

Technology Use Age 14 Summary

Why Examine Technology Use?


Becoming intentional about your child's/teen'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 their development.

STEP 1	 GET INPUT	Get Your Child/Teen Thinking by Getting Their Input
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Writing down notes on your child's/teen's responses to the following questions will help you when you develop rules or routines for device use.

- What are your hopes and goals for your time after school, weekends, or summer days?
- 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)?

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

STEP 2	 TEACH	Teach New Skills
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Model healthy technology habits.

- Because technology plays a significant role in our family's life, modeling how we use technology teaches our children/teens 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/teen so that they understand that it's not only children and teens 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/teen about how you are feeling and what you will do to calm down rather than tune out.

Research content together before viewing.

- Our children/teens 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.

Trap: Online time should not replace time outside playing with friends. Exposure to nature, exercise, play, and social interaction are critical factors in your child’s/teen’s healthy development.

Trap: Online time should be different from reading time since this is a necessary time to cultivate positive reading habits and skills. Be sure you leave judgment of book choices behind and only encourage their reading. Nonfiction and graphic novels are excellent choices if they interest your young reader. If it’s safe content for children/teens, offer your support and interest.

Trap: Not all media is trustworthy! Fake news, images, and videos are interspersed with real media. Making your child/teen aware of the fact that there are fabricated news stories is an essential part of training them to use critical judgment when viewing media.

STEP
3



PRACTICE

Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Use “Show me…” statements with a positive tone and body language to express excitement and curiosity. When your child/teen 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, maybe at a natural breaking point, call “device break.” Practice moving away briefly. Get a drink of water. Walk outside in the fresh air. Get a drink of water.

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/teen to own and do them entirely without prompting.

STEP
4



Support Your Child's/Teen's Development and Success

- Promote a learning attitude. Show confidence that your child/teen can learn anything with time and practice (because they truly can!). 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, how can we find content that will make you feel better if you feel fearful or sad?”
- Stay engaged. In addition to reading together, it can motivate your child/teen to see you reading your favorite book alongside them for company or when they visit the library or local bookstore together.

Trap: Online social aggression and cyberbullying are real and challenging experiences for children/teens. If you hear about this occurring, teach your child/teen how to unfriend or respond in healthy ways to stop the behavior.

STEP
5



Recognize Efforts

- 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/teen is making an effort and let them know you see them.
- Build celebrations into your routine. For example, after you've completed your bedtime routine, snuggle and read before bed. Or, in the morning, once you're ready for school, take a few to have a cup of hot chocolate together.

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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