PARENTS LEAD.ORG

MEDIA USE & YOUR CHILD

Studies show that children who watch five or more hours of TV per day are much more likely to try cigarettes and alcohol.

Benefits of Media Use

- Stay connected with friends and family.
- Enhance creativity through the sharing of ideas, music, and art.
- Meet and interact with others who share similar interests.
- Research school projects and communicate with teachers.
- Play interactive games.

Risks of Media Use

- Excessive media use has been associated with obesity, lack of sleep, school problems, aggression and other behavior issues.
- The media can be a hub for cyberbullying.
- Personal information (name, birthdates, interests, school name, location etc.) can be easily shared online which can make youth easy targets for online predators.
- Youth may receive online advertising or access to websites that are not age appropriate (e.g. – one missed keystroke "legs" instead of "lego" can direct kids to a slew of websites which may contain inappropriate material).

Reducing the risks

Start Talking: Get involved in a way that helps your child understand you respect their privacy but want to make sure they are safe.

Monitor Media Use: Become familiar with any media your child is involved in (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) and monitor their use and interactions.

Promote Family Values: Co-view TV, movies, and videos with children and teenagers, and use this as a way of discussing family values. Spend time together online to teach your kids appropriate online behavior.

Set Clear Rules: Establish a family home use plan for all media (for example: enforce media free meal time and a bedtime "curfew" for media devices, etc.). Limit the amount of total entertainment screen time to <1 to 2 hours and discourage screen media exposure for children < 2 years of age.

Role Model: Set a good example. Your own interactions with technology can go a long way toward helping your kids use media safely.

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