

# MEDIA PLAN

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SCREEN TIME & FAMILIES:  
MANAGING CHILDREN'S ONLINE LIVES

NAME:

## 6-12 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.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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 walking across the street
- While doing homework
- While at school
- 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# MANNERS MATTER

Being polite & having good manners are just as important as they have always been. Having a cellphone or a mobile device is not an excuse to forget our manners.

## We will show good media manners by:

- Not looking at the phone or texting while talking with someone, or during mealtime
  - If it's truly urgent, we will say "excuse me"
- Not keeping the phone on (or under) the table during meals
  - Devices will not be brought to the table
- 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:**

- Video chat with friends or relatives
- Play learning apps
- Play apps that are creative, educational & promote healthy interactions with others
- NOT play video games that are against our family's rules both at home & at someone else's house
- Play videos, shows & apps with adults
  - Co-playing (playing games together) & co-viewing (watching videos together) are great ways to share media with young children
- Watch age appropriate & educational shows & videos
- NOT download apps, movies, games without permission & asking an adult if they are appropriate for my age
- NOT visit new websites or video sites without asking permission
- Watch "educational" shows & use apps that have been reviewed & vetted by trusted sources to actually be educational such as PBS or Common Sense Media
- 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:**

- Reading
- Sleeping
- Being with friends
- Doing hobbies I like
- Playing board games, having creative time
- Playing outside
- Joining a team or playing a sport
- 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:**

- Respecting the privacy of others
  - We will never forward a text or photo without asking permission
- Not being rude or bullying anyone online
- Sticking up for others online
- Telling a parent or other trusted adult if we or others are being bullied, disrespected, attacked or treated badly online
- Telling a parent or other trusted adult if we get messages or photos that make us uncomfortable
- 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
- Do not use a phone or text while crossing a street
- 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.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# SLEEP & EXERCISE

All children need plenty of sleep & exercise each day.

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

- Get 9-12 hours of sleep
- Exercise
  - All kids (and adults, too!) need at least 1 hour of exercise each day
- 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

I, \_\_\_\_\_, intend to uphold the  
(parent name)  
screen time boundaries set in this media plan. I will convey to my  
child the importance of following these guidelines. These  
boundaries are set with my child's and my family's best interests in  
mind and are intended to help my family use screens responsibly.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit to using the  
(child name)  
boundaries set in this media plan to guide my behavior with  
screens. I recognize that these boundaries are set with my and my  
family's best interests in mind and are intended to help me use  
screens responsibly.

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

Child Signature: \_\_\_\_\_