

Recommendations for Parents and Caretakers

Technology offers extraordinary opportunities for our youth, but navigating the digital world is a complex task that children cannot handle alone. Pediatricians and medical professionals recommend that children aged 0 to 6 have no screen exposure, except in specific cases under adult supervision. For children aged 7 to 12, less than one hour per day is advised, including schoolwork, with clear limits on time and content. For teenagers aged 13 to 16, no more than two hours daily is recommended, prioritizing offline activities and delaying access to internet-connected smartphones.

The following recommendations provide clear, actionable guidance for parents and caregivers to help youth safely navigate digital spaces while developing healthy technology habits.

1

Set Device-Free Zones and Times

Designate specific places (bedrooms, dinner table) and times (meals, one hour before bedtime) as technology-free. This promotes better sleep, family connection, and helps children develop the ability to be present without digital distractions.

2

Use Parental Controls Effectively

Implement age-appropriate content filters, privacy settings, and time limits using built-in tools on your child's devices and platforms. Regularly review and adjust these controls as your child matures and demonstrates responsible behavior.

3

Practice "Side-by-Side" Media Engagement

Regularly participate in your child's digital activities to understand their interests and provide real-time guidance. Co-viewing and co-playing creates opportunities for meaningful discussions about content, online interactions, and digital citizenship.

4

Establish Clear Consequences

Create and consistently enforce specific rules about what happens when digital boundaries are crossed. Ensure consequences are related to the behavior (e.g., temporarily reducing screen time for misuse) and focus on learning rather than punishment.

5

Teach Privacy Protection

Teach your child to protect personal information, create strong passwords, spot scams, and understand data collection. Explain that shared online data may be permanent.

6

Build Digital Resilience

Equip your child with strategies to handle cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and peer pressure. Teach them when to block or report harmful content, when to disengage from negative interactions, and when to seek adult help.

7

Create a Family Tech Agreement

Develop a written contract together that clearly outlines expectations for device use, digital behavior, and safety practices. Review and revise this agreement as children mature and technology evolves.

8

Balance Online and Offline Activities

Ensure your child engages in regular physical activity (at least 60 minutes daily), face-to-face social interactions, and non-digital creative pursuits. Schedule technology breaks and model this balance in your own habits.

9

Coordinate Policies with Other Parents

Work together with other parents to establish and agree on specific policies regarding technology use, ensuring consistency across peer groups and environments.

10

Delay Personal Use of Smart Devices

Postpone the introduction of smartphones and tablets for personal use by children until at least 16 years old, promoting gradual and responsible adoption of technology.

11

Encourage Outdoor and Social Sports

Provide incentives for children to participate in outdoor activities and social sports to foster healthy habits and reduce screen dependency.

12

Discuss Real-World Risks

Engage in joint exploration of public cases where teenagers and adolescents have encountered risky situations, including those with tragic consequences, to educate and promote responsible decision-making.

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