

Digital media

A clinician's guide to counselling parents of school-aged children and adolescents

Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents is a Canadian Paediatric Society position statement that reviews the evidence for the cognitive, psychosocial and physical effects of digital media on school-aged children and adolescents.¹

Promote healthy use of digital media among your patients and families with this advice:

MANAGE screen use through plans, rules, and limits

- Make a family media plan that includes time and content limits for each family member.
- Be present and engaged when children and youth are using screens.
- Whenever possible, watch together and talk about content.
- Discourage media multitasking, especially during homework.
- Follow your child or teen's social media profiles.
- Speak to your children regularly about acceptable and unacceptable online behaviours.

Encourage MEANINGFUL screen use, so that time online serves a purpose

- Ensure daily routines come first: face-to-face interactions, sleep, physical activity, mealtimes.
- Choose screen activities with active, social or educational uses.
- Help children and youth to recognize and choose content appropriate to their age and stage.
- Play video games *with* your kids. Ask about their experiences and encounters online.

MODEL healthy screen use, because your kids are watching you

- Review your own media habits, and be sure there is time for hobbies and outdoor activities.
- Never text or use hand-held devices while driving.
- Have daily "screen-free" times for the whole family, especially during meals.
- Turn off screens not in use, including background TV.
- Keep screens out of bedrooms.

MONITOR for signs of problematic screen use

- Seek help from your child's doctor if you're concerned.



More information for parents is available at
www.healthyscreenuse.cps.ca



**Centre for Healthy
Screen Use**

AT THE CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY



1. Digital Health Task Force, Canadian Paediatric Society. Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents. June 2019. Available at www.cps.ca.