

# Digital Do's and Dont's



Digital media, including social media, has transformed the way we live and communicate over the past 20 years. Though it is a great tool, digital media creates significant problems for families and individuals when not controlled. Below are a list of some of the reasons to control digital media use in your family and some simple tips to foster helpful media use. - Dr. Rowberry

## Why control digital media use?

- Social media overuse is linked to poor sleep, anxiety, depression, aggression, and suicidality
- Children often secretly message at night, decreasing their sleep and setting them up for predatory situations
- Time spent on social media decreases time for bonding, communication and learning social skills
- Messaging and social media interrupt concentration and increase the time it takes to do homework
- Children are often exposed to age-inappropriate content on digital media
- Social media makes rare and remote events seem common and close, decreasing a child's sense of security and perspective
- Communication on digital media is often more inflammatory, inaccurate, and harsh than other forms of communication

## Tips for your family

- Use digital media in a purposeful way (looking up information, communicating with known friends, video calling relatives); limit non-purposeful use (scrolling through news feeds)
- Confine non-essential digital media use to specific times of the day (totaling 2 hours or less)
- Confine digital media use to public spaces (no phone, tablet, or laptop use in bedrooms)
- Have a specified place to keep all of the mobile devices when they are not supposed to be in use
- Do not allow phones or other unnecessary digital media while doing homework
- Do not allow media use during family meal time
- Assure that all digital media devices are turned off and in the parents room at bedtime
- Talk with your children about what to do when they encounter pornography and other inappropriate content on the internet. Create an internet safety plan.
- Install internet filters on mobile and home devices.
- Set a good example by spending time with your family without the distraction of digital media

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2. Mai-Ly N. Steers, Robert E. Wickham, and Linda K. Acitelli (2014). Seeing Everyone Else's Highlight Reels: How Facebook Usage is Linked to Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*: Vol. 33, No. 8, pp. 701-731. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2014.33.8.701>

3. Walsh, Jeremy J., et al. "Associations between 24 hour movement behaviours and global cognition in US children: a cross-sectional observational study." *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* 2.11 (2018): 783-791.

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