Setting screen-use limits for school-aged children and teens

School-aged children and teens are still developing. In some situations, they may find it hard to control their impulses, regulate their emotions, or assess and make decisions based on risks and consequences. They need you to <u>set limits and provide support</u> to ensure they make healthy choices online.

How parents can help set limits on screen use

MANAGE screen use through plans, rules, and limits.
- Create a <u>Family Media Plan</u> to guide media use at home.
- Be present and engaged when screens are used. Whenever possible, watch together and talk about the content.
- Discourage media multitasking—using/watching more than one screen—especially when doing homework.
- Learn about <u>parental controls and privacy settings</u>.
- Have your child or teen share their passwords and login information with you.
- Talk about acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour.

Encourage MEANINGFUL screen use, so that it serves a purpose.
- Put daily routines and important activities ahead of screen time.
- Help children and teens choose appropriate content and encourage programs and activities that have learning goals.
- Be a part of your children's media lives. For example, play video games with them and ask about their experiences online.
- Ask your child's school or childcare provider about how screens are used throughout the day.

MODEL healthy screen use, because children are watching you.
- Review your own media habits and consider where you might need to make changes.
- Never text or use headphones/earbuds while driving, walking, jogging or biking. These are activities where you need to hear what is going on around you to be safe.
- Encourage daily "screen-free" times, especially during meals and family time.
- Turn screens off when not in use, including background TV.
- Avoid screens at least 1 hour before bedtime and keep devices out of bedrooms.

Signs of trouble

Talk to your child's doctor if these signs persist, or interfere with family life:

Complaints about being bored or unhappy without access to technology.

Oppositional behaviour or conflict when you set limits on screen time.

Screen use interferes with sleep, school or face-to-face interactions.

Screen use interferes with in-person/offline play, physical activities or socializing.

Negative emotions after interacting online, playing video games or while texting.

Parents can encourage responsible media use by paying attention, getting involved, and modelling positive media habits.

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