

Pediatrician explains why co-viewing is important

March 18 2024, by Megan Moreno, MD, MEd, MPH, FAAP, American Academy of Pediatrics



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Most parents I meet these days worry about what their kids do online. After all, it can be hard to know what they're absorbing from their media

interactions.

The good news is that online experiences can help [kids](#) learn conversation skills, strengthen their decision-making abilities and much more. However, they do need guidance from parents and caregivers to gain the greatest benefit (and avoid possible harm).

Making a [family](#) media plan is one way you can help kids and teens embrace healthy digital habits. One of these habits can also be one of the most fun: co-viewing media with your child. Co-viewing can open a window into your child's online experiences in a context of sharing and trust. It can open difficult conversations, build parent-child bonds and give you the chance to help your child navigate the digital landscape in a positive way.

Co-viewing (or co-playing) happens when adults hang out with kids to get a sense of the apps, games, shows, music and other online content they enjoy. You can ask your child's permission to join them for movie nights; gaming sessions; YouTube or TikTok viewing; time exploring apps or websites; or listening to music or podcasts.

If you're worried about something you see, you can address it in a thoughtful way. Co-viewing and co-playing isn't the same as policing. It's a way to learn more about your child's online experiences in a context of sharing and trust.

Here are 10 tips to view, listen and play alongside your child:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) family media plan is a great tool to engage kids in creating a plan that specifies what kind of content is allowed and what's not and sets age-appropriate limits on [screen time](#). Creating a plan helps you carve out tech-free times, such as meals or family outings, and it addresses risks and creates safeguards

that everyone can get behind. A family plan also allows kids to give [parents](#) feedback and create shared guidance around adult digital [media](#) use.

Your plan can include co-viewing and co-playing as a way to share digital experiences as a family. It also models the principle that everyone—grown-ups included—must use online technology in healthy, responsible ways.

More information: [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org).

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