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Thursday, April 30, 2026

Dr. John Hutton, MD, MS, FAAP

RECOMMENDED READING

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Find all of Dr. Hutton's Children's Books at http://www.bluemanateepress.com

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The 5 Cs of Media Use

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE Social Media and Youth Mental Health

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN: 5 TO 10 YEARS

Congrats! Your child is out of the big-emotions early childhood phase and now is starting to be more of a rule-based thinker. They can probably talk more about their feelings, are learning to read and pay attention to schoolwork, and are building friendships. These are the important developmental tasks that media shouldn't crowd out. Despite their growing maturity, kids are not ready for social media accounts at this age.

ASK YOURSELF THE 5 Cs	WHAT YOU CAN DO
Child *Who is your child, how do they react to media, and what are their motivations for using it?*	Children's unique strengths and challenges start to become clear in elementary school. They may struggle with attention (like ADHD), social skills (like autism), reading or other academics (like learning disabilities), or managing their mood (like anxiety or depression). They are also likely to show interest or skills in activities. You may be learning that they are great artists, dancers, are good with animals or science facts. It's important to carve out time to build upon these strengths and interests.
Content *Whatisworththeir attention?*	Many kids start to love video games and YouTube at this age but can easily access content that is age-inappropriate (e.g., violent, sexual, or rude). Read reviews on **Common Sense Media** to find out what shows, games, and movies are the right fit for their maturity level. Family settings or parental controls, although not 100% effective, can be used for filtering content on devices your child uses. Watch shows and play video games together to see if you like the messages and behaviors they convey—if not, find alternatives. AVOID: 'Teen' video games which have more gore and sexual content.
Calm *Howdothey calm down emotions or go to sleep?*	Many school-aged children like to use media for a mental break at the end of a school day. Be sure that this break doesn't get in the way of homework and other activities, such as meals together. Put devices away at bedtime so that kids can settle their brains and bodies to sleep. Teach them techniques such as deep breathing and listening to quiet music to help calm their brains.
Crowding Out *Whatdoesmediagetinthe way of?*	Video games and online videos can have designs that promote extended use – for hours at a time. Talk with your kids about balancing time on screens so that there is enough time to sleep, read, draw, do homework, hangout, play sports with other kids, and chat with family. Parents can role model putting phones down at bedtime, dinnertime, and on car rides. AVOID: Letting screens be your child's go-to whenever they get bored, get frustrated with homework, or other challenging tasks.
Communication *How canyou talk aboutmedia to raise a smart and responsible child?*	This is a great time for conversations about media, since kids have a burst of understanding of things like advertising, privacy, and concepts like right vs. wrong. By regularly having open-minded talks about media, you build critical thinking skills and can be the "voice in your child's head" when they become more independent in the teen years. Let your child know that they can talk to you about anything negative or creepy they see online. If they've gotten a phone and have started texting friends, check in about how those interactions are going.

https://www.preventionnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/The-5-Cs-of-Media-Use-School-Aged-Children-5-10.pdf

Family Media Plan

Atthisage, the Family Media Plan can be particularly beneficial as children are still young and receptive to setting up and adhering to rules. While devising a plan together as a family, it is essential to have ongoing conversations about media, keep limits so that kids can get their schoolwork and other activities done, and check what they are playing/watching. Although children in this age group are not yet ready for social media accounts, kid-friendly messaging apps might be a workable alternative for your family.



Make a Media Plan for the whole family (parents too!).

About Us

TheAmerican Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health is dedicated to creating a healthy digital ecosystem for children and adolescents. Social media use starts during childhood and can play a significant role in the relationships and experiences that affect children and teens' growth, development, and mental health.
The Center provides resources and tools for parents, clinicians, teachers, and youth to learn how to better navigate social media and the online world. Visit **aap.org/SocialMedia** for more information and resources.

We're here to help.

Explore our Q&A portal for answers to your questions about social media and youth mental health.

The 5 Cs were inspired and built upon the work of journalist & author of books about media and children, **Lisa Guernsey**. The Three Cs were first described in the book *Into the Minds of Babes* (2007) and then *Screen Time* (2012) and *Tap, Click, Read: Growing Readers in a World of Screens* (2015).

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CENTER OF EXCELLENCE Social Media and Youth Mental Health FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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SCREEN & TIME brain development

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Resources to Learn More About the 5 Cs

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