

# Digital media

## A clinician's guide to counselling parents of school-aged children and adolescents

**Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents** is a Canadian Paediatric Society position statement that reviews the evidence for the cognitive, psychosocial and physical effects of digital media on school-aged children and adolescents.<sup>1</sup>

Promote healthy use of digital media among your patients and families with this advice:

### MANAGE screen use through plans, rules, and limits

- Make a family media plan that includes time and content limits for each family member.
- Be present and engaged when children and youth are using screens.
- Whenever possible, watch together and talk about content.
- Discourage media multitasking, especially during homework.
- Follow your child or teen's social media profiles.
- Speak to your children regularly about acceptable and unacceptable online behaviours.

### Encourage MEANINGFUL screen use, so that time online serves a purpose

- Ensure daily routines come first: face-to-face interactions, sleep, physical activity, mealtimes.
- Choose screen activities with active, social or educational uses.
- Help children and youth to recognize and choose content appropriate to their age and stage.
- Play video games *with* your kids. Ask about their experiences and encounters online.

### MODEL healthy screen use, because your kids are watching you

- Review your own media habits, and be sure there is time for hobbies and outdoor activities.
- Never text or use hand-held devices while driving.
- Have daily "screen-free" times for the whole family, especially during meals.
- Turn off screens not in use, including background TV.
- Keep screens out of bedrooms.

### MONITOR for signs of problematic screen use

- Seek help from your child's doctor if you're concerned.



More information for parents is available at  
[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)



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1. Digital Health Task Force, Canadian Paediatric Society. Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents. June 2019. Available at [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca).