



**15-17**  
*years old*

Digital Safety  
Basics

## Multitasking: The Modern Juggling Act

### MULTITASKING AND TEENS

- ▶ The average 8- to 18-year-old crams more than 10 hours of media use into 7.5 hours of media time every day (Kaiser, 2010).
- ▶ Every year, kids spend more and more time using two or more forms of media simultaneously.
- ▶ Experts disagree on some aspects, but all agree that multitasking prolongs the time it takes to do individual tasks, such as homework.
- ▶ Research shows that multitasking affects kids' ability to filter and retain information.

### WHY MULTITASKING MATTERS

Being able to process several things simultaneously in a media-rich world is an important skill. When teens are constantly being interrupted by messages, phone calls and texts, multitasking can help them manage it all. However, because multitasking can come at a cost to attention spans, there are important things to consider.

### TIPS FOR MANAGING MULTITASKING

- ▶ **Encourage teens to read more.** Reading can help counteract the impact of multitasking. The more they read, the better they can become at reflection and analysis.
- ▶ **Practice what you preach.** Set an example to demonstrate how to multitask.
- ▶ **Keep distractions to a minimum.** Try to help your teens do one thing at a time. For older kids, make sure social networks and chatting happen after homework is completed or at timed intervals.
- ▶ **Pay attention and connect the dots.** If you see grades slipping, make the connection between multitasking while doing homework. If your teen begins hanging in work late or if they are staying up to complete homework, consider turning off the internet, mobile phones or the TV, and see if the situation reverses itself. Grades can be a strong indicator as to whether or not multitasking is taking a toll on your kids.



*Stay  
connected.  
Stay safe.*