

➤ Grades 6–12 Family Tips

## Help Kids Balance Their Media Lives



MEDIA BALANCE & WELL-BEING

We find balance  
in our digital lives.

From phones and tablets to streaming movies and YouTube, tech and media are everywhere. Kids love easy access to TV shows, games, and information. Parents and caregivers love that kids can stay in contact while they explore their independence. But it's easy to overdo it when the phone never stops pinging and the next episode plays automatically. Families can keep media and tech use in check by following a few simple practices.

### Check out these 5 tips

- 1 **Create screen-free times and zones.**  
Help tweens and teens take breaks from tech by limiting screen time in bedrooms, during study time, or at the dinner table. Consider carving out regular family time when screens are either put away or enjoyed together.
- 2 **Explore built-in digital well-being tools.**  
Together with your kids, check out the features on their devices and in their apps that can help them use tech more intentionally. Consider turning off autoplay functions, limiting notifications from certain apps, using settings that turn off devices at a certain time each night, and more.
- 3 **Model the behavior you want to see.**  
Tweens and teens learn more from watching adult behavior than listening to lectures. Consider how you use your devices and other media, and make changes if your use doesn't follow your expectations for your kids.
- 4 **Help kids identify healthy behaviors.**  
Ask kids to notice their feelings, both physical and emotional, during screen and non-screen activities. Does their heart rate increase when their phone vibrates? Does their self-esteem dip after viewing a friend's Instagram feed? Do they feel good when they get positive feedback on a post? Encourage kids to keep the constructive activities and let go of the rest.
- 5 **Understand how tech companies make money.**  
Along with your tween and teen, research how digital devices, social media platforms, and apps and games get paid. Do they sell ads? Do they sell kids' data? Discuss why companies might want kids to spend more time on their platforms and what tricks they use to keep their attention.

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