



SOUTH SEATTLE COLLEGE

Cooperative Preschools

Where Parents and Children Learn Together

Co-op Quick Tips:

The “Why ● Where ● What ● When ● How” of Screen Media Usage for Families

Why: Connect with the members of your family and decide how screen time fits into your day-to-day life and family value system. Are screens: Entertainment? Tools? Communication devices? Other? All?

When: How much screen time feels like an appropriate amount for your child, for yourself, for your partner? Factors to consider: recommendations from professionals like the APA, child’s age, temperament, what other time commitments exist for the family. Make sure to set both time and location boundaries around screen usage, for example: no screens at mealtimes, no screens in the car, etc.

What: What is acceptable content for your child? Young children might enjoy the occasional animated, non-scary TV show or movie, older children might be more interested in a game or short videos. Teens gravitate toward video games and social media. Make your decision based on first-hand experience or research. Watch **with** your child, keeping an eye and ear out for possible content that might trigger confusion or questions from your child. Make sure to discuss questionable content with your child; start by asking them for their impressions and questions. Use tools such as Common Sense Media to help guide and inform your decisions about appropriate age levels for different shows, games, movies, and videos.

Where: Which devices will your child use or have access to? Will they have their own devices or share those of the family? Research shows that keeping devices in children’s room can result in loss of sleep and poor sleep quality for children of all ages.

How: Screen time often comes at the expense of connection with other family members - decide how to preserve face-to-face time with other people: create family connection rituals and routines around mealtimes, bedtimes, weekends. Have a family game night or a weekly outdoor adventure; ask your child to teach you something new; set aside time to cook or bake with your child; preserve time for free play with three-dimensional materials like puzzles, blocks, Legos, creative art supplies.

And last - know that what you do speaks volumes over what you say. Walk the walk by making sure to have healthy boundaries around your own screen usage: set aside screen-free hours/days to which you adhere as well, make sure your child sees you set your devices down (better yet, in another room!) while you are spending special time together.



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Screen Media - Family Resources

Online

- **American Academy of Pediatrics** - This site includes policy statements, articles and public education brochures created by pediatricians.
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>
- **Common Sense Media** - A not-for-profit site that features reviews of movies, music, books, games and other Web sites intended to help families make decisions about what they watch, hear, read and play. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- **HealthyChildren.org** - This site is associated with the AAP and geared toward helping parents educate themselves on AAP research-backed recommendations around childhood health, development, and family issues.
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx>
- **Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood** - CCFC's mission is to support parents' efforts to raise healthy families by limiting commercial access to children and ending the exploitive practice of child-targeted marketing. www.commercialfreechildhood.org
- **Center for Media Literacy** - The CML mission is to help children and adults prepare for living and learning in a global media culture by translating media literacy research and theory into practical information, training and educational tools for teachers and youth leaders, parents and caregivers of children. www.medialit.org/
- **Media Smarts** - MediaSmarts is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital and media literacy. The vision is that children and youth have the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens. <http://mediasmarts.ca/>
- **Media Education Foundation** - MEF produces and distributes documentary films and other educational resources to inspire critical thinking about the social, political, and cultural impact of American mass media. <http://www.mediaed.org/>
- **Screenagers** - The website for this documentary film provides resources for parents and young people on screen media consumption, cyberbullying, digital citizenship, and more.
<https://www.screenagersmovie.com/>



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Screen Media - Family Resources (cont'd)

Print

Hands Free Life: Nine Habits for Overcoming Distraction, Living Better, and Loving More

By Rachel Macy Stafford and Jaimee Draper

Digital Kids: How to Balance Screen Time and Why It Matters

by [Martin L. Kutscher](#) and Natalie Rosin

Parenting Well in a Media Age

By Gloria DeGaetano

Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four-Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time

By Victoria L. Dunckley, M.D.

Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives

by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser

Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide

by Henry Jenkins

Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media

by Mizuko Ito et al

Into the Minds of Babes: How Screen Time Affects Children from Birth to Age Five

by Lisa Guersey

