

# MEDIA PLAN

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**SCREEN TIME & FAMILIES:  
MANAGING CHILDREN'S ONLINE LIVES**

NAME:

## 2-5 YEARS OLD

**ADAPTED FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
PEDIATRICS "FAMILY MEDIA PLAN" TOOL**

# SCREEN FREE ZONES

Having areas of your home remain screen-free is important. Select from the list below & add them to your Media Plan to make sure your children understand where screens are not allowed. Add any other screen free areas that are specific to your family.

## **Mobile devices & TVs are not allowed in the following screen-free zones in our home:**

- Bedroom
  - Recharge devices overnight - outside your child's bedroom
  - Incoming messages & calls can interfere with your child's sleep
  - Help children avoid the temptation to use or check devices when they should be sleeping
  - Emitted light from devices charging may still effect the quality of your child's sleep
  
- Kitchen or Dining Room Table
  - Keep family mealtimes & other family & social gatherings tech-free.
  
- Stroller
  
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# SCREEN FREE TIMES

As part of the daily routine, make devices like TVs, phones, computers, games or other electronics off limits at specific times. Dinnertime & before bedtime are important ones, but more extended breaks from technology each day may also be needed, especially for families with very young children.

## **We will not use mobile devices or other screens during the following times:**

- While in the car, except for long trips
- Family time
  - Family time may be whenever the family is together or it may be during specific times such as when in the car together or when walking to school together.
- Meal time
  - Do not watch TV or use mobile devices at meal time.
  - It is associated with obesity & weight gain in children.
  - It discourages from family interaction.
- One hour before bed
  - Using a mobile device or watching TV before bed can interfere with a child's sleep. When using screens in the evening:
  - Turn the brightness on the screen down
  - Don't play or watch media that are intense or scary in the evening
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# DEVICE CURFEWS

All families are different, but deciding when all devices are turned off for the night is a great addition to a Media Plan.

## Devices will charge overnight in:

- Parent's bedroom
- Kitchen
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Talk to your children about being good “digital citizens” & discuss the serious consequences of online bullying. If your child is the victim of cyberbullying, it is important to take action. Attend to children’s & teens’ mental health needs promptly if they are being bullied online & consider separating them from the social media platforms where bullying occurs.

## We will be good digital citizens by:

- Telling a parent or other trusted adult if we get messages or photos that make us uncomfortable
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# CHOOSE & DIVERSIFY MEDIA

## **Choose Media that is Worth Your Time:**

More than 80,000 apps are labeled as educational, but little research has demonstrated their actual quality. Products pitched as "interactive" should require more than "pushing & swiping."

Look to organizations like Common Sense Media for reviews about age-appropriate apps, games & programs to guide you in making the best choices for your children.

## **Diversify Your Media:**

Use media in a way that promotes interaction, connection & creativity. Different types of media may each have potential benefits, so media use is best diversified so that not all of one's time is spent doing one particular activity.

### **When we have recreational screen time, we will:**

- Co-view (watching media with a parent or adult)
  - Co-viewing allows for interaction & discussion
  - Younger children learn better from media, educational shows & videos when they are co-viewed & there is parent-child interaction.
  
- Co-play (playing video games & using apps with a parent or adult)
  - Younger children learn better from media when they share the experience with an adult.
  - Helps parents to stay connected with their children & teens.
  - Allows parents to have better sense of how their child is spending his or her time.
  
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **When we have recreational screen time, we will:**

- NOT play video games that are against our family's rules both at home & at someone else's house
- NOT download apps, movies, games without permission & asking an adult if they are appropriate for my age
- Use media to be creative
  - Use apps & play games that let me use my creativity
- Watch "educational" shows & use apps that have been reviewed & vetted by trusted sources to actually be educational such as PBS or Common Sense Media
- NOT spend lots of time watching fast-paced shows or apps with lots of bells & whistles
  - These types of shows & apps may affect brain development & make it harder for children to concentrate later in life.
- Use media to connect me to others
  - Video chat with friends or relatives
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# BALANCING ONLINE & OFF-LINE TIME

Media & digital devices are an integral part of our world today. The benefits of these devices, if used moderately & appropriately, can be great. But research has shown that face-to-face time with family, friends & teachers, plays a pivotal & even more important role in promoting children's learning & healthy development. Keep the face-to-face up front & don't let it get lost behind a stream of media & technology.

## **By decreasing screen time, we will have more time for:**

- Looking at books, going to the library
- Playing outside
- Playing dress-up or make believe
- Playing with friends
- Playing with blocks, Legos & puzzles
- Being with my family
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAFETY FIRST

Keep your child safe by treating media as you would any other environment in your child's life.

## We will follow these digital safety rules:

- Do not give out personal information online
- Review Privacy Settings on all sites with your children
- Do not share private photos online
- Review Privacy Settings on all sites with your children
- Do not befriend, chat with or virtually game with someone without a parent's permission
  - Meeting & chatting or gaming with strangers online can be dangerous. Discuss these concerns with your child.
  - For older children, discuss these concerns with your child.
  - For younger children, set up family rules & use device settings to make sure you vet & approve of your children's online friends.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# SLEEP & EXERCISE

All children need plenty of sleep & exercise each day.

## **We will get enough sleep & exercise by doing the following:**

- Get 10-13 hours of sleep (including naps)
  
- Turn off the TV or mobile device one hour before bedtime
  - The blue light from the TV or mobile screen can interfere with sleep
  - Vibrating & audio alerts can wake children & teens from sleep
  - Children & teens may wake up to use devices in the middle of the night or early in the morning
  
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# PARENT-CHILD SCREEN TIME AGREEMENT

**The below signatures indicate that:**

- **We understand the importance of the screen time boundaries set in this media plan.**
- **We will let these boundaries guide our behavior with screens.**
- **We agree that these boundaries are in the best interests of our whole family and will help us use screens responsibly.**

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_