



How adults can model healthy screen use

Regardless of age, children will notice how their parents use screens.

Review your screen use habits to determine if they should change:

How much time do you spend on screens, especially around your children?

What type of content do you watch with children and teens present?

Does your screen use often interfere with shared family time?

Does anyone in the family use screens during mealtimes?

Do you sleep with devices in the same room (for example, with your smartphone beside your bed)?

To improve your screen use habits, aim to:

Use screens in moderation

Prioritize conversation, play, and active routines over media use—especially during meals and shared family time.

Remember that timing is everything

Consider how the timing of screen use affects all members of the household. Remember to consider your own screen use. (Seeing parents spend a lot of time on devices is linked to children wanting to use screens more often).

Turn it off when not in use

Background screen media has a negative impact on child development and interferes with family time. Turn screens off when they are not being actively used to reduce distractions during moments that should be screen-free.

Be choosy about content

Select media content appropriate for your child's age and stage. Avoid stereotypes, advertising, violence, and sexual content, regardless of their age.

Avoid having screens in all bedrooms

Having any type of device in a bedroom (for either parents or children) is associated with fewer minutes of sleep per night.

Prioritize safety

Only use screens when safe to do so. For example, texting while driving is dangerous and illegal. Never engage in this behaviour: Explain and reinforce the health and legal risks of texting and driving with children and teens. Consider setting your phone to do not disturb mode before setting out.

When family members are distracted by screens, everyone misses out on quality family time and teaching moments. Prioritize times that are completely screen-free when all devices are off, including background TV.



Centre for Healthy Screen Use

AT THE CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY

