



Digital Parenting Behavioral Health Tips

With internet penetration rates reaching 90 % in North America, and over 90% of adolescents and 50% of children below 10 having smartphones, technology has become integral in our lives. The effects of technology on children are complicated, with both benefits and costs. Whether technology helps or hurts in the development of your children's thinking depends on what specific technology is used and how and what frequency it is used.

The dangers:

Most interactions children have online or with other forms of technology (for example school work assignments or listening to music) are not dangerous and may actually benefit your child. However, there are some online behaviors that may place your child on undue harm or legal troubles. Some examples include sexting, bullying, or posting self-harm images. Monitoring your child's media use and setting limits on the amount of media use (including television and video gaming) is key to prevent these bad things from happening.

What can parents do?

Educate yourself about the technology, websites, games, social media sites and applications your child is using. Know your children's friends, both online and off. Make your own family media use plan. Apply your own values and style. Be mindful that online interactions cannot displace and cannot give the same benefits of many other important activities (such as face-to-face interaction, family-time, outdoor-play, exercise, unplugged downtime and sleep). Treat media as you would any other environment in your child's life. Set limits as kids need and expect them. Make unplugged

playtime (known to stimulate creativity) a daily priority, especially for very young children. Screen time shouldn't always be alone time. Co-view, co-play and co-engage with your children when they

For more information

Cohen Children's Medical Center

Pediatric Behavioral Health Emergency Service
Ground Floor, CCMC Emergency Room

718-470-3768

Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care
269-01 76th Avenue, Suite 161

New Hyde Park, NY 11040

718-470-3148

Pediatric Behavioral Health- Rockville Centre
100 Merrick Road

Rockville Centre, NY 11570

516-927-1630

Pediatric Behavioral Health- Mineola
156 First Street

Mineola, NY 11501

516-321-5770

Pediatric Behavioral Health- Commack
2171 Jericho Tpke, Suite 345

Commack, NY 11725

631-775-3280



Pediatric Behavioral Health

are using screens—it encourages social interactions, bonding, and learning. Be a good role model. Teach and model kindness and good manners online and limit your own use. It is important to recognize that this is a rapidly changing area and keeping up your knowledge of technology your child is or may use in the future is essential. Know the value of face-to-face communication. Very young children learn best through two-way communication. Engaging in back-and-forth "talk time" is critical for language development—much more so than "passive" listening or one-way interaction with a screen. Limit digital media for your youngest family members: 18-24 months limit to only to video chatting; ages 2 to 5 to just 1 hour a day of high-quality programing, virtually always co-viewed and concepts re-iterated in real life; ages 5 and up 2-4 hour a day of high-quality programing, preferably co-viewed and concepts re-iterated in real life. Talk to your child about the importance of privacy and the dangers of predators and sexting. Discuss and help your child set up privacy settings.

Create tech-free zones. Family mealtimes, social gatherings and even children's bedrooms should be free of all screens: television, computers, tablets, video game consoles, and smartphones. Recharge devices overnight—outside your child's bedroom to help him or her avoid the temptation to use them when they should be sleeping. Don't use technology as an emotional pacifier. Media can be very effective in keeping kids calm

and quiet, but it should not be the only way they learn to calm down or sit quietly. Remember: Kids will be kids. Kids will make mistakes using media. Try to handle errors with empathy and turn a mistake into a teachable moment. Finally, with good monitoring and limits media use can be fun, safe and beneficial to your child and family.

Resources:

Ratings on age appropriateness of movies, games, and other media: <https://www.common sense media.org>

Family Online Safety Institute <https://www.fosi.org/>

Center on Media and Child Health <http://cmch.tv/>

Child Mind Institute: <https://childmind.org/>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Tips-for-Parents-Digital-Age.aspx>

Video Game and App Ratings for Children: <http://www.esrb.org/>

Apps for monitoring use:

<https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/mobile-apps/10-apps-parents-monitor-kids-mobile-use>

AACAP' Facts for Families

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Table-of-Contents.aspx

