

**Help !
I have a TechnoKid !**



Tips to stay informed.

Technokids Tips for Managing Kids' Technology Use

Modern day parenting is not for cowards and technology does not make it any easier as our Technokids spend hours tapping away at their touch screen devices. Many parents feel ill prepared on how to deal with technology in the home, as they themselves may feel disempowered to deal with the topic that has grown around them but their children have been birthed into.

Some statistics show us that when it come to 'Gaming', a study conducted by Harris Interactive with kids ages 8 to 18 spending shows them spending on average 44.5 hours per week in front of screens. Nearly 23% of youth report that they feel “addicted to video games” (31% of males, 13% of females.) In another study conducted by the Kaiser Foundation with children between the ages of 8 and 18, an average of 7 hours 38 minutes a day is spent with digital media. This was broken down, noting Television as being the largest culprit, with kids watching an average of 4 hours 29 minutes a day. Music is the second leading technology, with an average of 2 hours 31 minutes a day. Kids spend about 1-1/2 hours a day using computers/tablet/mobile devices and 1 hour 13 minutes a day playing video games.

It is very easy as a parent to lets "things" slip when it comes to technology use as we have very busy schedules and somewhat crazy lives due to modern day pressures.

So let's stop there, we know there is a challenge so here is where I'd like to add a "but", we have the ability (and responsibility) to set things in place in our homes with regards rules, procedures, guidelines, boundaries and consequences. You may even have to do some research on how to achieve this but that is very doable by using the very technology we are discussing .

Please note that technology is not the enemy in your family, like everything it's about balance. Let technology bring your family closer to each other, not make the family its servant and keep you apart.

Let's look at some guidelines you could begin with :

1. Remind your child/ren that the use of technology is a privilege, not a right.
2. Set a family media policy in place or have it as part of your Family Constitution. Decide who can use which forms of technology, when and where it's acceptable, and how you will monitor usage to ensure kids are staying safe while online.
 - You can have monitoring software on the pc they use for Internet access.
 - There are Apps that can allow particular timed access to games or applications on a child's device or even notify you when they access what. (But we want to help them understand without necessarily becoming a policeman and straining your relationship.)
3. Establish consequences, both positive and negative, for appropriate technology usage.
4. It is better not to allow them to have their own television or computer in their bedroom. This is their chill-zone, their special place. The technology can be in a

- general family area, accessible to all. If they want some solo time on their device and you have some reservations then ask that their bedroom door remains open.
5. Establish “technology-free” zones and times in your home when you all “disconnect” and concentrate on communicating with each other and enjoying each other’s company. (Like at dinnertime with no technology involved.)
 6. Help your children achieve balance in their lives by encouraging them to stay physically active, encourage reading by visiting a library, and learn to relax and have fun without electronics. This means parents have to be hands on, playing a game, catching a ball, and wrestling on the bed. As a parent you are your child’s first and best teacher.
 7. Try to avoid using technology as a babysitter. If a child is bored it could be a wonderful opportunity to start a conversation or gain some insight into their day, week or world.
 8. Technology is a good add-on to education but does not need to be the only channel. With children many things are 'caught' and not just 'taught', they do as they see you do, not as you say. (So be a good technology model yourself.)
 9. Don't be pressurised by society to give them their own device just because everyone else has one. Technology and devices should be age appropriate.
 10. Rather than stopping or banning Techno use, set limits in place. Once homework is done they can play a game for an hour or choose their desired techno device for that hour.
 11. Keep the rules, procedures, guidelines, boundaries and consequences in place. Don't slip or waver under pressure or tantrums. Techno use can even be a reward for chores done, good behaviour, school progress and so on.
 12. Practice safe technology use, eg. Music should not be blasting in their earphones, device screens should not be too close to their face, maybe causing eye strain and posture while using their device is important as slouching or wrong head posture can place strain on the neck/shoulder area creating strain and headaches.
 13. When it comes to social media make sure your children are educated regarding not giving out personal information or posting private information or photos. Help them understand that what goes on the Web stays stuck to the Web, even if you think you have deleted it. Things can easily be taken out of context by the viewer or maybe a potential boss in the future. Have an agreement in place, that should the need arise, that you reserve the right to have access to their info or monitor content. Make it clear to them that they can come to you at any time should they be unsure of something.

Much more can be said and this is not an exhaustive list but is there to begin the process, awaken common sense and assist parents to take the wheel and guide their families' techno use. While there are disadvantages and dangers with using technology, if parents are sensible, approach technology in the correct way and have conversations with children so as to monitor their techno usage, then the advantages can outweigh the disadvantages when it comes to your family and technology.

Should you need any further information or specific assistance then drop us an email.