BELIEVE *you* MATTER

The 5 Ms of Digital Wellness

Technology is a powerful part of children's lives, but just like with any tool, kids need guidance to use it safely and meaningfully. This guide offers a simple, practical way for parents to support their kid's physical, mental and emotional well-being in the digital world.

Model

Show them what healthy technology use looks like. Kids are always watching, even when we think they're not.

Try this:

- Put your phone away during meals and family time.
- Say things like "I'm turning off my notifications so I can focus on you."

Why it matters: Your habits set the tone. When you prioritize presence over screens, they learn to do the same.

Mentor

Be their guide, not just their gatekeeper. Instead of just saying "no," explore apps and platforms together.

Try this:

- Ask "What do you like about this app?"
- Share your own online experiences, both the good and the challenging.

Why it matters: Mentoring builds trust and helps kids develop critical thinking about their digital choices.

Monitor

Stay involved with empathy and curiosity. Monitoring isn't about spying; it's about staying connected.

Try this:

- Use parental controls when needed but also have regular check-ins.
- Ask open-ended questions like "What's something funny or interesting you saw online today?"

Why it matters: Kids feel safer when they know you're there to support not just supervise. Start when they're young and build the habit.

Mastery

Help them build real digital skills. Technology skills are life skills, and they need practice.

Try this:

- Teach them how to spot fake news or manage screen time.
- Celebrate small wins like turning off notifications during homework time.

Why it matters: Mastery builds confidence and helps kids feel in control of their digital lives.

Meaning

Encourage tech use that reflects their values and passions. Not all screen time is created equal.

Try this:

- Help them find apps, games or communities that align with their interests.
- Ask "Does this help you feel connected or inspired?"

Why it matters: When technology use feels purposeful, it supports emotional and social growth.

Source: Boston Children's Digital Wellness Lab

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