# Recommendations for Social Networking Sites Use

In this document, service providers will find a useful list of recommendations based on previous research and clinical practices which they can use to assist families in navigating the use of digital technology.

## Recommendations for Service Providers

Become more familiar with the types of social media, and the benefits and risks that clients are exposed to. The links below provide access to interactive documents and various social media platforms, applications, and websites, many of which are commonly used by young people. Families may have seen an image or logo on their child's device, and would like to learn more about the type of content their child is accessing.

- Help increase caregiver awareness of time spent on social media apps with information at: https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/screen-time-and-young-children
- Increase caregiver awareness of the significance of social media use with recommendations found here: https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/social_media
- Offer educational tools developed by the Canadian Paediatric Society and the Media Awareness Network to supplement teaching; MediaSmarts https://mediasmarts.ca/ is one of the most comprehensive Canadian resources for further education.
- Advise parents to develop a plan of use regarding social networking websites: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2792691/#b51-pch08301
- Advise youth on what to do when someone shares a photo of them without consent: https://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/help-someone-shared-photo-me-without-my-consent-–-tip-sheet
- Promote health and development in a digital world https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children
- Encourage Cyber Security awareness http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/tipsheet/Cyber-Security-Tip-Sheet-Socializing-and-Interacting-Online-Final_en.pdf http://mediasmarts.ca/category/categories/social-networking
- Enhance Cyberbullying Prevention https://cyberbullying.org/Cyberbullying-Identification-Prevention-Response-2018.pdf

For more information, contact Provincial Information and Child, Youth, and Family Initiatives Standards at informationandcyfistandards@ahs.ca.

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Addiction & Mental Health

## Recommendations for parents and caregivers for problematic use of social networks sites:

- Talk with your children about the digital technology they use so you are informed. Ask questions about the people they interact with on social networking sites, why it's fun, the activities they do, and their favourite sites. Do not comment while they're explaining. This is an opportunity to connect with your children about something they're interested in.
- Familiarize yourself with games and social networking sites, and maybe try them yourself to increase familiarity.
- Discuss reasonable limits on using technology, and have two-way discussions about safe, responsible, and considerate use of social networking sites.
- Be a positive role model when using technology. Model a safe behaviour; for example, do not use your phone while driving. Apply the same standards of technology use for yourself. Choose other recreational activities more often, such as reading, outdoor play, and creative, hands-on activities.
- Discuss important elements, such as privacy and safety. For example, remind children not to share confidential information, inappropriate texts, videos or photos.
- Monitor what your children post on social media to help protect them against online predators and bullies.
- Balance the pros and cons of technology use.
- Educate your children to avoid using technology when it could impact safety. Model this behaviour, as well. Do not use digital devices at swimming pools, in washrooms, on balconies and rooftops, or while walking on streets or in crowded places. Other spaces where it's hazardous not to pay attention are staircases, escalators, roads, parking lots or any place where safety is a concern.
- As a family, be mindful about the use of digital time. Set limits on use; for example, do not allow technology use before going to school, during meals or before bedtime.
- Encourage age-appropriate rest time and sleep habits.
- Include more educational options in games and interactions with friends and family.
- Modify access to content. For example, activate parental limits on devices to avoid violent and inappropriate sexual content.
- Promote healthy alternative recreational activities such as outdoor events, reading, and family time.
- Make available activities that improve social skills.
- Implement strict measures to control use, such as blocking certain websites, limiting internet access, and turning off alerts on devices.
- Help children recognize and question problematic content.
- Consider psychotherapy and family therapy, if necessary.

- Consult a physician if technology use is affecting a family member's overall functioning.
- Conduct a self-assessment of current digital habits, and develop a family media policy [1-3].

## References

1. Canadian Paediatric Society. (2017, November 29). *Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world*. Retrieved from https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children
2. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). (2019). *Should I play or should I go?* Retrieved from https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/should-i-play-or-should-i-go
3. Media Smarts. (2018). *The Digital Wellbeing of Canadian Families. [Executive Summary Infographic].* Retrieved from http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/publication-report/summary/infographic-digital-canadian-families.pdf