

Help Children Balance Their Media Lives

From phones and tablets to streaming movies and YouTube, tech and media are everywhere. Children love easy access to shows, games and information. Parents and carers love that children can learn on the go (and stay busy when dinner's cooking). 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 children take breaks from tech by limiting screen time in bedrooms, during study time or at the dinner table.

2

Try parental controls.

Set content limits that make sense for your family. Alongside talking about healthy media habits, use features such as content filtering, privacy settings and time limits offered by the apps and platforms to help manage access and exposure to media.

3

Establish clear family rules.

Decide together what kind of media and tech is OK -- and when it's OK to use it. A family media plan can help get everyone on the same page.

4

Watch and play together.

Choose quality, age-appropriate media to enjoy with your children. Visit commonsensemedia.org to find movies, shows, games and more.

5

Help children identify healthy behaviours.

Practise talking about feelings -- both physical and emotional -- during screen and non-screen activities.



Media Balance Is Important

Good news:

Your child is learning about media balance! What does that mean? They're learning to ...

- "Pause for people" and stop using devices when someone wants to talk.
- Know when it's time to move their bodies and go outside to play.
- Turn off screens before bedtime.
- Ask before they use a device, and stay on trusted sites and apps.
- Listen to their feelings and tell an adult if something makes them uncomfortable.



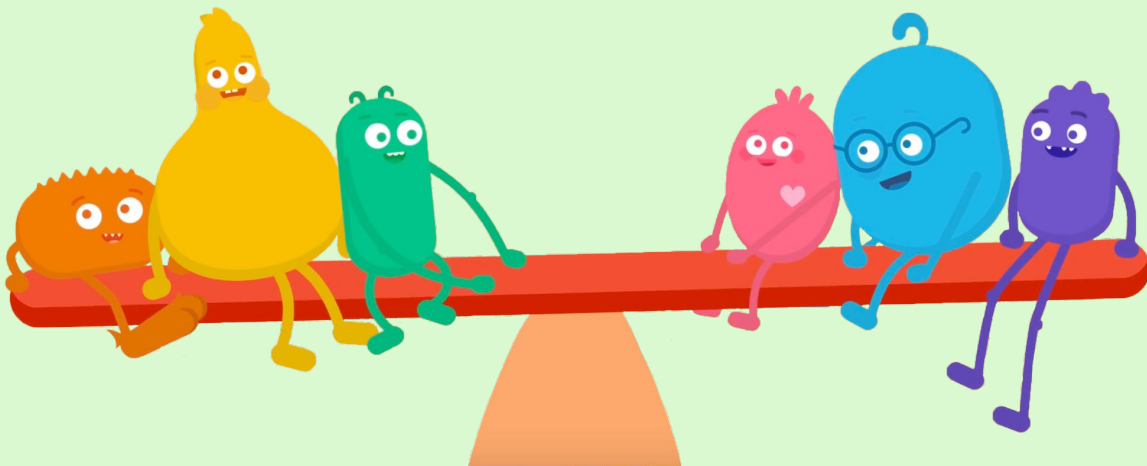
Check out the music video featuring our favourite digital citizenship friends!

Watch it together (turn on captions so you can see the lyrics) and sing along!

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/videos/media-balance-is-important>

Now talk about this together:

1. What was your favourite part of the song and why?
2. How can we work together to have media balance as a family?
3. What would that look like? You can even draw a picture that shows your whole family practising media balance!



Pause & Think Online

 There are lots of things to think about when it comes to being a responsible digital citizen. At school your child is learning all about it and now they can show you what they know! They're learning to ...

- Pause and think before searching, clicking or sharing.
- Be kind online.
- Find balance using media and tech.
- Pay attention to their feelings to make sure they feel safe and know when to stop.
- Stand up to online bullies.
- Carefully choose the digital footprints -- like posts, pictures and comments -- they leave behind.



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Now talk about this together:

1. What was your favourite part of the song? Why?
2. Who's your favourite character? Why?
3. What are some ways you can behave like how your favourite character does?
4. What could be hard about it and how would you keep going anyway?



Text the word **kids** to the phone number **21555** to get free weekly tips on healthy media habits.

We the Digital Citizens



The internet can be fun, but it also requires responsibility. That is why your child is learning how to be a safe, strong digital citizen! What does that mean? They're learning to ...

- Find fun, cool stuff online.
- Set limits on how much time they spend online.
- Keep personal information -- like their phone number and address -- private.
- Pause and think before searching, clicking and sharing.
- Ask before they go online.
- Pay attention to their feelings and ask for help when they feel scared or confused about something they see online.

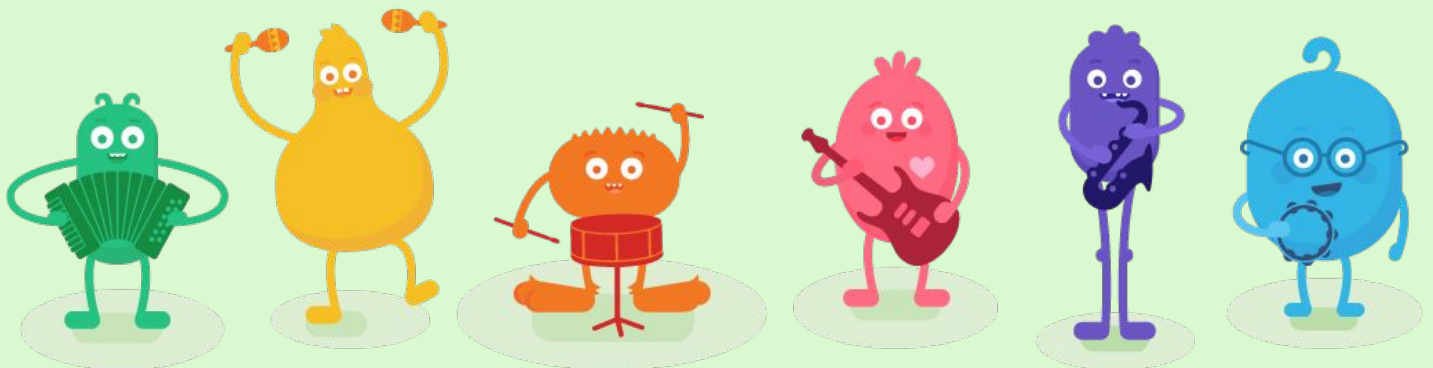


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Watch it together (turn on captions so you can see the lyrics) and sing along!

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/videos/we-the-digital-citizens>

Now talk about this together:

1. What was your favourite part of the song? Why?
2. What rules do we have about using apps and going online?
3. What sites are OK to use?
4. What are the time limits? Make a list of safe sites and apps, and your rules, to put in a place where your whole family can see it!



Media Balance & Well-Being



MEDIA BALANCE & WELL-BEING

*We find balance
in our digital lives.*

Digital citizenship: thinking critically and using technology responsibly to learn, create and participate.

Instructions

It's important to stay aware of how our on-screen and offscreen activities fit into our lives. Do a "Media Balance Checkup" on your family. Get one or more family members together to help. Read the "Setup" section before doing the activity together!

Setup

Read aloud: We balance the food we eat to stay healthy. We also need to balance our media use. Media includes the shows and videos we watch; the video games and apps we play; and the music we listen to. Let's answer questions to see if our media use is balanced. Then we can decide if we want to make some changes.

Activity

Read aloud: Let's answer these questions together.

- Do digital devices (phones, tablets, TV) ever keep us from getting enough sleep?
- Do we use them while we eat?
- Do we do activities together without devices?
- Do we ever use them together?
- Does our digital device use ever cause fights? If so, what are the fights about?
- When we use our devices, how is it fun? What do we learn?
- Is there anything we want to change about how we use our devices? If so, what?

Does the way your family use media feel balanced and healthy? Give a thumbs up or thumbs down. Does your family agree? If you want to make changes, what are they? Think of changes that work for the whole family since you're all on the same team!

Learn more ways to find balance in your digital lives at commonsense.org/family-tips-on-media-balance!