



# 10 TECH TIPS FOR PARENTS

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## Create a family media plan.

As a family, examine your media usage. Learn about age-appropriate technology use and limits. Work together to develop a plan that creates a healthy balance between line online and off-line and create firm but reasonable rules that all members of the family agree to follow. Use the American Association of Pediatrics Media Time Calculator and create a personalized media plan at [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org).

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## Create media-free zones.

Create spaces in your home such as bedrooms and the dinner table that are device-free. Outdoor spaces like the yard and the park make great screen-free zones too. Use screens sparingly with and around children 2 and under to support the healthy rapid brain growth that is taking place during these early years.

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## Join the #DeviceFreeDinner movement.

According to Common Sense Media, 92% of parents feel that connecting with their kids over quality dinner conversation is very important, but many feel that devices are damaging this critical family time. Establish device-free dinner in your home. Get conversation starters, dinner game ideas and take the #DeviceFreeDinner Challenge at [thefamilydinnerproject.org](http://thefamilydinnerproject.org).

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## Prioritize playtime and family time.

Nothing replaces time together talking, playing and connecting as a family.

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## Take an active role.

Participate in your child's media use. Help them to find material that is educational and reinforces your family values. Play games, learn about social media platforms, view content with them and use it as an opportunity to talk about valuable lessons. Be sure to discuss the importance of digital citizenship including cyberbullying and the sharing of inappropriate content. Visit [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org) for resources.

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## Help kids to mindfully add contacts.

If your child has a phone or tablet, brainstorm with them age-appropriate ways to mindfully add and manage their contacts. For advice about how to know if your child is ready for their first cell phone and how to support them to successfully navigate their digital connections, read *First Phone: A Child's Guide to Digital Responsibility, Safety and Etiquette* by Dr. Catherine Pearlman.

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## Turn off screens at least 2 hours before bedtime.

The blue light emitted from electronic devices including televisions, tablets, computers and phones inhibits the brain's production of the sleep-related hormone melatonin. Turning off screens in plenty of time before bed allows for critical melatonin production and brain quieting that is necessary to fall and stay asleep.

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## Set a good example.

In today's over-connected world, many adults struggle with creating space and time that is media-free. It's important to be a good role model of healthy technology habits and shift the focus from being your child's media monitor to their media mentor.

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## Maintain open communication with your child.

Ask your child about their technology use and activity. Make sure they know that they can come to you with any problems or concerns and that you will work them out together.

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## Join the fun!

Show interest in your children's favorite apps and sites. Ask them to teach you about how to use them. They get to be the experts and you get to learn more about their online activity.