

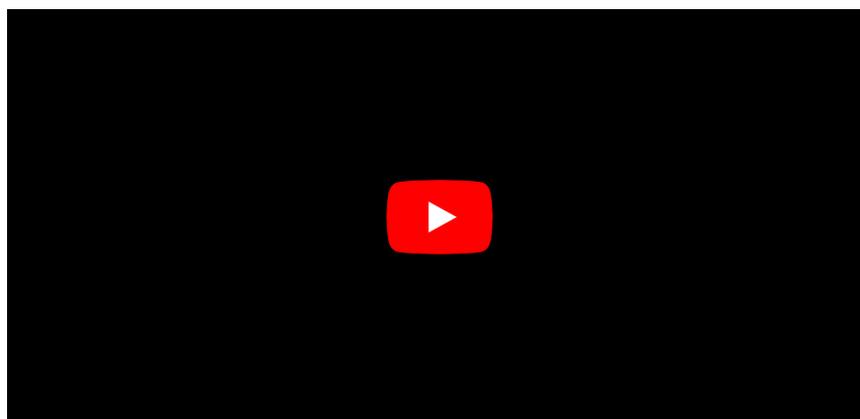
Media use for 5- to 18-year-olds should reflect personalization, balance

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The changing nature of media use means children and teens can engage in a media environment that is highly personalized. That's why a new AAP policy proposes that parents develop and reinforce media guidelines that go beyond how much time is spent on media and consider *how* they are used. A key recommendation includes drawing up a Family Media Plan.

Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents, from the AAP Council on Communications and Media, is available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-2592> and will be published in the November issue of *Pediatrics*. The policy offers recommendations for pediatricians, families and researchers/governmental organizations/industry.

Strive for balance with Family Media Plan

Today's children and teens are growing up in a media-saturated environment, including broadcast and streamed television, interactive video games and social media. These immersive media allow youths to experience the role of both media creator and consumer. Toward the goal of a personalized media approach, the Academy introduced a new, interactive Family Media Plan (www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan), which allows families to prioritize daily activities. Health, academic and social goals are met first, and then media use time is considered.

Using the plan, critical health practices are followed daily, including attaining one hour of exercise and eight to 12 hours of sleep (depending on age). To ensure that sleep is restful, the policy says children should not sleep with media devices in their rooms and should avoid any screen time for at least an hour before bed. The plan also suggests designating screen-free locations at home, such as the bedroom, as well as media-free times such as family dinnertime or while driving. Families are guided to prioritize these health practices,

to consider other responsibilities such as homework, sports and time with friends, and then to determine how much time is “left over” that may be considered for media use.

Teaching moments

Media can be thought of as tools that may provide both positive and negative experiences and influences. Thus, the policy promotes thoughtful selection of media, as well as co-viewing of media by parents and their children. Through co-viewing, parents have the opportunity to learn about their children’s interests, discuss family values and share experiences. Experiencing media together provides ongoing opportunities for families to communicate about treating others with respect (both online and offline), avoiding risky behaviors and developing healthy relationships.

The policy statement represents a step beyond traditional screen time limits and encourages mindful media parenting. Pediatricians have the opportunity to encourage ongoing communication between parents and their children toward balanced and positive media use.

Recommendations for pediatricians

- Work with families and schools to promote understanding of the benefits and risks of media.
- Promote adequate physical activity and sleep via a Family Media Plan.
- Advocate for media literacy.
- Be aware of tools to screen for sexting, cyberbullying, problematic internet use and internet gaming disorder.

Recommendations for families

- Develop, follow and routinely revisit a Family Media Plan.
- Address what type and how much media are used, and what media behaviors are appropriate for each child or teen — and for parents. Place consistent limits on hours per day of media use as well as types of media used.
- Help your child select educational media that encourage creativity and co-view the content or co-play with your child.
- For children ages 6 years and older, set media use limits that factor in other health-promoting activities such as physical activity, sleep, family meals, school and friends.
- Discourage entertainment media while children are doing homework, and make sure children don’t sleep with devices in their bedrooms.
- Implement media-free zones such as the dinner table.
- Serve as positive role models on healthy media use.

Dr. Moreno is a lead author of the policy statement and a member of the AAP Council on Communications and Media Executive Committee.

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