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Family Media Plan helps parents set boundaries for kids

by Trisha Koriath, Staff Writer

It can be overwhelming for parents to manage all of the media options available to children and adolescents around the clock and sort out the pros and cons of screen time.

While media use can help build kids' social skills, it also can put them at risk of obesity, lost sleep, bullying, addiction and violence, according to new guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

To help families navigate the digital world, the AAP has developed a Family Media Plan. Parents and children can use the plan to customize guidelines on screen time, ensuring that media use is in line with their family's values. This personalized plan also helps children establish a healthy relationship with media, including televisions, smartphones, computers, tablets and even watches.

"Creating a Family Media Plan is an important step in helping parents realize that they can, and should, still 'parent' their children's online life and be aware of, and hopefully approve of, their online and media choices," said Corinn Cross, M.D., FAAP, a pediatrician who helped develop the resource.

Families can use the plan to:



- determine screen-free zones and times, device curfews, and charging spots outside of bedrooms;
- maintain balance and make sure children get enough sleep and exercise;
- include family values in children's media experiences; and
- learn how to research the age-appropriateness and ratings of apps and programs.

The plan should be updated periodically throughout the year as the family's schedule changes.

The AAP also urges parents to select and view media with their children and adolescents, and talk about safe and respectful behavior online and offline. This includes cyberbullying and sexting, online predators, and personal privacy and safety. A network of trusted adults (including aunts, uncles and coaches) can help guide kids through social media challenges.

To access the Family Media Plan, visit [HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan).



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