

Technology – How much is too much?

According to Common Sense Media, tweens log 4 1/2 hours of screen time a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. For teens, it's even higher: nearly seven hours a day. And that doesn't include time spent using devices for school or in school. The average age of a child receiving their first cell phone is 10.3; and about 56% of kids between 8-12 years old have a smart phone. Welcome to the New Age.

Although there are guidelines and recommendations about how much is too much; it is not always about the number of hours your child spends on the screen, but more about what the quality of the screen time is, how your child interacts with the screen or how screen time impacts your child's personality.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages parents to help their children develop healthy media use habits early on.

For children younger than 18 months, use of screen media other than video-chatting should be discouraged.

Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming/apps and use them together with children, because this is how toddlers learn best. Letting children use media by themselves should be avoided.

For children between 3-18 years old no more than 2 hours of screen time is recommended.

Parents are encouraged to develop personalized media use plans for their children. Media plans should take into account each child's age, health, personality, and developmental stage. **Create your Family Media Use Plan here** and remember to communicate your plan to other caregivers, such as babysitters or grandparents, so that media rules are followed consistently.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Where-We-Stand-TV-Viewing-Time.aspx>

For more information about the impact of media on children's development visit

<http://cmch.tv/>

Wondering what's good for kids to watch, read or play?

Common Sense Media is a great site that offers reviews and feedback about all sorts of available media from books to video games.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Apps that help to control and monitor screen time:

- Bsocial
- Mama bear: The MamaBear app (free) allows parents to track their children's social media use and receive alerts if their child does something they deem inappropriate.
- Parent kit: With ParentKit (free), parents can create a usage schedule for multiple devices right from their own phone. ParentKit also allows parents to block any apps that they deem inappropriate for children.
- Screeentime manager: Rather than giving your kids money when they complete their chores, why not give out mobile minutes? Screen Time — Media Time Manager (\$2) allows parents to assign time allowances for each child and tracks when their minutes are up.
- Moment: Track how much you and your family use your phone and tablet each day, automatically. • See what apps you use the most too! Moment is the first and only app on the App Store to do this. • Set daily limits on yourself and find a balance for the screens in your life.
- Dinnertime: Parents are able to pause activities remotely for up to two hours for family time, as well as set a clock for bedtime
- Screen time labs: Manage the time your kids spend on their tablets and smart phones
- My mobile Watchdog: allows parents to monitor whom their kids contact and when they do so. It also lets parents block content, creating a safer mobile experience. If, however, your child does manage to access blocked content, My Mobile Watchdog notifies you immediately.
- Kidsplace: Your child may be too young to have their own device, but that doesn't stop them from using yours. Kids Place (free) allows you to create a special kid-friendly screen, which hides any apps that are for Mom's eyes only and keeps them from downloading new ones