

# Parents can help manage children's screen time

By **Charlie Kanzig**  
Correspondent

The speed and manner in which most of us communicate today — text, Instagram, Twitter — seems normal, but the access we have to one another in this fast-paced world can be a real challenge for school-aged students and their parents.

Summertime might be the perfect time to address these concerns and form some new habits.

Earlier this spring, the documentary “Screenagers” was shown at Sisters High School as an outreach to parents in understanding how to better guide their kids in the age of ever-present screens.

Among other things, the documentary shines some light on some of the pitfalls of instant media, especially for teenagers, including texting, sexting, and bullying, in addition to video game and phone addiction.

Just last month three teenagers in Eugene were charged with crimes for sharing nude photos and videos over social media of female students at North Eugene High School. The instant-ness and ease of sharing personal and very private information can cause real trouble for those bent on trouble as well as for those who are not mature enough to handle the phone in their hands.

In addition to the dark side of harassment and bullying through social media, there is a great concern about the overuse of screened devices

as well as the content that young people are exposing themselves to, including sexually explicit and violent material. Parents often find themselves in real battles with their children when attempting to separate them from their beloved screens.

Experts agree that for parents, an informed, even-handed approach with clear, reasonable guidelines is what most teenagers need most, when it comes to being responsible digital citizens and to staying safe in a world saturated by stimulating information.

“The “Screenagers” website has a vast array of resources for parents.”

One of the resources on the “Screenagers” website ([www.screenagersmovie.com](http://www.screenagersmovie.com)) includes suggestions of how to make a family screen-time agreement. This is a contract among family members focused on the house rules of screen access. For example, some families decide to put out a basket in the entryway

to the house for phones to be placed after school or at dinnertime, where they remain until homework, chores, and dinner are finished. Other families have a “lights-out” rule during which the phone is turned off or disabled at bedtime. The concept is to have agreed-upon guidelines to avoid overuse and to also lessen the likelihood of disagreements.

Although many Americans want to deny the possibility, addiction to screens, particularly when it comes to video games, is a growing concern among mental-health professionals. The content of what children are able to access is an additional issue that requires diligence — and even intervention — since violent and adult content is just a click away if parental controls are not employed.

PBS Newshour produced a show last year titled “The drug-like effect of screen time on the teenage brain” which is still available online. It references the Screenagers documentary in regard to the addictiveness of phones, games, and social media in general. Doctors and neuroscientists are finding more and more evidence of the potential for harmful

effects due to overexposure to screens. (Find the link with the online version of this story at [www.nuggetnews.com](http://www.nuggetnews.com).)

The “Screenagers” website has a vast array of resources for parents, including apps for monitoring and blocking smart phones, information about digital citizenship, research on this topic, the impact on sleep, and non-technology alternatives to engage teens.

Summertime in Sisters Country affords countless alternatives to being in front of a screen, but it may take some planning, persuading, pulling, and pushing by parents to get things moving. Left unattended, young people might spend hours and hours locked onto a screen when they could be enjoying the outdoors, reading, working at a job, volunteering, or partaking in non-screen play.

Parents are advised to

develop a game plan before speaking to their teenager about screen time. Kids are so accustomed to having free and constant access to their phone, games and consoles that they tend to be “battle-ready” when it is suggested that they limit their use or are asked to exert more self-control. A firm, but gentle, sharing of concern followed by a reasonable plan of action can work well. Writing down the agreement is essential. Parents are encouraged to check their own use, or overuse as the case may be, of screen time for their own sake and so as to not appear completely hypocritical.

Sharing with other parents in a sort of “support group” fashion can be effective as well. This is a hot topic that many parents are very concerned about, but are of uncertain how to approach.

**NuggetNews.com**  
is your online source for  
**Breaking News**  
**Classifieds | Weather**  
**Road Reports**

*There's something special about gathering around a glowing fire!*

**Ponderosa Forge**  
Sisters, Oregon  
One-of-a-kind, custom ironwork hand-forged right here in Sisters

*We have many fire pits to choose from!*

541-549-9280 | 207 W. Sisters Park Dr. | [PonderosaForge.com](http://PonderosaForge.com) | CCB# 87640

**TUMALO TAVERN**

**BINGO!**

EVERY TUESDAY 6 PM START

\$1 PER CARD!  
**CASH PRIZES!**  
21 & OVER  
541-330-2323

*The Anjulia Foundation*  
ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT C.O. KIDS

**THE GALLERY RESTAURANT AND BAR**

*Welcome, Quilters!*

**SOUP OF THE DAY**  
July 5th - July 11th

Wed.....Cajun Chicken Gumbo	Sun.....Clubhouse Tomato
Thurs.....Meatball	Mon.....Vegetable Beef
Fri.....Clam Chowder & Vegetable	Tues.....Tomato Gorgonzola
Sat.....Chicken Vegetable	

*Orders to go welcome*

Breakfast & lunch 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Nightly dining until 10 p.m. (21 & over)

171 W. Cascade Ave., Sisters | 541-549-2631

**Doctor & "Health Detective"**

Let me figure out what can help with your "mystery" health complaints.  
**FREE CONSULTATIONS**

**MEANINGFUL MEDICINE**

Kim Hapke, Naturopath  
971-409-0908  
SISTERS ART WORKS BUILDING

**SISTERS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

**Thrift Store**

**Welcome, Quilters**  
Hope your stay is fabulous.

**We open at 7:30 a.m. July 8!**

541-549-1740  
141 W. Main Ave., Sisters  
**Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, 12-4 p.m.**  
Donations accepted  
**Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

**ReStore**

**50% OFF EVERYTHING WITH AN ORANGE PRICE TAG!**

*Wow! That's a deal!*

541-549-1621  
254 W. Adams Ave., Sisters  
**Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Closed Sundays**  
Donations accepted  
**Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**