

## Social Media / Internet Safety

Kids are spending more and more time in front of screens. Whether it be on social media, games, texting, homework, or browsing the internet. The average screen time for children ages 8-12 is 4.5 hours a day and 8-9 hours for teenagers ages 12-18. Parent efforts to limit screen time and help children be safe on media can be very stressful. This can lead to tantrums, fights, and acting out.

You may be currently dealing with these frustrations. However, there is **Good News**- your child and family can **OVERCOME** these challenges! Following are supports and resources, skills, and further information to manage screen time and increase media safety.

### Support and Resources:

- Pew Research Center *Internet and Technology***  
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>
- Family Media Plan**  
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx#home>
- Books:**
  - Glow Kids By: Nicholas Kardaras
  - Screens and Teens By: Kathy Koch PhD & Jill Savage
  - iGen By: Jean M. Twenge PhD
  - Reset your Child's Brain By: Victoria L. Dunckley
- "Being 13"- YouTube documentary by CNN**

### Skills to Manage Screen Time and Healthy Usage:

- ❖ **Set usage limits.**
  - Develop consistent time limits and consequences if not followed in collaboration with your children.
- ❖ **Designate media and screen free times/ locations together.**
  - i.e. dinner time, driving, bedrooms, and cut off times.
- ❖ **Have ongoing communication about online safety and family expectations**
  - Having conversations with your children about what is appropriate and what isn't, along with specific expectations helps everyone be on the same page.
- ❖ **Offer alternatives.**
  - Getting children involved in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, hobbies, etc.) are great alternatives and gives children chances to interact with others in person.
- ❖ **Don't use screen time as a punishment or a reward.**
  - Practices like this make media seem even more important to children.
- ❖ **Be aware of trends including acronyms used, various app content, and Ghost Apps- ways kids hide media use.**
  - <https://securingtomorrow.mcafee.com/consumer/family-safety/2018-texting-slang-update-decode-teen-saying-online/>
  - <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/columnist/2017/05/21/sneaky-teen-texting-codes-what-they-mean-when-worry/101844248/>
  - Check out new apps, especially those that have access to the phone's camera.
  - Look for redundancy, like two calculators on a phone.

- Use parental controls and read the app description (in App Store or Google Play) so you know what apps are downloaded onto the phone.
- Look for extra symbols or words in the app title that may not belong.
- If you can delete a utilities app, it could be a ghost app; utility apps that come installed on the phone like the calculator app cannot be deleted.
- Have a conversation about sexting (Sending naked photos or talking sexually).
- Discuss fake social media accounts, commonly called “Finstas” or “Sinstas”.

❖ **Be an example.**

**Parental Control Apps and Routers:**

❖ Webwatcher

- Parental monitoring app helps parents monitor their kids’ activity including texts, photos, calls, website history, gps history and more.
- <https://webwatcher.com/>

❖ Ourpact

- Simple family locator and parental control app that allows parents to locate family members and manage screen time by blocking internet and app access.
- <https://ourpact.com/>

❖ Screentime

- Manage the time your kids spend on their tablets and smartphones.
- <https://screentimelabs.com/>

❖ Family Time

- Now you can actually lock the smartphone or tablet of your child. Whether it’s time to do some chores or a family activity, get your children’s full attention because with FamilyTime, it’s as easy as a tap! And what’s more; you can lock phone of one or all your children from a single dashboard!
- <https://familytime.io/features/phone-lock.html>

❖ Qustodio

- Free parental control software. Monitor and track your child's online activity. Block dangerous sites and protect kids from online bullying.
- <https://www.qustodio.com/en/>

❖ Bark

- A parental control phone tracker to help keep kids safer online. Bark monitors social media, text and email on Android and iPhone devices.
- <https://www.bark.us/>

❖ Teen Safe

- Subscription service for parents of children between the ages of 7-17 that provides smartphone monitoring capabilities.
- <https://www.teensafe.com/>

❖ Norton Family

- Offers an impressive range of parental control and monitoring features for parents of today’s hyper-connected kids.
- <https://family.norton.com/web/>

❖ Eero

- World's first whole home Wi-Fi system that delivers hyper fast, super secure Wi-Fi to every room in your home.
- <https://eero.com/>

**THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE**

If you or your child begins to have suicidal thoughts, please contact your treatment team immediately or call 911 in an immediate emergency. Effective treatment and safety planning can help you or your child overcome these challenges and find the hope to live!