February 2022

THE COUNSELORS' CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the
Elementary Counseling Department

What's in this month's issue:

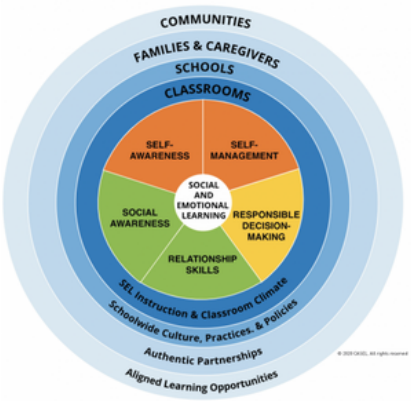
ENCOURAGING HEALTHY TECH HABITS IN AN AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

We live in a time when technology is all around us, even from the moment we are born. Various experts, such as The American Academy of Pediatrics, make recommendations based on age and time of use. These ideals, however, are not always practical or realistic when it comes to daily nuances set forth by our world and can also be overwhelming to implement. The American Psychological Association (APA) recognizes the limited guidance provided by the basic outline of developmental time constraints and offers that "...instead of focusing on how much time a child spends on digital media, parents should consider the content of that media and the context in which they're using it."

- **Don't overreact.** It won't help your child if you set overly restrictive limits or send the message that technology is something to fear. Instead, focus on teaching healthy habits that will stay with your child for a lifetime.
- **Teach kids about technology from a young age.** Teach children about technology from a young age. Explain that tablets, computers, and other media devices are not toys. Discuss with kids not only the many benefits of technology but also the risks. and teach the importance of respecting privacy and protecting personal information in age-appropriate ways. These conversations should be ongoing
- **Use your judgment.** Consider the context when establishing your family's rules for technology use. Video chatting with grandparents is different from playing a video game, for example.
- **Protect bedtime.** Studies show that using digital media at night can interfere with sleep quality. Consider restricting the use of phones, tablets and computers for at least 30 minutes before bed.
- **Pay attention.** Have open, honest discussions about what sites and types of content are off-limits. Do your research to understand the media your child is using, and check out your child's browser history to see what sites they visit. Explore software to filter or restrict access to content that's off-limits.
- **Teach good online behavior.** People often say things online that they'd never say to someone's face. Talk to your children about the importance of being respectful in their digital interactions. Encourage them to come to you if they witness cyberbullying or other troubling information online.
- **Discuss digital decision-making.** It can be hard to discern whether some websites are reliable sources of information or not. Have conversations with your child about how to evaluate authenticity and accuracy online. Explain why they shouldn't download unfamiliar programs, click on suspicious links or share personal information on unknown apps or websites. Also teach your children not to respond to unsolicited messages from strangers — and to tell you if they get them.
- **Foster real-life friendships.** Some kids who find it difficult to connect with peers spend more time online than playing with friends in real life. But digital friendships aren't a replacement for the real thing. Help your child develop social skills and nurture their real-life relationships.
- **Learn more.** Technology changes quickly...To keep tabs on the changing tech landscape, visit the Family Online Safety Institute and Common Sense Media.

To read the American Psychological Association's full article, click on the link:
Digital guidelines: Promoting healthy technology use for children

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEARNING IN SEL



Responsible decision-making: The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacity to consider ethical standards and safety concerns and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

Such as:

- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
- Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts
- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school
- Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

Check out this video from PBS Learning Media for more information.

TRY IT AT HOME!

BRIGHT, POLITE, LIGHT

Encourage your child to shine when communicating online with this simple checklist.

Keep It:

- **Light -** Uplifting, positive, and fun
- **Bright -** Articulate, smart, and positive
- **Polite -** Message or picture shows consideration before hitting "send"

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH: SMART SOCIAL

Smart Social
Learn How to Shine Online

Smart Social is a website that teaches parents and educators how to navigate social media with their children and students.

Click on this link to explore the Smart Social website.

Free Webinar from Smart Social:
25 Dangers You Need To Know About TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Fortnite, Netflix, YouTube & More

Thursday, February 10th at 9 pm
Thursday, March 10th at 9 pm
Click Here for more information and registration