Wellness Committee Newsletter
May 2019

Promoting healthy screen time habits is essential in a world where technology is everywhere. You can help **your child develop healthy media habits by minimizing and monitoring their screen time with the following tips.**

COME UP WITH A MEDIA PLAN:

Step #1   Be Proactive. Discuss with your child or teen that there are benefits and risks

- **Benefits include** **exposure to new ideas and knowledge that can increase creativity and critical thinking skills, increased opportunities for social contact and support, and access to valuable health promoting messages and information.**
- **Risks include** **negative health effects on weight and sleep; decrease in ability to focus, exposure to inaccurate, inappropriate, or unsafe content and contacts, and compromised privacy.**

Step #2   Make an agreement on HOW, WHEN and WHAT type of media will be used.
- Make an agreement on what type of content is acceptable; time limits, and device curfews should apply.
  - Turn off screens during meal and family times. This is a time for family bonding and socialization.
  - Ask your child or teen to give you their cell phone at a certain time at the end of the day so they aren't interrupted with phone calls or text messages during family time.
  - Aim for 2 hours or less of screen time each day.
- With younger children whenever possible, preview content to make sure it is age-appropriate or watch together. Encourage your child to watch learning programs; shows about nature, science, the arts, music or history.
  - Explain what they see on the screen and repeat activities like sharing, giving, or singing in real life to teach her why these things are important.
  - Apps should have a clear learning goal, and encourage participation. If your child has mastered an app, upgrade to the next level or try a new app to continue the learning process.
- When helping to choose content, pay attention to messages about gender, body image, violence, diversity and social issues. Explain why certain programs are not appropriate. This is a chance to share your own beliefs and values.
- Find out about programs or apps that provide parental controls. They can help block websites, enforce time limits, monitor websites your child visits, and their online conversations.

Step #3   Create an unplugged zone or times in the house everyday.
- Leave enough time each day to play, study (without the TV on or phone nearby!), talk and sleep.
- Balance screen time with sports, hobbies, creative and outdoor play.
- Make a rule that homework and chores must be finished before screen time.
- Children shouldn't sleep with devices in their bedrooms, including TVs, computers and smartphones.
- Remember, children learn from what they see. Be a good role model with your own screen habits.

Step #4   Sign up for the Commonsense Media Newsletter
- You can find reviews of movies, TV shows, apps, games, and books as well as ideas for how to break unhealthy technology use habits. For more information check out www.commonsensemedia.org

Remember you can keep your kids healthy by focusing on the importance of good habits. It starts by encouraging them to eat and play the right way. It's how they can live 5-2-1-0.

Coronado Unified School District