



Setting screen limits for children

School-aged children and teens are still developing the ability to control their impulses, regulate their emotions, and assess risks and consequences. They need guidance to make healthy choices online.

How parents can help set limits

MANAGE screen use through plans, rules, and limits.

- Create a Family Media Plan to guide media use at home.
- Be present and engaged when screens are used. Sit with your child together and talk about the content.
- Discourage media multitasking—using/watching more than one screen when doing homework.
- Learn about parental controls and privacy settings.
- Have your child or teen share their passwords and log out of accounts.
- Talk about acceptable and unacceptable online behavior.

Encourage MEANINGFUL screen use, so that it serves a purpose.

- Put daily routines and important activities ahead of screen time.
- Help children and teens choose appropriate content for their age and interests.
- Be a part of your children's media lives. Ask them what they are doing and ask about their experiences online.
- Ask your child's school or childcare provider about screen use throughout the day.

MODEL healthy screen use, because children are watching you.

- Review your own media habits and consider making changes.
- Never text or use headphones/earbuds while driving. These are activities where you need to be fully present.
- Encourage daily "screen-free" times, especially during mealtimes.
- Turn screens off when not in use, including in the bedroom.
- Avoid screens at least 1 hour before bedtime to help with sleep.

Signs of trouble

Talk to your child's doctor if these signs persist or interfere with family life:

Complaints about being bored or unhappy without access to technology.

Oppositional behavior or conflict when screen time is limited.

Screen use interferes with sleep, school, or face-to-face interaction.

Screen use interferes with in-person relationships, socializing, or activities.

Negative emotions or behaviors when screen time is limited.

Parents can encourage responsible media use by practicing healthy media habits.



Centre for Healthy Screen Use

AT THE CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY



Canadian
Paediatric
Society