

Screen Time – Children and Adolescents

Computers, mobile devices and televisions have become a big part of our lives. The digital media that these devices provide can enhance our children's lives, but can also interfere with important activities like school, being physically active and sleep time. The American Academy of Pediatrics has made the following recommendations to balance screen time with other activities.

- Make a Family Media Use Plan – visit www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUse
- Promote daily physical activity (1 hour a day) and adequate sleep (8-12 hours, see the HPA handout – *Recommended Hours of Sleep*).
- Children should not sleep with devices in their bedrooms. Avoid screens 1 hour before bedtime
- Discourage digital media while doing homework.
- Have media-free times together, for example meal times. Have media-free locations such as bedrooms. Promote activities that facilitate development and health such as reading, talking and playing together.
- Let other care-givers know what your guide-lines are for digital media.
- Be involved in selecting what media your child will use. Watch and use digital media together. Use media to help your child learn and be creative
- Talk to your children about being good online citizens and safety. Treat others with respect, avoid cyberbullying and sexting, be wary of solicitation.
- Develop a network of trusted adults (relatives, coaches, etc.) who can engage with your children through social media and to whom your children can turn to when they encounter challenges.
- See HPA handouts – *TV and your Child, Internet Safety*.