

Family Media Action Plan Toolkit

1. Foundation: Our Family Values Around Technology

This section establishes the core principles that guide our digital lives. These values serve as a diagnostic lens for our habits, prioritizing health and connection over screen time.

- **Respect:** Treating ourselves and others with dignity in all digital interactions and respecting the digital rights and privacy of all individuals.
 - *Why this matters to our family:*

- **Balance:** Ensuring technology use is a healthy part of a full life, rather than a replacement for offline experiences and relationships.
 - *Why this matters to our family:*

- **Sleep:** Protecting our physical and mental health by ensuring digital notifications do not interfere with restorative rest.
 - *Why this matters to our family:*

- **Kindness:** Choosing to be helpful and empathetic in digital spaces while actively avoiding digital cruelty or harassment.
 - *Why this matters to our family:*

- **Responsibility:** Taking ownership of one's digital footprint and data privacy while following agreed-upon safety protocols.
 - *Why this matters to our family:*

2. Situational Awareness: The 4 Signs of Unhealthy Use

Review these signs regularly as a family. As a wellness consultant, I encourage you to view these checkmarks as invitations for supportive conversation rather than grounds for punishment.

- [] **Sleep Disruption:** Staying up late to text or scroll, or experiencing excessive daytime sleepiness due to late-night device use.
- [] **Emotional Dysregulation:** Feeling extreme frustration, irritability, or distress when asked to transition away from a screen.
- [] **Withdrawal from Offline Activities:** Losing interest in hobbies, sports, or in-person social connections in favor of digital consumption.
- [] **Conflict that Dominates Family Life:** Frequent arguments or tension regarding technology that overshadows positive family interactions.

3. Brainstorming: What We Want More Of

Focusing on the activities we want to add to our lives makes it easier to naturally define limits for screens.

Activity Category	Specific Ideas/Examples
Outdoor Play	Bike riding, visiting the park, organized sports, or daily family walks.
Reading	Independent reading time, visiting the local library, or reading a book together.
Family Connection	Board game nights, cooking together, or "unplugged" dinner conversations.
Creativity	Drawing, building with blocks, or using Positive AI to create silly songs about pets or family trivia.
Skill Building	Using AI for language practice or social skills roleplay (to supplement, not replace, in-person practice).
Sleep	Establishing a calming bedtime routine and achieving 8-hour sleep goals.

4. Operational Plan: Device-Free Zones and Times

Clear physical and temporal boundaries reduce "pings" and ensure we remain present with one another. **Mindset:** Prioritize connection before correction when implementing these rules.

Screen-Free Zone/Time	Our Family's Rule
Mealtimes	No phones or tablets at the table; focus on face-to-face conversation.
Bedrooms	Devices are charged in a central location (e.g., kitchen) outside the bedroom at night.
After School	The first 30 minutes after arriving home are screen-free to allow time to reconnect.
Study/Homework	Limit screens in the workspace unless required for a specific academic assignment.

5. The "In Balance with Bedtime" Checklist

To prevent emotional dysregulation and daytime sleepiness, we commit to the following health components:

- **Eight-Hour Goal:** We aim for a full night's sleep (around eight hours) regardless of social media, email, or text notifications.
- **Blue Light Filters:** We utilize device settings or apps to reduce blue light if a screen is used shortly before bed.
- **The One-Hour Rule:** We stop using all electronic devices at least one hour before bedtime to allow the brain to wind down.
- **Bedroom Boundaries:** We keep devices out of the sleep environment and shut them off completely at bedtime.
- **Automatic Shut-off:** We utilize parental controls or device timers to ensure technology turns off at a set time each night.

6. Digital Literacy & AI Safety Commitments

Rules for the Road

1. **Tool, Not Relationship:** Recognize that AI chatbots are computer programs, not a substitute for real-life peers or human relationships.
2. **Tool, Not Replacement:** AI can help brainstorm or double-check work, but it cannot replace the learning process; it must not write entire essays for you.
3. **Think First:** The internet is public and permanent. Never use digital tools to tease, embarrass, or engage in digital cruelty.
4. **Privacy First:** Never share private data (addresses, passwords, or financial info) with AI tools or strangers online.

Warning Signs to Watch For

- Using an AI chatbot as a main social outlet or primary source of companionship.
- Feeling distressed or anxious when unable to access an AI companion or device.
- Attempting to hide device usage, secret accounts, or screen activity from family members.
- Major changes in mood, irritability, or acting increasingly isolated from the family.

7. The Family Media Agreement: Mutual Commitments

Student "I Will" Statements

- **Stay Safe:** I will not share my full name, date of birth, or passwords without permission. I will tell a trusted adult if anything online makes me feel uncomfortable.
- **Think First:** I will communicate kindly and not engage in bullying. I know that what I post can spread fast and far, so I will protect my reputation and give credit to others' work.
- **Stay Balanced:** I will follow the time limits we set and be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens versus being with people.

Parent Promises

- **Recognize Media's Role:** I will acknowledge that media is a significant part of your identity and life, even if I don't always understand every app.
- **Talk Before "No":** I will discuss my worries with you and listen to your perspective before setting new restrictions.
- **Support Growth:** I will let you make some mistakes and help you learn from them, rather than just using punishment.
- **Model Healthy Habits:** I will follow the same "device-free zone" rules I set for you and model the balanced behavior I want to see.

Child Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Caregiver Signature: _____ Date: _____