



TIPS FROM AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICIANS TECHNOLOGY & YOUTH

Sometimes as parents/ guardians we find it helpful to get guidance on what is healthiest for our growing children. Here are some tips gleaned mostly from pediatricians.

Make your own [family media use plan](#). There are many templates you can find on-line. Here is a good, helpful [site](#).

Transitioning is hard

- Having another activity ready to do can help (bonus points for making it fun).
- Use visual and sound cues to help kids keep track of time limits.
- Stopping at a natural break, such as the end of an episode, level, or activity can make it easier. Talking about this before starting, and getting youth's input can go a long way to help with transitions.
- Discuss consequences and follow through when kids test the limits.
- *When they can show that they can be partners in moderating and regulating, there can be more flexibility.*
- Treat media as you would any other environment in your child's life. Set limits, know their friends (both online and off), know what apps and sites they visit, know what they are doing.
- *Set limits on technology time and encourage playtime.*
- Screen time shouldn't always be alone time. Co-view, co-play and co-engage – it encourages bonding and social interaction.
- *Be a good media role model.*
- Know the value of face-to-face communication especially as young children are developing their language skills.
- *Create tech-free zones. Dinner time, bedrooms... set family limits.*
- Don't use technology as an emotional pacifier. Be sure that your child has strategies for identifying and dealing with feelings that come up for them (boredom, frustration, sadness) that don't involve technology.

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MAKE A FAMILY USE PLAN



Remember: Kids will be kids.

Kids will make mistakes using media. Try to handle errors with empathy and turn a mistake into a teachable moment. But some indiscretions, such as sexting, bullying, or posting self-harm images, may be a red flag that hints at trouble ahead. Parents must observe carefully their children's behaviors and, if needed, enlist supportive professional help.



Recommendations for digital limits by age are:

- No screen time for babies 0-18 months (perhaps video chat together)
- Minimal screens with co-viewing for 18-24 months
- 1 hour of screens max for 2-5 yr olds
- Consistent limits for 6+ years old
- 1-1.5 hours for ages 6-10
- Up to 2 hours/day for ages 11-13

Apps for kids – do your homework. There are a lot of 'educational' apps out there, some better than others.

www.commonsensemedia.org is a great site to help parents make informed choices.

It's OK for your teen to be online. It is also good for parents to set limits, and monitor appropriateness. Keep lines of communication open and let them know you're there if they have questions or concerns.

Warn children about the importance of privacy and the dangers of predators and sexting. Once something is out there digitally it can not be removed or deleted completely. Sex offenders often use social networking, chat rooms, e-mail, and online gaming to contact and exploit children.

