

Social Media Guide: How to Design a Media Plan for Your Family

From TV to smartphones to social media, our lives are dominated by 24/7 media exposure. Despite this, many kids have few rules around their media use. Parents can help their kids balance their online activity by designing customized media plans that will provide structure to their daily media routines.

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.
- Take an active role in your children's media education by co-viewing programs with them and discussing values.
- 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 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.
- 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.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx>