

Bringing Up Tweens & Teens in a Digital World

A Guide for Parents

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Tech Healthy  Families

INTRODUCTION

Parenting in the digital age can feel overwhelming. Technology is woven into every aspect of our kids' lives, from learning and socializing to relaxation and entertainment. While it brings endless opportunities, it also comes with challenges we've never faced before: managing screen time, navigating social media, and protecting their mental well-being.



So Many Roles:

We need to be:

- *protectors*
- *role models*
- *teachers*
- *mentors*
- ~~*experts*~~ *nope!*

This guide is here to give you some practical introductory ideas and strategies to help your family thrive in this digital age. Whether you're trying to reduce arguments about screen time or wanting to empower your kids to make smart online choices, you'll find the tools to get started right here.

Building a Foundation of Digital Well-being



A healthy digital lifestyle starts with understanding and intention. As parents, we set the tone by modeling positive habits and engaging in ongoing conversations.

Quick Tips for a Strong Foundation:

- **Set Boundaries Together:** Sit down as a family and decide on clear boundaries about when and where devices are used. For example, “No phones during dinner” or “Screens off one hour before bedtime.” Try the [Connected Agreement](#).
- **Be Curious, Not Judgmental:** Ask your child what they love about their favorite apps or games. Listening without judgment encourages open communication. [Try these 15 questions](#).
- **Leave Room for Mistakes:** Kids will make errors online, it’s part of learning. Create an environment where they feel safe coming to you for help, instead of hiding mistakes.



Think about...

The online world is like a playground. Mean words can be said, kids can be hurt, some activities aren't appropriate, and not everyone has to play together. BUT, it is where kids are playing games, chatting about their day, asking for advice, and learning.

Essential Digital Habits for Balanced Life

It's not just about limiting screen time; it's about making sure their time online adds value and doesn't replace the things that matter most. And yes, some passive time is OK!

Quick Tips for Balance:

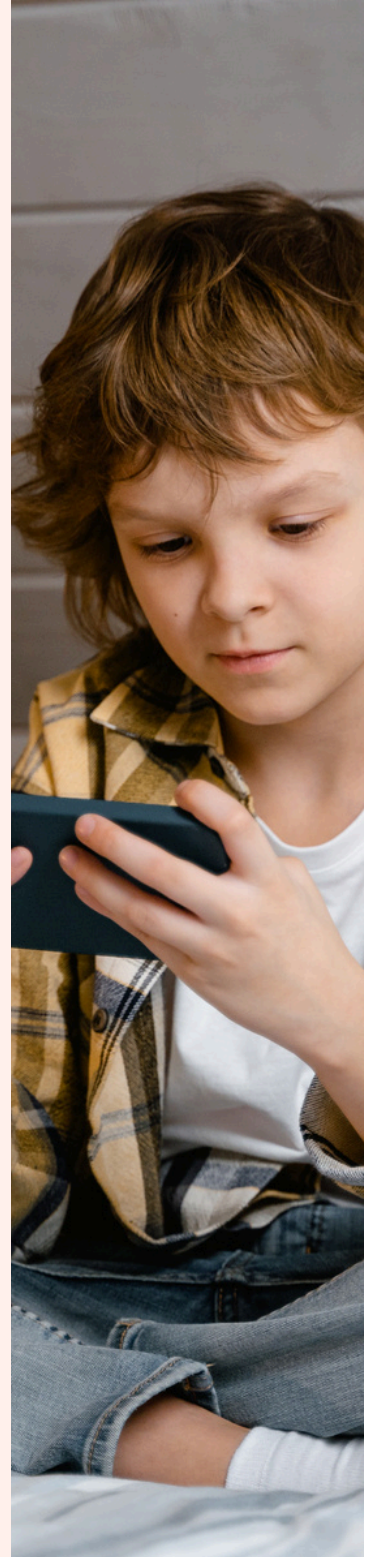
- **The 20-20-20 Rule:** Encourage breaks while using screens. Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- **Offline Activities:** Mix in activities like sports, art, or family to balance out the screen time. This teaches them balance, but they need support in this.
- **Reflect on Screen Time:** Have them consider: "Does this app or activity make me feel happy, stressed, or drained?" Teach them to recognize when it's time to step away. They can do this with my workbook or course!

Digital Safety and Online Well-being

The online world can feel like the Wild West for parents, so many opportunities, but also potential risks. Together, you can create a safety plan that builds confidence for you and your kids. New to digital citizenship? Try the [beginner workbook](#) for tweens or younger.

Quick Tips for Safety:

- **Strong Passwords Are Key:** Teach your kids to create unique passwords and never share them, even with friends.
- **Check Privacy Settings Together:** Apps and platforms often have default settings that aren't kid-friendly. Adjust them together to show your child how to protect their information.
- **Talk About Red Flags:** Explain how to spot online scams, suspicious messages, or inappropriate content. Let them know they can always ask you for advice if something feels off.

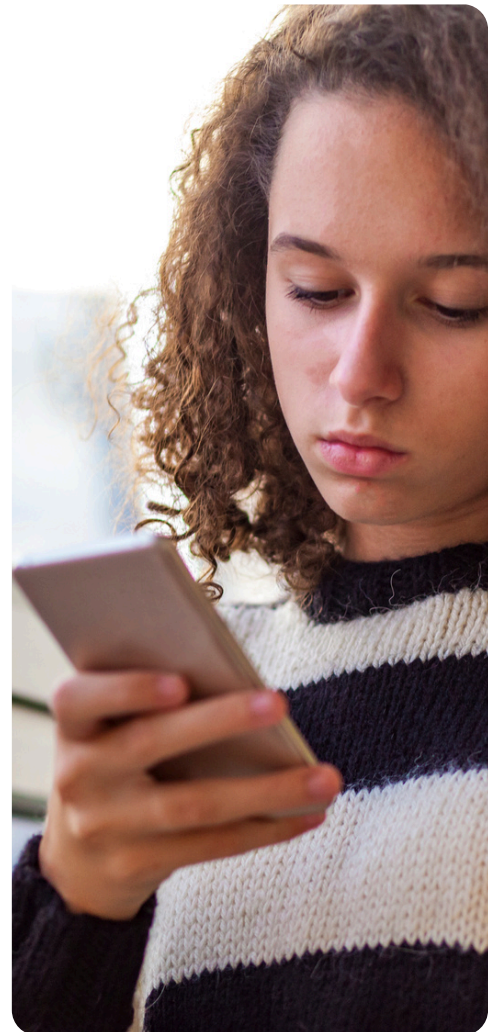


Empowering Your Child to Make Smart Choices

We can't protect our kids from every digital risk, but we can empower them to navigate challenges with confidence and resilience.

Quick Tips for Empowerment:

- **Teach Critical Thinking:**
Encourage them to pause before sharing or believing something online. Ask, "Is this source reliable? Could this be misinformation?"
- **Foster Healthy Friendships:**
Talk about the importance of surrounding themselves with supportive friends, online and offline.
- **Practice Digital Citizenship:**
Teach them to be kind online, even when it feels easy to hide behind a screen. Discuss the consequences of their digital footprint.



Making Screen Time a Positive Family Experience to Make Smart Choices



Let's flip the script on screen time! Instead of constant arguments and counting minutes, use tech as a way to connect and learn together.

Quick Tips for Positive Use:

- **Tech Together:** Watch a movie, play a game, or explore an app with your child. It turns screen time into bonding time.
- **Share Your Own Habits:** Be open about how you use tech, both the good and the bad. This builds trust and shows them that you're learning too.
- **Celebrate Wins:** Did they finish homework without distractions? Take a healthy break? Recognize their efforts and celebrate progress.

Next Steps

Navigating the digital world as a parent is not about being perfect, it's about **being present**. Use this guide to start meaningful conversations with your kids, set boundaries that work for your family, and empower your tweens and teens to thrive online. Together, you can create a digital environment where your kids feel safe, balanced, and prepared for the opportunities ahead.

Ready for more tools and tips? Join my [membership](#) where EVERYTHING is free! You'll feel confident approaching all of this in no time.



Looking for more resources for your tween or teen?

Visit my website:
www.techhealthyfamilies.com

Thank you!

Hey there! I'm Heather, a mom of three amazing teenagers and a Certified Digital Wellness Educator.

With 21 years of teaching experience and a decade in 1:1 device schools, I've witnessed the challenges our children face with screens. Living in different countries like the UAE, Singapore, and now Spain has given me a unique perspective on the global impact of technology on our kids.