



# Digital Media and Your School-Aged/Adolescent Child

## Risks and Benefits of Media

### Risks:

- Sleep: higher social media use and sleeping with a mobile device in the bedroom increase risk for sleep disturbances.
- Obesity: links to obesity, especially for those who watch greater than 5 hours per day, snacking while watching TV, and having a TV in the bedroom.
- Social/emotional development: children who overuse online media are at risk for problematic internet use and internet gaming disorder. Social media use in small and large quantities has been linked to depression in adolescents.
- School performance: using entertainment media while engaged in academic tasks can have negative consequences on learning.
- Unhealthy behaviors: exposure to alcohol, tobacco use, or sexual behaviors is associated with earlier initiation of these behaviors. Digital media use may expose children to cyberbullying, sexting, or online solicitation.
- Privacy: adolescents vary in their understanding of privacy settings. Once content is shared publicly it may be difficult or impossible to remove.
- Parent-child Interactions: heavy parent use of media can lead to missed opportunities for emotional connections with their child.

### Benefits:

- Provides exposure to new ideas and information.
- Opportunities for community participation and civic engagement.
- Collaboration on assignments and projects.
- Access to support networks and social inclusion.
- Communication with family and friends who are separated geographically.
- Can be used to promote healthy behaviors like nutrition and exercise.

## Guide to Media Use in School-Age Children

- **Create and consistently adhere to a family media use plan that addresses what type and how much media is allowed per day. Communicate these guidelines to other caregivers.** <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>
- Make sure your child gets the recommended amount of daily physical activity (1 hour).
- Ensure your child gets the recommended amount of sleep (8-12 hours depending on age). Remove digital devices from the bedroom and avoid exposure to screens at least 1 hour before bedtime.
- Designate media-free times to spend as a family and media-free locations within your home.
- Select and co-view media with your child.

- Communicate with your child about online citizenship and safety (ie treating others with respect online and offline, avoiding cyberbullying and sexting, being cautious of online solicitation, and avoiding communication that can compromise personal privacy and safety).
- Develop a network of trusted adults who can engage with your child through social media and to whom children can turn when they encounter challenges.

## High Quality Programming

Not all media is bad and can be used in positive ways to promote interaction, connection, and creativity. Be aware that many shows/apps claim to be educational or interactive but research has not demonstrated their quality. Use resources such as these to find high-quality and age-appropriate programming.

 common sense media®



## Digital Media Research and Resources for Your Family

Media resources:

- Healthy Children - Media: <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/family-life/media/pages/default.aspx>
- National Association of Media Literacy's Free Guide for Parents: <https://namle.net/a-parents-guide/>
- Health effects of screen time: <http://www.screenfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/screentimefs.pdf>
- Screenagers and Tech Talk Tuesday: <https://www.screenagersmovie.com/tech-talk-tuesdays/>
- Wait Until 8th: <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>
- "The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids" - Dimitri Christakis & Frederick Zimmerman
- American Psych Association "Digital Guidelines": <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/digital-guidelines.aspx>
- Family Online Safety Institute: <https://www.fosi.org/>
- 60 minutes (effects of screen time on kids): <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/groundbreaking-study-examines-effects-of-screen-time-on-kids-60-minutes/>
- Pornography: Culture Reframed: <https://www.culturereframed.org/>
- Sexting: What Parents Need to Know About Sexting: [https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2673714?utm\\_source=silverchair&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=article\\_alert-jamapediatrics&utm\\_content=olf&utm\\_term=022618](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2673714?utm_source=silverchair&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=article_alert-jamapediatrics&utm_content=olf&utm_term=022618)
- Cyberbullying: Stop Bullying: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/prevention/index.html>
- Mental Health:
  - "Increases in Depressive Symptoms, Suicide-Related Outcomes, and Suicide Rates Among U.S. Adolescents After 2010 and Links to Increased New Media Screen Time": <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2167702617723376>
  - "Digital Media, Anxiety, and Depression in Children": [http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/Supplement\\_2/S76.long](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/140/Supplement_2/S76.long)
  - Child Mind Institute (Media and Tech): <https://childmind.org/topics/concerns/media-and-technology/>
  - Common Sense Media (Mental Health): <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/mental-health>
  - TED Talk "Addicted to Likes": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCA\\_g2i1ZG8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCA_g2i1ZG8)

- Internet safety/privacy:
  - Seattle Police Department (Internet Crimes Against Children Unit): <https://www.seattle.gov/police/about-us/about-policing/icac>
  - Federal Trade Commission “Protecting Kids Online”: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online>
  - American Psychological Association (parental social media posting): <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/07-08/social-media.aspx>
  - OECD Digital Media and Mental Health Report: <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Children-and-Young-People-Mental-Health-in-the-Digital-Age.pdf>

\*Information on this handout is from the most recent guidelines published by the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement “Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents” <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162592>