



Screen Time Consumption

Online videos and social media are very popular with youths. Typically, youth use some of the following:

- Instagram
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- YouTube

Establishing Boundaries

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following limits:

- Children younger than 18-24 months: Avoid media, except video chatting
- Children 18-24 months: High-quality programs; use media together
- Children 2-5 years: Limit to 1 hour per day; high-quality programs; use media together
- Children 6-18 years: Limit and monitor; should not displace adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health. Focus on balance.

How Much Is Too Much?

The following questions can help to figure out how much is too much:

- How are your children acting during and after using the screen?
- Is their behavior positive?
- Are they using high quality, age-appropriate media?
- Is there a healthy balance between screen time and screen-free activities?

Consider the purpose of screen time:

- Passive: watching videos or shows, scrolling
- Interactive: playing games
- Communication: video-chatting, social media messaging
- Content Creation: making digital art, music, videos, or coding

Talk about screen time. Watch together. Relate what they are watching to real-life events, experiences.

Common Sense Media helps families make smart media choices. They offer age-based and educational ratings and reviews for movies, games, apps, TV shows, websites, books, and music. Their Parent Concerns and Parent Blog help families understand and navigate the problems and possibilities of raising children in the digital age.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>

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Healthy Children.org is affiliated with the American Academy of Pediatrics. It has many resources that address children's development and healthy practices, including children and media: <https://www.healthychildren.org/english/family-life/media/pages/default.aspx>

Public Broadcasting Service has numerous resources for parents, including programs and apps: <https://www.pbs.org/parents>

Why Establish Healthy Screen Time Habits

There is a myriad of reasons for establishing healthy screen time habits. Without them too much screen time could lead to:

- Sleep problems
- Lower grades in school
- Reading fewer books
- Less time with family and friends
- Not enough outdoor or physical activity
- Weight problems
- Mood problems
- Poor self-image and body image issues
- Fear of missing out
- Less time learning other ways to relax and have fun

Potential Impact on Mental Health

- Sleep problems
- Potential negative effects on self-control
- Academic performance
- Social interaction
- Can affect how children and teens see themselves
- Social Isolation

Potential Benefits of Screens

- Entertainment
- Social Connection –Connecting with family and friends
- Education –Learn something new

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- Support - Such as Bloom – Empowering the Military Teen:
<https://www.bloommilitaryteens.org/>

Practical Tips for Developing Healthy Habits

Common Sense Media recommends tips to create healthy habits:

- Pay attention and take interest in what they're doing online.
- Try not to be judgmental, but rather show curiosity and interest.
- Help them recognize their screen time habits.
- Talk to them about their emotional health while using online activities.
- Talk about what to do when they have negative feelings or want to change their screen time habits.

More Tips for Healthy Habits

- Establish media free zones, like the dinner table, bedrooms, or cars.
- Consider media free days where the family focuses on activities they enjoy together.
- Communicate. Talk about advertisements, fake news, violence; citizenship and safety.
- Make screen time a privilege, not a right.
- Enforce consistent limits and share rules with caregivers.
- Co-view and co-play.
- Be a positive role model.
- Create a Family Media Plan.
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/fmp/Pages/MediaPlan.aspx>

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Screen-Free Choices

Once you establish limits and build in screen-free time, help children fill the time with meaningful activities that they enjoy. Together with your children, create a list specific to them that highlights choices for how they can spend screen-free time. You can help them find balance by listing ideas to choose from that are creative, active, contributing or learning inspired.

- During the 2024 summer, MWR libraries will kick-off their "[Read, Renew, Repeat](#)" reading program.
- Check out the Child and Youth Programs such as [The Department of Air Force Child and Youth Education Services](#), the [Navy Child and Youth Programs](#), the [Installation Volunteer Coordinator](#), or visit your [School Liaison](#) for more information.

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Parent Support

Establishing Screentime Boundaries

Videos

- The New Normal: Parents, Teens, Screens, and Sleep in the United States
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ8E3jL1VxI>
- AAP Family Media Use Plan: <https://youtu.be/ExKZnALhDjw?si=PH7ayc1OZivx2mVk>

MCEC[®] Resources

- [SchoolQuest™](https://schoolquest.militarychild.org) is an interactive tool, specially designed to support highly mobile military-connected parents and students: <https://schoolquest.militarychild.org>
- Global Support System for Students, Parents and School Professionals: The Military Student Consultant initiative provides regional one-on-one support for advocacy and problem-solving resources to assist military-connected students, parents and professionals who serve them. To contact a Military Student Consultant, email msc@militarychild.org or call (254) 953-1923 ext. 1146.
- Professional Development: Enhancing the current capabilities, competency and awareness of professionals who serve and support military-connected children a youth. Find current offerings and more details at <https://www.militarychild.org/for-education-professionals/training/>
- Student Achievement: Provides support to military-connected students through peer-to-peer mentoring programs, the *Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program™*, student-focused webinars, and our Student Advisory Council. Find more details at <https://www.militarychild.org/programs-and-initiatives/student-2-student/>
- **MCEC[®] Podcast:** Covers an array of informative and current topics with guests from all walks of life. Visit [Podbean](#) or [iTunes](#).
- **MCEC[®] Parent Support Webinars:** offers a vast number of topics to support military-connected families <https://www.militarychild.org/event/parent-webinars/>
- **MCEC[®] En Español:** Delivers Spanish resources to those who seek to provide valuable and relevant information to the Spanish-speaking military community, such as teachers, administrators, school districts, military installations, and parents. Visit <https://www.militarychild.org/en-espanol/>

References Available Upon Request

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