

# How to Make a Family Media Use Plan

 [healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx)



From TV to smartphones to social media, our lives are dominated by 24/7 media exposure. Despite this, many children and teens have few rules around their media use.

## Create Your Personalized Family Media Use Plan:

Visit [HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan) to create a personalized Family Media Use Plan that works within your family's values and busy lifestyles.

This interactive tool developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) includes a Media Time Calculator that can give you a snapshot of how much time each child is spending on daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, homework, physical activity, and media use. It also includes AAP recommendations on screen-free zones, media manners, and much more.

## Media Use Plan Tips:

- Screens should be kept out of kids' bedrooms. Put in place a "media curfew" at mealtime and bedtime, putting all devices away or plugging them into a charging station for the night.
- Excessive media use has been associated with [obesity](#), lack of sleep, school problems, [aggression](#) and other [behavior issues](#). Limit entertainment screen time to less than one or two hours per day.
- For children under 2, substitute unstructured play and human interaction for screen time. The opportunity to think creatively, problem solve and develop reasoning and motor skills is more valuable for the developing brain than passive media intake.
- Take an active role in your children's media education by co-viewing programs with them and discussing [values](#).
- Look for media choices that are educational, or teach good values -- such as empathy, racial and ethnic tolerance. Choose programming that models good interpersonal skills for children to emulate.
- Be firm about not viewing content that is not age appropriate: sex, drugs, violence, etc. [Movie](#) and [TV ratings](#) exist for a reason, and online movie reviews also can help parents to stick to their rules.

- The Internet can be a wonderful place for learning. But it also is a place where kids can run into trouble. Keep the computer in a public part of your home, so you can check on what your kids are doing online and how much time they are spending there.
- Discuss with your children that every place they go on the Internet may be "remembered," and comments they make will stay there indefinitely. Impress upon them that they are leaving behind a "digital footprint." They should not take actions online that they would not want to be on the record for a very long time.
- Become familiar with popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You may consider having your own profile on the social media sites your children use. By "friending" your kids, you can monitor their online presence. Pre-teens should not have accounts on social media sites. If you have young children, you can create accounts on sites that are designed specifically for kids their age.
- Talk to them about being good "digital citizens," and discuss the serious consequences of online bullying. If your child is the victim of [cyberbullying](#), it is important to take action with the other parents and the school if appropriate. Attend to children's and [teens' mental health](#) needs promptly if they are being bullied online, and consider separating them from the social media platforms where bullying occurs.
- Make sure kids of all ages know that it is not appropriate or smart to send or receive pictures of people without clothing, or [sexy text messages](#), no matter whether they are texting friends or strangers.
- Check out a sample "[Media Time Family Pledge](#)" for online media use.
- If you're unsure of the quality of the "media diet" in your household, consult with your children's pediatrician on what your kids are viewing, how much time they are spending with media, and privacy and safety issues associated with social media and Internet use.