



# Online Safety and Awareness

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# Reminder!

- You know your family and your children best, do what works for you!
- Approaches will shift with age





# Mental Health Effects

More daily screen time associated with lower psychological well-being, an increase in anxiety and depression and a decrease in:

- Curiosity
- Self-control
- Emotional stability
- Finishing tasks

Children were found to be more distractible, have more difficulty making friends, and were more difficult to care for.

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

Time away from the screen compensates for time on the screen.

Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being were larger among adolescents than younger children



# Two Approaches to Online Safety

1. Protection
  - May be more useful with younger children
  - Includes doing things such as, child locks, restricting phone usage, monitoring usage etc.
2. Preparation
  - Can have beneficial long term impacts
  - Help child mindfully engage with social media
    - Notice what feels good, what doesn't feel good

**Will likely find a balance in both of these approaches!**

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# Important Steps for Protection

- Inform yourself about various parental controls, platforms, applications
  - Empowers you to make the decisions that are right for your family
- Resources
  - [National Online Safety](#)
  - [Facebook Safety](#)
  - [Tik Tok Safety](#)
  - [SnapChat safety](#)
  - [Instagram Safety](#)





## Protection Tips

- Download shows or create stream queue→ prevents shows not pre-approved from automatically playing
- Sit with your child as they watch/engage in screen time
- Have screens be utilized in shared spaces (i.e., living room not bedrooms)
- Pre-watch shows they will have access to



## Protection Tips: Sit with your Child as they watch/engage in Screen Time

- Contingent Engagement: Redirects relationship between child and the screen and moved towards child and adult
- Develop shared language: increases communication outside screen time
- Ask Open ended questions:
  - “What would you say?”
  - “What should she have said?”
  - “I hope you’ll come tell us if anything like that happens.”
- Provide Context: Reinforces values



## Protection Tips

Be discerning

- Age-appropriate
- Engage your child's imagination
- Has the right values

Conversely, if you don't want your child playing a particular game or watching a particular show, explain your reasons why and be specific — don't just say it's "bad."

Don't make screens the reward (or consequence).

Be prepared for unwanted discoveries





# Boundaries

- Once you have decided screen limits, app access→ set your boundary and stay firm in it!
- Example: You can watch 10 minutes of Peppa Pig
- Child may protest and **that's ok!** They are expressing a conflicting desire
  - **Validate their experience** “I know you really want to watch more Peppa Pig.”
  - **Name the emotion** “You feel very angry/sad/annoyed”
  - **Hold the boundary** “We are only watching 10 minutes”
- Holding these boundaries makes you trustworthy and in the long run helps children regulate their emotions



# Bridge the Gap Between Protection and Preparation

- Start conversations with your children early and often
  - Younger children
    - [Lego Build and Talk](#)
      - 6 part series about online security, digital footprint, privacy, false information, screen time, and cyberbullying
  - Older youth
    - Get curious about their interests of different platforms
      - “Why do you like about \_\_\_ (facebook, instagram, tik tok)?”
    - Discuss safety, expectations for online behavior, privacy concerns
      - “What happens to what you say/post online?”
    - Impact of social media on self-esteem/ self- image
      - “What if you post something you really love and it gets no likes? What do you think that would feel like? Would it change how much you liked the post?”



# Preparation

- Through conversations you allow your child to know you are a place they can come to discuss what they are exposed to online
  - You ultimately won't be able to block everything kids see!
- As they are allowed different privileges may want to discuss with them different exposures (i.e., scary advertisements, friend requests from strangers)
  - "How will you know if you see something that doesn't feel good? What will you do?"
- Also want to have ongoing conversations surrounding more vulnerable topics
  - Youth use online platforms/social media to make sense of their environment
  - Want to reinforce that you are a person they can talk to about sex, mental health, current events etc. allows you to be the first person who discusses these things with them rather than them gathering the information from a 3rd party source
- If they do see something and come to you, try not to panic!
  - "This is why I didn't want you to have social media! It's so bad!" → shaming
  - "I am so glad you came to me with this. What was that like for you?" → builds connection

# Thank you!

Questions?

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