



Family Media Agreements

In the movie *Screenagers*, we saw the filmmaker, Delaney Ruston, struggles with her daughter in coming to a *workable* agreement about safe and healthy media use. She ultimately realizes that she must include her daughter in this conversation by listening to her perspective and input. Parents must also be honest about their own media use (or *misuse*) and model healthy habits. Written Family Media Agreements are a great starting point. Ultimately they should take place before new devices are introduced but it's never too late to start! And it is *just* a start. These conversations should take place regularly. If you are making monthly payments on a phone and/or internet plan, the date of the next installment is a great time to sit down and discuss your agreements. Here are some recommendations from the makers of *Screenagers*:

Some things to consider before you begin:

1. There may be a lot of built up tension about these topics in your home. That is normal! Parents often express anxiety and frustration, and children may feel defensive.
2. Keep in mind that a big goal is to help everyone become more conscious of when and why they use technology and how it affects self esteem, social skills, relationships, work, academics and more. Being conscious is key to making realistic use guidelines.
3. Start conversations by encouraging everyone to share positive aspects of technology in their lives. Then move on to ideas about when screens should be turned off.
4. Include your own technology behavior goals in the conversations. Finding balance is a joint family project, not one of adults versus kids.
5. Stick with it — over time, these conversations build trust and understanding so behaviors can really change.

Recommendations from Jane Nelson of Positive Discipline:

1. Have a family meeting. Get the whole family involved in a plan for reducing screen time. Part of the solutions should include things to do in place of screen time. It is more difficult to give something up when you don't have plans for what else to do.

2. Create a “parking lot” for electronics—have a basket or charging station in a central location in the house at which family members “park” their electronics during certain times of day.*

3. Establish new routines. Start with one time of day to be screen free (such as dinner) and periodically add on other times of day.

4. Stay close with your child with special time. Children will listen to your limits about screen time when they feel understood and that you “get” them. Spend regular one-on-one time together to keep your relationship strong.**

6. Hold limits with kindness and firmness. Changing a screen time habit is hard; be ready for disappointment, anger, and sad feelings. Hold your limits by empathizing with a child’s feelings and sticking with the limit you’ve set.

**Bedtime is a good time for a parking lot. ISH Junior School parents have reported that their children receive text messages from same-aged peers 11 PM and later! Remember, to model these behaviours. Need an alarm in the morning, buy an alarm clock.*

Read the full article: <http://blog.positivediscipline.com/2012/04/limit-screen-time.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations

1. Limit the amount of total entertainment screen time to <1 to 2 hours per day.
 2. Discourage screen media exposure for children <2 years of age.
 3. Keep the TV set and Internet-connected electronic devices out of the child’s bedroom.
 4. Monitor what media their children are using and accessing, including any Web sites they are visiting and social media sites they may be using.
 5. Coview TV, movies, and videos with children and teenagers, and use this as a way of discussing important family values.
 6. Model active parenting by establishing a family home use plan for all media. As part of the plan, enforce a mealtime and bedtime “curfew” for media devices, including cell phones. Establish reasonable but firm rules about cell phones, texting, Internet, and social media use.
- From: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/132/5/958.full>

Here is a list of resources to help you with your Family Media Agreements

1. Screenagers’ website offers advice on how to get started with media agreements and shows examples of agreements from families depicted in the movie:
<http://www.screenagersmovie.com/contracts-1/>
2. Common Sense Media is a great resource for both parents and children for all things related to electronic media. Here is a link to their Family Media Agreements:
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/technology-addiction-concern-controversy-and-finding-balance/resources>
3. The American Academy of Pediatrics *Media and Children Communication Toolkit* offers sample media agreements according to the age of your children. Enter your children’s ages and get their recommendations: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.asp>

Book Recommendations

Help! My Child is Addicted to Screens (Yikes! So Am I): Positive Discipline tools for managing family screen time by Jane Nelson, Ed.D and Kelly Bartlett. This book is aimed at parents of younger

students but the tools it provides work with all age levels. It is available as a downloadable pdf:
<https://www.positivediscipline.com/products/help-my-child-addicted-screens>

Positive Discipline: The Classic Guide to Helping Children Develop Self-Discipline, Responsibility, Cooperation, and Problem-Solving Skills by Jane Nelson

Positive Discipline for Teenagers, Revised 3rd Edition: Empowering Your Teens and Yourself Through Kind and Firm Parenting by Jane Nelson and Lynn Lott

How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

About Device-Free Dinners

<http://www.today.com/video/device-free-dinners-bringing-families-closer-together-one-meal-at-a-time-862316099929>

Electronics and Sleep

<https://sleepfoundation.org/ask-the-expert/electronics-the-bedroom>

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