

Mealtime Minutes

Power-Up

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children and adolescents limit total entertainment screen time to less than 1 to 2 hours per day. Current estimates suggest that the average 8- to 10-year-old child spends nearly 8 hours a day using some type of screen media. Teenagers are reported to spend more than 11 hours per day using some type of screen media. Excessive screen media use has been associated with increased risk for obesity, poor sleep habits, and exposure to sexually explicit and violent content.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Enforce a mealtime “curfew” for screen media that applies to all members of the family.
- Ten minutes before the meal, have everyone turn off all devices and help to finish up any last minute cooking or set the table.
- For younger children, make sure all electronic devices are turned off twenty minutes before the meal and provide them with an art or book reading activity.
- After the meal is finished, wait ten minutes before powering up. Use this time to go over homework needs, schedules for the next day, or plan breakfast.
- Power down before going to bed. Keep televisions and electronic devices out of children’s bedrooms so they get a good night’s sleep.

