

ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



DIGITAL DILEMMAS: HANDLING TECHNOLOGY TEMPTATIONS AND TACTICS WITH YOUR CHILD



What's Inside ?

10 WAYS TO SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY USE FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS



Watch

Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study Investigator, Florence Breslin discussed the research of screen time's effects on children and where screen time does and does not play a role in different family experiences.



Read

This short article from staff at the Mayo Clinic discusses the benefits and the drawbacks to social media use in teens. It also provides guidelines for how to support responsible online engagement.



Listen

The Child Mind Institute explains why numerical age is less important than overall maturity when considering cell phone use along with special considerations for children and parents.

- 1 Set clear guidelines
- 2 Encourage creativity online
- 3 Emphasize learning
- 4 Model healthy tech habits
- 5 Teach digital literacy
- 6 Promote physical activity breaks
- 7 Provide tech-free alternatives
- 8 Monitor usage
- 9 Stay informed and engaged
- 10 Facilitate social interaction

STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING SCREEN TIME BATTLES

Set Boundaries and Stick to Them

However you choose to handle screen time with your children, it is important that you communicate the policies to them clearly, ensure they understand, and remain consistent. Whether you decide to set time limitations, parameters for use, or ways for them to earn it, once the expectation is set, stick to it. Clear and consistent communication is vital.

Lead by Example

Although tech provides a lot of convenience for parents, children will not understand why we have different screen time rules than they do. Also, when parents are focused on their devices, they are more likely to react harshly to their children when interrupted and to put off bids for connection.

Practice Co-Viewing

Hang out with your children to get a sense of what apps, games, shows, music and other content they enjoy. Being aware of what your children are viewing can lead to positive conversations about the material and may open doors to discuss concerning content in a thoughtful way.

Let Go of Your Fears

Love it or hate it, screens are here to stay. They are used in educational settings and allow children to socialize and share common interests more easily. Parents often feel guilty because kids today spend a lot of time on their devices when they didn't as kids. Remember that not all technology is bad. Like everything else in life, it is all about balance.

Keep Devices Out of Sight

If a child cannot see a phone or tablet, they may be less likely to ask for it. Plan alternate activities that are engaging so your children look forward to something other than screens.

Follow the 5 S's

Time spent on social media can be a direct cause of mental health concerns in teens. We can promote mental well-being with:

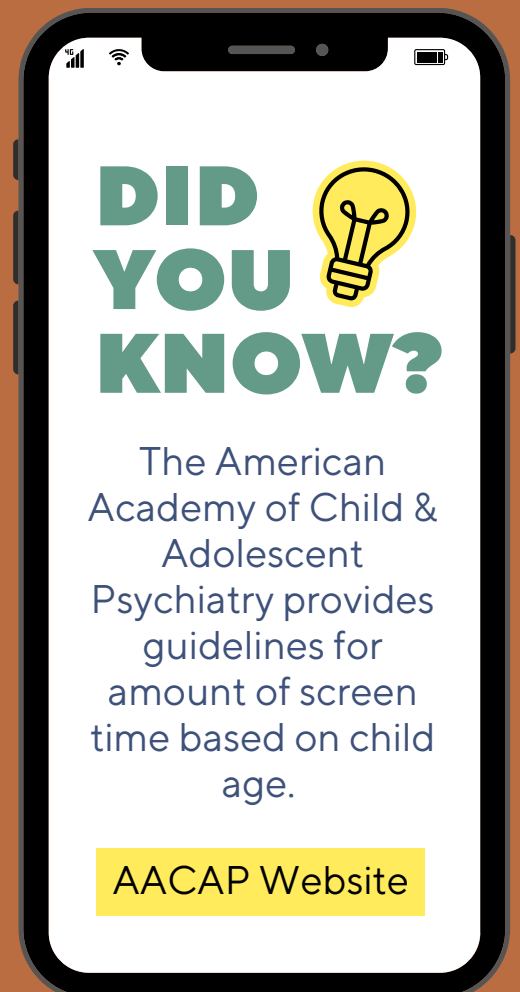
- **Sleep** - Keep phones out of the bedroom and reduce exposure to blue light at least 60 minutes before bed.
- **Self-care** - Get kids moving and off their devices! Promote mental and physical wellness by encouraging kids to take time for exercise, time outdoors, or taking a hot shower.
- **Service** - Encourage teens to act outside of themselves by engaging in acts of kindness, helping a sibling, or volunteering.
- **Skills** - Learn new things through a hobby or extracurricular activity to build self-esteem.
- **Socializing** - Spend time with others the old fashioned way, with face to face contact.

— ” —

The key is to teach them how to be safe with technology, because ultimately, we want our children to be in charge of technology, rather than feeling technology is in charge of them.

— ” —

ELAINE HALLIGAN
THE PARENT PRACTICE



Parental Controls for Smartphones

Whether they're playing games, texting friends, or checking out the latest viral video, kids are constantly connected, leaving parents with the unenviable task of setting limits on device use to protect their children from inappropriate content and excessive screen time.

There are simple ways to limit screen time and purchases, control access to the content your child views, monitor your child's activities, and preserve family privacy. You just have to locate and activate those features.

[This article](#) from Consumer Reports provides guidance on how to set controls on different smartphone devices.

Protect
your
child's
privacy



Control
access
to
content



Limit
screen
time



PARENTAL CONTROL APPS

bark 

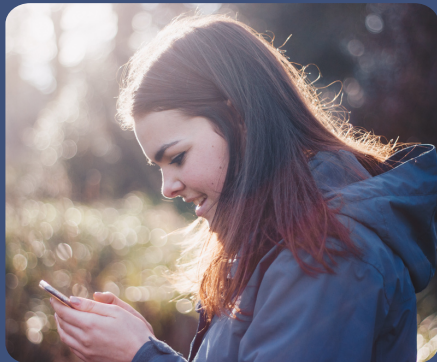
Bark offers parental control for iOS, Android, Amazon tablets, and Chromebooks. With content monitoring, you get alerts when it detects potential issues so you can talk to your child and make sure everything is OK. You can set bedtimes and block access to a variety of websites. This includes: streaming, gaming, adult content, and more. There's also a tracking feature that offers real time location check ins for your children's devices.



Family Keeper helps you track your children's digital activities and protect them from harmful content online. The app's comprehensive monitoring and control features provide peace of mind for parents and help prevent cyberbullying, limit screen time, and filter inappropriate content. This app does not work with laptop or desktop devices.

̄URA

Aura is a digital security and ID theft protection company. Aura has many features, but for Parental Controls, Aura makes it easy for parents to block websites and apps, set screen time limits, and see what kids are doing online. Additionally, Aura just added Safe Gaming, which monitors communications on 200+ online games and sends alerts if it detects harmful communication such as cyberbullying or from online predators.



Social Media for Teens: What's the Impact?

Short Article

Mayo Clinic staff, including doctors and psychologists, discuss healthy versus unhealthy social media use and how to protect your teen from online dangers. [Read more...](#)



Screen Time: Is it Really That Bad?

7 minute video

Florence Breslin, MS, discusses how use of screens may provide support for the educational, social, and mental health needs of some kids. [Watch here...](#)



When Should you Get Your Kid a Phone?

8 Minute Listen

Listen to (or read) this article from medical experts with The Child Mind Institute for answers to questions such as "How do I know if my child is ready for a phone?" [Listen here...](#)



**ENJOY SCREENS
NOT TOO MUCH
MOSTLY TOGETHER**

Technology plays an important role in all of our lives and use of technology almost cannot be avoided. However, all screen time is not created equal and when used responsibly and in moderation it can even support child development.

We can teach children to be responsible digital consumers and to find balance between media consumption and overall well-being. The "Digital Citizenship Curriculum" from Common Sense Media offers child specific lesson plans for grades Pre-K through 12th grade and covers topics such as privacy & security, cyberbullying, relationships & online communication, and news & media literacy.

[CHECK IT OUT HERE!](#)

FAMILY MEDIA PLANNING

The online family media planning tool from The American Academy of Pediatrics allows families to work together on media rules so all family members can agree on how devices fit into your lives.

When your family works together on a media plan, it allows you to communicate your boundaries and expectations and to hear from your children about any needs or concerns they have. Once you have identified a plan, post it in a common area for all family members to reference as needed.

The Smith Family Media Plan

We will communicate about media by:

- Discussing media content that is shocking or upsetting.
- Listening to each other with open minds.
- Talking about the ways media can affect mental health.

We will emphasize kindness and empathy when using technology by:

- Having a plan for how to deal with cyberbullying.
- Being polite and considerate to others online and in person.

We will set and discuss digital safety rules by:

- Trying to avoid oversharing.
- Setting and following safety rules for who we chat with online.

We will create some screen-free zones for our family by:

- Keeping meals screen-free.

“Every day, children are inundated by endless media messages intended to educate, entertain, or influence their behavior. It takes commitment and effort on the part of parents to monitor and help interpret these external influences on children. Creating a Family Media Plan can help you and your children set media priorities that matter most to your family. Since media habits are different for every household, the Family Media Plan can be customized to meet your family’s needs.” – AAP.org

CREATE A FAMILY MEDIA PLAN AT HEALTHYCHILD.ORG



WORKS CITED

Teens and social media use: What's the impact? (2024, January 18). Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teens-and-social-media-use/art-20474437>

Miller, C., Bubrick, J., PhD, Anderson, D., PhD, & Stossel, M. (2023, October 30). When should you get your kid a phone? Child Mind Institute. <https://childmind.org/article/when-should-you-get-your-kid-a-phone/>

Family media plan. (n.d.-b). HealthyChildren.org. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/fmp/Pages/MediaPlan.aspx>

Pinola, M. (2018, March 15). How to use the parental controls on a smartphone. Consumer Reports. <https://www.consumerreports.org/electronics-computers/cell-phones/how-to-use-parental-controls-on-a-smartphone-a4120021016/#:~:text=Protect%20Your%20Child's%20Privacy&text=You%20can%20also%20block%20access,in%20the%20device's%20web%20browser.>

Aacap. (n.d.). Screen time and children. https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx

TEDx Talks. (2020, February 12). Screen Time: Is it really all bad? | Florence Breslin | TEDxTysons [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3XLnHHPV18>

DIGCIT Curriculum | Common Sense Education. (n.d.). Common Sense Education. <https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/curriculum>

Need additional support? Contact our post adoption team!

