

Technology Use Age 2 Summary

Why Technology Use?

As a parent or someone in a parenting role, you play an essential role in your child's success. There are intentional ways to grow a healthy parent-child relationship and ensure your child develops a healthy relationship with technology. After all, technology is simply a set of tools that can serve the beneficial purposes of entertaining, educating, creating, connecting to others, and making life easier.

STEP
1


GET INPUT

Get Your Child Thinking by Getting Their Input

You can take cues from your child when they have had enough screen time.

When observing your young child, you will look for:

- turning their head away from the screen, even in short bouts, indicates they are finished
- rubbing their eyes means they are tired or overstimulated
- over-excitement can also mean they are overstimulated

And after using a device, you can begin to build emotional awareness by asking:

- How do you feel? (Since your young child is still developing a feelings vocabulary, one way to help them learn to label their feelings is to offer what you observe in brief, simple terms and ask if you are right. "You seem happy. Or you seem frustrated. Is that right?")

Trap: Do not leave your child alone with a screen or device. It's far too easy to lose track of time, and they will not get the nourishment they require off screens.

Trap: Do not use a device as entertainment while waiting for a seat at a restaurant, in line at the post office, or any of your daily activities. This is a tough habit to break in the long term. More importantly, your young child misses the opportunity to build self-management skills by waiting and the chance to make critical social skills by interacting with others in your community.

**STEP
2****Teach New Skills**

Model healthy technology habits.

- Because technology plays a significant role in family life, modeling how you use technology teaches young children more than your words ever could.
- Think about the following questions: How are you disciplined about technology? Do you have rules for putting the laptop down and working 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.
- Be sure that when you share the focus with your young child on whatever draws them to you, one is put away, and notifications are turned off so that those distractions do not tempt you. Your focus will help build the critical executive function skill of focusing on your young child.
- Notice how you cope with challenges and uncomfortable feelings. Do you tend to use technology as an "escape"? Reflect and decide on ways in which you are going to calm down rather than tune out.

Focus screen time on connecting with loved ones.

- Because screen or device time should be minimized at this time of life, use your device time to connect on-screen with loved ones you cannot see in person. This time will continue to stimulate your young child.

Tip: When not using technology, sharing the focus of your child's imaginative play can create opportunities to grow your trust and intimacy while helping your child develop valuable social and emotional skills and enhance brain development.

Trap: Not all media is trustworthy! Young children should not be given devices to scroll through a wide range of videos because the content they might inadvertently encounter is far from age-appropriate. Be selective about your young child's viewing.

**STEP
3****Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits**

- Use “Show me...” statements with a positive tone and body language to express excitement and curiosity. If you connect with a loved one on a device, have your child shut it down or hand it back when you are finished. You might say, *“Show me you hand the device back when our time is up.”*
- Set an alarm like a kitchen timer when on a device and around your child. Be sure to put the device away when the timer goes off. They will learn from your modeling how to manage devices for a designated time frame.
- Recognize effort using “I notice...” statements like, *“I notice how you powered down when we ended our call. That’s smart!”*

**STEP
4****Support Your Child’s Development and Success**

- Promote your child’s healthy development. Sing songs while waiting in line or play games like “I Spy” instead of using devices to fill the time.
- Notice and observe your child and their feelings as a guide. You might notice your child feeling more anxious, angry, or frustrated after time on a device. You might then say, *“It seems like you are feeling _____, is that right? Why do you think that is?”* Be sure you reflect and learn from that indicator that it’s too much, and allow your child plenty of time to spend on play, sleep, and other critical activities.
- Stay engaged. If your young child is using a device, be sure you are nearby to help select what to view and reflect on what is being viewed to help them make meaning of it.

**STEP
5****Recognize Efforts**

- 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.
- Recognize small steps along the way. Don’t wait for significant accomplishments—like the whole 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.

- Build celebrations into your routine. For example, snuggle and read before bed after getting through your bedtime routine.

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.

Trap: Think about what behavior a bribe may unintentionally reinforce. For example, offering a sucker if a child stops a tantrum in the grocery store checkout line may teach the child that future tantrums lead to additional treats.

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