



Creating a family media plan

It's easier to set limits on screen use when children are young. A family media plan can help by describing rules and guidelines for screen use by each member of your family.

When creating the plan:

Start early, if possible: For expecting parents, it helps to create a plan before the child is born. If that's not possible, remember it's never too late. Even teens benefit from the structure that a media plan provides.

Involve your children: Creating the plan together is an opportunity to talk about screen use in your home and why you have certain limits and rules.

Ensure it works for everyone: Consider each family member's health, education, work and entertainment needs. Then create a plan that reflects those needs.

Consider media use in childcare or at school: If you have a young child, consider how screens are used by their daycare or caregiver. For older children and teens, think about how technology is used at school. If you're unsure, ask the school or childcare for more information.

Review and revise: Review the media plan once in a while and make updates as needed. It can change, as children grow, reach new milestones, or throughout the year (for example, during the school year or during the summer).

Consider these questions to create a plan everyone understands and follows:

- What kind of screens are used at home, and how many? Where are they located? Which one(s) do children use?
- Is watching content a shared family activity and a common way to relax together?
- How often is a screen on in the background when no one is watching?
- Does anyone in the family use a screen at mealtimes?
- What content do you co-view with children? What do they watch alone?
- Do you encourage conversation with children while co-viewing?
- Do you watch adult or commercial programming with young children present?
- Do you use screens to occupy children while doing chores around the home? How often?
- Are there screen-based activities in your child's childcare program? How regularly?
- Are screens used before bedtime? How long before? Are they allowed in children's rooms?

Visit healthychildren.org, the American Academy of Pediatrics parenting website, for a Family Media Plan online template.



Centre for Healthy Screen Use

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