



## 5 Ways to Help Your Kids Use Technology Responsibly

### 1. Moderate your own use.

Kids pick up quickly on their parents' behavior. If you're glued to a screen 24/7, it's hard to tell your child to do otherwise. Practice your own self-regulation by:

- Turning off notifications
- Using Screen Time or something similar to monitor your use of devices.
- Having device-free zones like the dinner table and the bedroom.
- Limiting your computer/device use outside of work.
- Enjoying (and involving your kids in) analog activities such as sports, conversations, board games or books)

### 2. Set limits on your children's technology access.

Technology has many positive benefits. However, free rein to use it whenever and in whatever way your child wants can be dangerous and unhealthy.

- Use parental controls. Many options are available, allowing you to block or limit access to sites, content, features or apps of your choosing.
- Have a set time frame or cut-off time for device use, perhaps turning off their phone at 9 pm.
- Have no-device places and times, like at meals or an hour before bedtime.
- Turn off notifications and autoplay on sites like YouTube.

### 3. Talk to your kids.

When equipping your child with a device, have a serious discussion with them. Talk about:

- Privacy settings. Go over this with your child, helping them turn off or limit location data, access to contact lists, information sharing, etc. (This is something you can do on your own device as well.)
- Rules and expectations. Tell them what is acceptable use and what is not, i.e. cyberbullying, questionable photographs, etc. You might even have an actual contract outlining these rules.

As kids grow up, continue the discussion on what is appropriate use and what is not of the technology.

### 4. Know what your children are doing online.

How much time your kids spend on devices is not as important as what they do when they are there. Apps like Screen Time can let you know where your child spends his online hours. And communication again is important. Find out what interests them online, what they watch, what they play, who they interact with. This can be done in casual conversation - it doesn't have to be confrontational.



## **5. Recognize issues and get professional help if needed.**

Problems in the young arising from technology use are real. You should be concerned if you observe behavior such as:

- Technology use to the exclusion of everything else
- Not wanting to go outside
- Not wanting to go to school
- Not wanting to join family meals
- Isolation
- Mood changes

Take it up with a health care professional. Counseling and therapy are available for cases of technology addiction.

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Marc Groman and David Reitman talk parenting and technology on [Their Own Devices](#)