Healthy screen habits: tips for parents

1 Screen-free bedroom

Make the bedroom a screen-free zone for better sleep. If their phone doubles as an alarm, consider buying them a traditional alarm clock instead.

2 Age-appropriate content

Make sure movies, games, and apps match your child's age and development. Tools like Kijkwijzer (for movies), Gamewijzer and PEGI (for games), and the recommended age ratings for social media platforms can serve as a guideline. If you prefer to base your decision on specific content, check resources like Mediasmarties, sign up for literacy events at your local library, or get personal advice from an expert.

3 Manage screen access

Use shared screens in common areas, like a TV or a gaming console in the living room. If your child uses a smartphone or a tablet, consider making it a family device, so you can all use it together. For older children (primary or secondary school age), autonomy and freedom are important, but be sure to set clear boundaries. They should feel comfortable coming to you with questions and to share their experiences.

4 Explore media together

Using different types of media together is safer and more fun. It also shows you what your child is doing and how they experience the online world.

5 Show interest

The older children get, the more alone time they spend on their devices. Keep the conversation open and ask questions about what they do and see online. Make talking about screen time a normal part of life, not just something you discuss when things go wrong.

6 Make agreements together

Set clear rules about screen use as soon as your child has access to a device. Discuss these rules with your partner, co-parents, and other caregivers. Need help starting the conversation? Check WeekvandeMediawijsheid.nl for tips.

7 Stay informed

Stay up to date on the latest media trends. Not just nationally or globally (through the news, for example), but also in your child's online life.

8 Encourage balance

Kids need to move, play, and interact with others. This is possible both with and without a screen. Encourage screen-free activities without being too negative about screen time. Both are possible. Keep the 20-20-2 rule in mind.

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