



Safe and Secure Places to Live, Learn, and Play

SAFE AND BALANCED TECHNOLOGY USE

Schools, neighborhoods, and community settings can foster and support healthy adolescent development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health, social interactions, and cognitive growth. Young people are also spending an increasing amount of time living, learning, and playing in a digital environment.

The Partnership recognizes the need for young people to feel like they belong and are valued. How young people are perceived and supported in these environments plays a significant role in their feelings of connectedness and investment as part of the community. Schools, neighborhoods, and communities can foster this sense of connectedness to support healthy development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health and cognitive growth. We also recognize that the overuse and misuse of technology has impacted young people's health and learning outcomes. Now is the time to provide opportunities for young people to learn about the addictive nature of devices, increase life skills and positive habits that support healthy and balanced use of technology, and discuss digital well-being practices in the community.





Safe and Balanced Technology Use

Encourage safe, balanced, and intentional technology use while promoting digital safety and wellbeing.

Young people are spending an increasing amount of time in a digital environment to live, learn, play, and interact with others. Nearly all young people interact daily with technology, especially social media. A 2023 U.S. Surgeon General report notes that because “adolescence is a vulnerable period of brain development, social media exposure during this period warrants additional scrutiny”. Growing up in a digital environment provides new challenges that previous generations of young people have not seen. The goal of this recommendation is to promote digital wellbeing and safety for young people. The action steps focus on how young people, parents/caregivers, schools, and the community can work together to make online environments safer and promote balanced technology use.



Action Steps

- Equip parents and caregivers to create a family media plan and model balanced technology use.
- Promote digital wellbeing resources so that schools, out of school time organizations, and other youth serving organizations can implement digital wellbeing resources for students and educators.
- Provide professional development opportunities to equip educators, youth workers, and adult youth advocates with tools and resources to facilitate digital wellbeing discussions with young people.
- Support mental and physical health care providers to have conversations with young people about safe, balanced, and intentional technology use.
- Engage and partner with young people in developing ideas and solutions to enhance digital well-being.
- Promote awareness of the need for digital wellbeing through effective health communication strategies.

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