

TECHNOLOGY

Raising
Digitally
Wise Kids



Why Technology Matters

Technology is part of everyday life for kids, whether we want it to be or not. As parents, we can delay the cell phone and lock down home internet use, but the online world will find our kids eventually...through friends, relatives, or even school...and it is important that our kids are equipped to wisely interact with it. Not everything about technology is bad, and understanding how to use it appropriately will allow kids to use it as a tool for learning, creativity, and connection.

Children need guidance to develop healthy habits, safe boundaries, and wisdom as they grow. This applies to the use of technology as well. This guide offers simple, age-appropriate practices to help your **family** thrive in a digital world. Because, YES, that includes you, too, parents! The best way to teach kids to be digitally wise is to first model it.

HEALTHY TECH HABITS BY AGE

Kindergarten–2nd Grade

- Prioritize **hands-on play** and real-world experiences.
- Use screens **together** when possible (co-viewing builds digital literacy).
- Choose simple, high-quality apps and shows.
- Keep devices out of bedrooms.
- Begin teaching “**Ask before you click.**”

3rd–5th Grade

- Introduce **short periods of independent tech use** with clear boundaries.
- Talk about **online kindness**, privacy, and what to do if something feels “off.”
- Encourage creativity: coding apps, digital art, educational games.
- Begin practicing **time limits** and self-monitoring (“How does this make you feel?”).
- No social media yet, most platforms require age 13 for a reason.

FAMILY TECH BOUNDARIES THAT WORK

- **Create a Family Tech Plan**
(when, where, and how devices are used).
- **Device-free zones:** dinner table, car rides, bedrooms.
- **Device-free times:** mornings, homework time, 1 hour before bed.
- Keep chargers in a **central location**.

SAFETY BASICS EVERY PARENT SHOULD TEACH

- Never share personal information (name, school, address).
- Only talk online with people you know in real life.
- If something feels confusing, scary, or inappropriate:
Stop → Close the device → Tell a trusted adult
- Use parental controls and kid-safe browsers.
- Check in regularly: "What are you watching?
What are you playing?"

RECOMMENDED SCREEN TIME

The goal is **not** perfection... But it's always good to have a goal.

- Aim for **1–2 hours/day** of high-quality content. Quality content is the key. It even outranks the quantity of time spent online when it comes to negative impact.
- Prioritize sleep, schoolwork, chores, outdoor play, and relationships first.
- Screens should **support** your child's development, not replace it.
- Screens should **support** your parenting, not replace it.

Additional Resources

Books

- Crouch, A. – *The Tech-Wise Family*
- Bogart, J. – *Raising Critical Thinkers*
- Boyd, D. – *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*