



RAISING RESPONSIBLE DIGITAL CITIZENS AT HOME

As parents, we teach our children about manners and how to follow rules and laws in the real world, but what about the digital world they spend 6+ hours a day in?

How can you help your children grow into healthy, well-adjusted adults in this world that is inundated with technology? The first step is to go to Common Sense Media at <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>. At the top click **For Parents**. This one website has a plethora of information, tools, and tips to help you help your children. What kinds of things can you find on Common Sense media?

- **Ratings** on books, movies, TV shows-with detailed explanations concerning language, violence, content, etc. They will even provide talking points and discussion guides for particularly hot topic shows like “13 Reasons Why” Download the Common Sense Media app for your phone for quick reference.
- **Information and research**
- **Advice** on how to limit screen time and have valuable discussions with your children (of every age)
- **Family Media Plans**
- Ideas such as **#DeviceFreeDinner**

Teach Your Child to Lead a Balanced Life:

Technology is not a bad thing. Technology has the potential to enhance our lives in so many ways. However, we need to teach our children to use technology responsibly. The best way is not to prohibit technology, but rather, introduce it in increments, and with limits, while demonstrating healthy, appropriate use.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children age 5-18 are at increased risk of the following:

1. Obesity
2. Sleep Disruption
 - a. Sleep disruption-social media/devices in bedroom overnight

- b. Can't sleep- blue light and screen activity affect melatonin levels and can disrupt sleep (and consequently cause problems at school)
3. Media use while doing homework has been shown to have negative effects on learning.
4. Sexting, cyberbullying, problematic Internet use, and Internet gaming disorder

Set Family Technology Rules (see sample media plans below)

- Keep mobile devices in the kitchen (or central location ie. NOT in their bedrooms) overnight
- “Unplug” 2 hours before bedtime so their brains have time to relax and get a restful sleep
- Check your child’s devices and social media accounts. You should have passwords to all your child’s accounts.
- Check account requirements. Did you know most social media accounts require the child to be at least 13 years old? Twitter just raised their minimum age to 16. Consider what message you are sending by allowing your child to enter a fake birthdate in order to create one of these accounts. Why 13? See [the Children’s Internet Protection Act](#).

Good Resources Family Media Plans and More:

- **American Academy of Pediatrics:** <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>
- **Tips for Parents:** <https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/for-parents/raising-digital-citizens>
- **Screen Free Week:** Participate in Screen Free Week April 30-May 6, 2018 <http://www.screenfree.org/>
- **#unplug:** National Day of Unplugging: <http://nationaldayofunplugging.com/>

Sources:

- "Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)." Federal Communications Commission. N.p., 26 July 2017. Web. 28 Aug. 2017. (<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>)
- Media, Council On Communications And. "Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents." *Pediatrics*. American Academy of Pediatrics, 01 Nov. 2016. Web. 01 Sept. 2017. (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162592>)