Tools for Your Child's Success.org

Technology Use Age 10 Summary

Why Examine Technology Use?

Becoming intentional about your child's daily technology use can influence how they develop a healthy relationship with technology and its role in their life. Looking for ways to experience and learn together about how to use devices wisely contributes to your child's development.



Writing down notes on your child's responses to the following questions will help you develop rules or routines for device use.

- What are your hopes and goals for your time after school and on weekends?
- Do you get to do everything you want to do in your free time – or connect with the people you want to communicate with (friends, family), or are there things you miss out on?
- What roles do you want your devices to play in your life? (i.e., learning, entertainment, connection with friends)
- Do you tend to want screen time when you experience a particular emotion (e.g., sadness, frustration, anger)?
- What other things would you like to try to calm down and feel better when you have this feeling? Can we talk about it, go outside, listen to music, or draw a picture?

Trap: Be sure you talk about technology use at a calm time when you are not stressed or upset!



Model healthy technology habits.

- Because technology plays a significant role in our family's life, modeling how you use technology teaches our children more than our words ever could. How are you disciplined about technology? Do you have rules for putting the laptop down and storing work away at the end of the day? Do you have times when you turn off or leave behind your phone? Share those practices with your child so that they understand that it's not only children who have to manage devices and cultivate healthy technology habits.

- Notice how you cope with challenges and uncomfortable feelings. Do you tend to use technology as an “escape”? Talk with your child about how you are feeling and what you will do to calm down rather than tune out.

Research content together before viewing.

- Our children need to learn to become their very own media analysts. Download an app or visit a media review site together. Get into a habit of reading together about new video games, television programs, movies, and applications before selecting them to view. If they are not developmentally appropriate, move on to something that is.
- Research any topic you are curious about on the internet together and review the keywords to use and the quality of the sites that come up in your search. Discuss the quality and reliability of the site.

Tip: Playing story games with your child, like cooperatively making up a story, can stir imagination, creativity, and a love of stories.

Trap: Not all media is trustworthy! Fake news, images, and videos are interspersed with real media. How do you know what to believe? And how do you guide your child? Making your child aware of the fact that there are fabricated news stories is an essential part of training them to use critical judgment when viewing media.



- Use “Show me…” statements with a positive tone and body language to express excitement and curiosity. When your child learns a new ability, they are eager to show it off! Give them that chance. Say, “Show me you know what we’ve agreed to with our devices - when we’re going to use them and when we’ll power them down.” This can be used when you are in the after-school routine and need that alert to move on to reading time.
- Take a “device break”. During device time, it may be at a natural breaking point called “device break.” Practice moving away briefly. Get a drink of water. Walk outside and get some fresh air.
- Recognize effort using “I notice...” statements like, “I notice how you searched the media site before watching a new program. That’s smart!”
- Proactively remind your child to help them be successful. The challenges of daily routines recur day after day. Remind in a gentle, non-public way. You can whisper in your child's ear, “Remember what time it is? What’s next we don’t want to miss out on?”

Trap: Resist the temptation to scold. If you've had a habit of fewer rules and routines around devices, it can take time to get into a new habit. Have patience and invest in reminding and recognizing positive steps forward, even if small. It may take a few consistent weeks of repetitive routines for your child to do them without prompting.



- Promote a learning attitude. Show confidence that your child can learn anything with time and practice. Your comments and reflections will matter significantly in how competent they feel to meet any learning challenge, especially when learning to manage technology in healthy ways.
- Ask key questions like:
    - "It looks like you're on screens longer than we agreed. Can I help you set the alarm? Are there other ways you can keep track of your time?"
    - "Are you feeling good about what you are viewing? If not, if you feel more fearful or sad, how can we find content that will make you feel better?"
- Stay engaged. In addition to reading together, it can motivate your child to see you read your favorite book alongside them.



- Recognize and call out when things are going well. It may seem obvious, but it's easy not to notice when everything moves smoothly. Noticing and naming the behavior provides the necessary reinforcement that you see and value your child's choice. For example, when children complete their homework on time, a short, specific call out is all that's needed: "I noticed you put your device on the counter when I asked you to. Excellent."
- Recognize small steps along the way. Don't wait for significant accomplishments—like the full bedtime routine going smoothly—to recognize effort. Remember that your recognition can work as a tool to promote more positive behaviors. Find small ways your child is making an effort and let them know you see them.

Trap: It can be easy to resort to bribes when recognition and occasional rewards are underutilized. If parents or those in a parenting role frequently resort to bribes, it is likely time to revisit the five-step process.

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