Screen Time and Mealtime

Why does it matter?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children and adolescents limit total entertainment screen time to less than 1 to 2 hours per day.
- Current estimates suggest that the average 8 to 10 year old spends nearly 8 hours a day using some type of screen media. Teenagers are reported to spend more than 11 hours per day using some type of screen media.
- Excessive screen media use has been associated with increased risk for obesity, poor sleep habits and exposure to sexually explicit and violent content.

Tips for Parents:

- Enforce a mealtime “curfew” for screen media that applies to all members of the family
- Ten minutes before the meal, have everyone turn off all devices and help to finish up any last minute cooking or set the table
- For younger children, make sure all electronic devices are turned off twenty minutes before the meal and provide them with an art or book reading activity
- After the meal is finished, wait ten minutes before powering up. Use this time to go over homework needs, schedules for the next day, or plan breakfast.
- Power down before going to bed. Keep televisions and electronic devices out of children’s bedrooms so they get a good night’s sleep.