Tips for Positive Media Use with Your Child

Be Proactive About Media

- **Make a family media plan** that sets expectations and boundaries about media and screen time in your home. Adjust it for breaks from school and weekends, to keep it realistic.
- **Use parental control programs** like Bark, Boomerang, Google Family Link, or FamilyTime to enforce screen time limits and regulate what content your child has access to online.
- **Preview shows, games, and apps** before your child engages with them; you can use Common Sense Media to get an idea of what age something is appropriate for.

Stick to the "Best Practices"

- Remove televisions, computers, and phones from your child's bedroom.
- Keep screens away during mealtimes, homework, and at restaurants or outings.
- Don't leave the television on for "background noise" - try music instead!
- Regulate your own screen time and set a good example for your child's habits.
- Avoid using screens as pacifiers during tantrums, to regulate emotions, as a babysitter, or to "keep them quiet".
- Stop screen time an hour before bed.

Create Fun Outside of Screens

- Encourage imaginative play by making crafts and activities easily available to your child. Help them assemble pillow forts, have "snowball fights" with dryer balls - get creative!
- Rotate toys in and out regularly to keep them new and exciting.
- Get your child involved in hobbies, sports, or other activities outside of the house that they can look forward to without screens.
- Make time to take your child to parks, libraries, museums, and other places they can explore without screens.

Encourage Interactive Screen Use

- Limit passive screen time (like watching YouTube videos or television), if you're not able to engage with your child while they're watching it and ask questions or react to the media alongside them.
- Seek out types of screen time (like making art, writing, coding, online learning) that are engaging, interactive, and build skills.
- Prioritize screen time that involves friends or co-operative playing, like Minecraft.
- Encourage apps and games that are interactive or active, versus ones that don't involve much thinking and movement.

Adapted from research performed by the Center of Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP).