HOW DO I...

Promote my child's healthy use of technology?

Advice for Parents and Caregivers

- **Raising kids in the digital age is like navigating uncharted territory.** While there may not be a definitive rulebook, embracing flexibility and tailoring your approach to your child's individual needs is key. Try to find the balance between fostering curiosity and exploration while ensuring responsible and safe engagement with the digital world.

- **Set some ground rules about screen time.** Keep an eye out for telltale signs like withdrawal from other activities or mood changes, which can signal that it might be time to dial back on the digital time.

- **Help your child to build safe online habits, and to understand why keeping some things private is important.** Before introducing your child to social media, talk about protecting passwords, being careful about what they share, cyberbullying, and setting appropriate privacy settings on their accounts.

Scan to watch our video on this topic.

Tips & Resources →

8 Tips for Helping Kids Develop a Healthy Relationship With Technology

1. **Not all screen time is created equal.** While some online and screen-based activities pose a risk, technology also has potential for learning and connection. Help kids recognize positive versus damaging or addictive content and how to find a balance of healthy use.

2. **Discuss the risks.** Talk to your child about the potential risks of social media, such as cyberbullying, online predators, inappropriate content, stress, anxiety, and addiction. Teach them about internet privacy and how to protect their personal information online.

3. **Set limits.** Consider what is both healthy and realistic for your child and family. Set clear boundaries and utilize parental controls that can be relaxed over time.

4. **Be your child's digital neighbor.** Monitor and try to understand your child's online world so you can help them make good decisions about their activities online.

5. **Encourage media literacy.** Kids often accept anything online as truth, so it's crucial to encourage your children to engage critically with information and behavior they are virtually exposed to.

6. **Encourage caution.** Teach kids to be mindful not only about what they consume but about their own online behavior as well. Help them understand that what they say and do online can have serious real-world consequences.

7. **Model healthy use.** You can talk about healthy screen limits all you like, but if your kids see you on screens 24/7, they'll be less likely to listen. Encourage times when the whole family is engaged in other activities like enjoying meals together, reading books, playing sports, or having a game night.

8. **Know the signs of addiction.** Parents can look for signs such as spending excessive amounts of time using technology, ignoring other activities, difficulty controlling tech use, and becoming irritable or anxious when unable to use screens.

To learn more, check out these helpful resources:

Parenting, Media, and Everything in Between
Common Sense Media

Screen Time and Technology Family Resource Center
The Child Mind Institute

Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence
American Psychological Association

The Child Mind Institute is dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders by giving them the help they need to thrive. We've become the leading independent nonprofit in children's mental health by providing gold-standard care, delivering educational resources to millions of families each year, training educators in underserved communities, and developing tomorrow's breakthrough treatments.

Child Mind Institute | Positive Parenting Thriving Kids