

SOCIAL MEDIA & THE CHILD WITH ADHD



Actor portrayal.

Can social media make ADHD symptoms worse?

Is being online excessively putting the ADHD child at risk for being bullied? Do you face an angry or argumentative child or teen who can't or won't put down their electronic device? Kids are using digital devices, on average, for about 3 hours a day. And adolescents may be spending up to 9 hours a day on electronic media.

When it comes to social media, research suggests that ***kids who use the most social media are more unhappy*** and that kids who use social media only to get “likes” and “follows” tend to have more negative experiences. **What does this mean for your child with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)?** There is a growing body of evidence connecting problematic electronic media use and ADHD.

- Rapidly changing screens put minimal demands on attention or the efforts required to remember things, read, or write—activities that may already be challenging for children with ADHD
- Many video games have built-in incentives to “get to the next level,” creating reinforcement of immediate reward that may be stimulating to the child with ADHD

Screen time does not cause ADHD or its symptoms, BUT overuse of electronic media can exacerbate ADHD symptoms.

How can you help your child with ADHD? Follow some of the guideline highlights from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the association for Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) on screen time, remain vigilant on what your child can access, and keep communication open about your family values and expectations.

SCREEN TIME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AAP AND CHADD

Birth to 18 months: No screens or digital media use, except for video-chatting with family.

2 to 5 years old: Limit screen time to 1 hour per day of high-quality, age-appropriate programming, and watch with your child.

6 and older: Limit screen time to less than 2 hours a day. Select shows that are age appropriate in terms of content and action. Watch programming with your child—especially teenagers. Make sure that screen time does not take the place of sleep, physical activity, or other healthy behaviors.

Watch the free webinar “Time to Unplug?
How Screen Time Impacts the ADHD Brain.”

PLAY THE WEBINAR ON SCREEN TIME