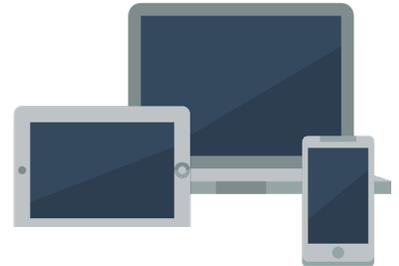

Creating a Positive Digital Culture in Your Home



Creating and supporting a positive digital culture can help your children understand how to use technology appropriately and foster positive relationships online. Below are some tips to help your family get started.

Purchase technology (e.g., gaming device, phone, tablet, etc.) that is appropriate for your child.

A 2015 study found that 88% of American teens ages 13 to 17 have or have access to a mobile phone of some kind, and a majority of teens (73%) have smartphones.



Lenhart, Amanda. (April 2015). Pew Research Center. *Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview 2015*. Accessed at: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/04/PI_TeensandTech_Update2015_0409151.pdf.

Most children started using mobile devices in their first year of life.

Kabali, Hilda K., et al. Exposure and Use of Mobile Media Devices by Young Children, *Pediatrics*, Volume 136, number 6, December 2015. Accessed at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2015/10/28/peds.2015-2151.full.pdf>.



It is a huge responsibility for a child to have 24/7 access to any cell phone, let alone a smartphone with Internet access. To access the Internet on a smartphone, one must have a data plan or use Wi-Fi. It is possible to opt out of the data plan, which means the child would need Wi-Fi to access the Internet. Being aware of your options and the capabilities of technology in your home is important so you can set appropriate rules and educate your children accordingly.

Lenhart, Amanda. (November 2013). Pew Internet & American Life Project. *9 Things You Need to Know About Teens, Technology & Online Privacy*. Accessed at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/11/07/9-things-you-need-to-know-about-teens-technology-online-privacy/>.

Help your children set up their new devices.

When you help your child set up their new technology, you will also learn what your kids can do and access through the device. You can set up your parental controls and restrictions at this time so they are aware of what you are allowing them to do or not do. You are learning alongside them (it doesn't hurt to play around with the device without them first too). They will know you understand the device as well as they do, whereas often kids are much more savvy with their technology than their parents.

FOSI & Hart Research Associates. (2012). *The Online Generation Gap: Contrasting Attitudes and Behaviors of Parents and Teens*.

Review appropriate websites, apps, and games for each child.



It is also important to monitor the games, sites and apps your children use. Some of the most popular games among kids are actually rated M (Mature) or A (Adult). Before allowing a game, website or app to be used, understand its purpose and what it is exposing to your child.

One way to stay informed is to view the free apps in the App Store on your or your child's smartphone. Another is to review Common Sense Media's ratings for games, movies, apps etc. that you can use to help you determine what is appropriate for your children.

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Discuss why strong passwords are important and how to create them.

Explaining the importance of passwords is especially vital with children who are new to technology and are creating profiles and passwords for the first time. Passwords should not be made up of easily guessed information such as a pet's name or birth year. And, passwords should be kept private and not shared with friends. Check out the following video for some password-creating advice for children:

<http://www.netsmartzkids.org/LearnWithClicky/ThePasswordRap>.



Obtain all passwords for your children's devices and the apps and sites they use (e.g., email, Facebook, Instagram, etc.).

While 91% of parents believe they are well informed about what their teens do online and on their cell phones, only 21% of teens think their parents are very well informed about their online behavior. Obtaining your children's passwords to their online profiles will help to keep you informed. Most of the sites and apps your children use have ways to communicate "under the radar," so being able to log into their profile as if you are them is a helpful way to see what's going on under the surface.

It is also important to get their passcodes for cell phones to enable you to check text messages and both outgoing and incoming calls.

FOSI & Hart Research Associates. (2012). *The Online Generation Gap: Contrasting Attitudes and Behaviors of Parents and Teens*.

Review the definition of private information with children.

More and more teens are sharing personal information on social networking sites. Approximately 92% of girls and boys aged 12-17 years use their real names on their most used social networking profile. Furthermore, about 90% use a photo of themselves, 80% share their birthdate, 70% post what city or town they live in and more than 75% of teens aged 14-17 post what school they attend. Discuss why this information should be kept private and how others on the Internet accessing their information could use it (e.g., reviewing for college admission or potential employment, identity theft, locating the child, impersonating the child and striking up an online relationship).

Pew Internet & American Life Project. (2013). *What teens share on social media*. Accessed at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/05/21/what-teens-share-on-social-media/>.

Develop and consistently enforce household rules for time limits and use of devices, apps and websites.

Rules should consist of setting time limits for technology use (including cell phones/texting), determining what social networking sites they can sign up for and requiring that they share their passwords with you for all sites and apps they use. Most, if not all, of the apps and games kids use have age restrictions; know and enforce these. To find age restrictions, review the terms of use of the site, app or game. Rules can evolve as kids show responsibility and get older, but remember to be consistent with the rules and consequences you develop.



Research states that children are spending about seven hours a day on technology, and excessive media use can lead to health and educational problems in the future. It's important to establish technology-free zones in the house where kids can go to study, relax, do homework, play with friends and sleep.

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Media and Children*. Accessed at: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.aspx>.

Be aware of these revealing statistics:

Mobile devices are introduced to children very early in life.

In a 2015 study of 350 parents, most children had access to mobile devices in their household, and by age four, three out of four children had their own mobile device. At age two, most children were using mobile devices on a daily basis and spending comparable screen time on television and the mobile device.



Almost 75% of teens with cell phones have smartphones.

A 2015 study found that 88% of American teens ages 13 to 17 have or have access to a mobile phone of some kind, and a majority of teens (73%) have smartphones. Fifty-eight percent of teens have or have access to a tablet computer.

Lenhart, Amanda. (April 2015). Pew Research Center. *Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview 2015*. Accessed at: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/04/PI_TeensandTech_Update2015_0409151.pdf.

91% of teens go online from a mobile device, at least occasionally.

Fully 91% of teens go online from mobile devices at least occasionally, and 94% of these mobile teens go online daily or more often, compared with 68% of teens who do not use mobile devices to go online.

Lenhart, Amanda. (April 2015). Pew Research Center. *Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview 2015*. Accessed at: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/04/PI_TeensandTech_Update2015_0409151.pdf.

Internet use is nearly constant for some teens.

Teens ages 13 to 17 are also going online frequently. Aided by the convenience and constant access provided by mobile phones, 92% of teens report going online daily with 24% using the Internet “almost constantly,” 56% going online several times a day, and 12% reporting once-a-day use. Just 6% of teens report going online weekly, while 2% go online less often.

Lenhart, Amanda. (April 2015). Pew Research Center. *Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview 2015*. Accessed at: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/04/PI_TeensandTech_Update2015_0409151.pdf.



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