

# what am I modeling?

**What are my best tech habits?**

What am I be proud for my kids to see or notice?

**What are my worst tech habits?**

What are some habits I'd be better off breaking?

**Why it's important to me**  
to be a good tech role model:

**One small change I can make**  
to my tech habits this week:

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## Remember

**Notice**  
your tech habits

**Name**  
the pulls you feel -  
and your intentions

**Nudge**  
your toward the  
habits you want

# TAKE BACK CONTROL OF TECH

**Check off all the strategies you currently use  
or that you want to try!**

- Experiment with setting a "tech-free" time of day

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- Put phone on "Do Not Disturb" or "Focus Mode"

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- Charge phone in a different room while I sleep

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- Set time limits on devices

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- Make sure I know how to disable notifications on my apps/devices

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- Rearrange the location of apps (to reduce mindless clicking)

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- Try putting phone in grayscale mode

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- Disable Face ID on phone (to reduce mindless unlocking)

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- Keep phone in another room during family meals

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- Replace some screen time with a new hobby or activity

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- Leave phone at home when I go out

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- Pick a "tech-free" day of the week

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- Block distracting websites

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- Delete distracting apps

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- Unfollow social media accounts that don't make me feel good

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**tech** without **stress**



# setting your screen time plan

Different styles work for different families – and some families use a combo. What’s your approach? Choose Your Own Adventure...

THE APPROACH	THE DETAILS
<p><b>NO SWEAT</b> “I don’t really worry about screen time”</p>	<p>Your view is: Why create another set of rules for something that isn't a problem? Your kid is doing fine managing their tech habits, so you're not worrying about screen time right now.</p>
<p><b>TIME CAP</b> “Your total screen time limit is X”</p>	<p>You set a total time for the day, or the week. Once it’s met, screen time is over. (Unless you decide to give more or less on a particular day. It’s okay to be flexible.)</p>
<p><b>DAILY WINDOWS</b> “You can use screens during these windows of the day”</p>	<p>You may have weekday rules and different rules for weekends, but your basic approach is to rely on windows (dinner time, before school, before bed, etc.) when screens are or aren’t allowed.</p>
<p><b>ESSENTIALS FIRST</b> “Get the important stuff done first, then you can have screen time.”</p>	<p>Your kids have a list of activities that need to get done before any screen time. So long as your kid is meeting essentials – which might include things like being active, doing homework and chores, getting sleep – you don’t really worry about tech during extra downtime.</p>
<p><b>PROTECTED ZONES</b> “There are certain places that we keep screen-free”</p>	<p>Your kids know there are zones that are phone-free, whether it’s the dinner table, grandma’s house, the car, your place of worship, or their bedrooms. You keep screens out of these spaces as a way to set boundaries.</p>

Quick note: There’s no “right” answer on this list. The key is just to think about screen time, and choose with intention what makes sense for your family.

Try one or more approaches from the list above, and stick to it for two weeks. If it isn’t working, pick another and try again. Hang in there! It will be worth the effort.



# setting your screen time plan

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## THE APPROACH (Check one or more!)

- No Sweat ("I don't really worry about screen time")
- Time Cap ("Your total screen time limit is X")
- Windows ("You can use screen time during these windows of the day")
- Essentials first ("Get the important stuff done first, then you can have screen time")
- Protected zones ("There are certain places that we keep screen-free")

## THE DETAILS

(The clearer your plan, the better! If you chose Time Cap, what's the limit - and will it differ on weekdays vs. weekends? If you chose protected zones, list them out...)

### THE ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

(Brainstorm with your teen 3 other ways they want to spend time when they're bored and inclined to browse)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



# WARNING SIGNS OF problematic tech use

## #1: importance

- Have they stopped or cut down on other interests or activities because they just want to be on their device?
- Do they feel that using tech is more important than anything else?

## #2: control

- Do they have a hard time controlling how much they use tech?
- Do they consistently use tech for much longer than they intended?

## #3: consequences

- Have they continued (or even increased) their tech use despite negative consequences?

## #4: impairment

- Does their use of tech cause them significant distress?
- Has it caused them problems with family, friends, school, or work?

If you're concerned about your child's tech use or answering yes to the questions above, consider speaking to your child's pediatrician or a mental health provider.



# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



## **JED Foundation Resource Center**

<https://jedfoundation.org/mental-health-resource-center/>



## **National Alliance on Mental Illness**

[www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults](http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults)



## **Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration treatment finder:**

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>



**American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:**  
[www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Youth\\_Resources/Home.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Youth_Resources/Home.aspx)



**National Institute of Mental Health:**  
[www.nimh.nih.gov/health/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/index.shtml)



**Mental Health America**  
<https://www.mhanational.org/>



**Psychology Today therapist finder tool**  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

# coping with STRONG EMOTIONS

## 4 strategies for getting through intense moments

### act

Act opposite of how you feel.

For example: Tempted to withdraw? Instead, call a friend.

### distract

Distract yourself until the emotion gets less intense (and know that it will).

ideas: exercise | a cold shower | splashing water on your face | listening to music | going for a walk | calling a friend | doing the dishes | watching a movie | counting backwards from 1000 by threes

### tame

Tame your stress by doing something relaxing.

Try tensing and relaxing your muscles, doing a breathing exercise, or even petting your dog!

### reframe

Can you reframe the way you're thinking about things? (Are you sure you've got it right? Are there are other possibilities?)

### what works for you?

(Fill this out together)

1. The strategy I most often use to cope is \_\_\_\_\_
2. One new strategy I could try is \_\_\_\_\_
3. One distraction that works well for me is \_\_\_\_\_
4. One way I "tame" emotions and relax is \_\_\_\_\_

# 5

## things teens need to **TO BUILD SELF-ESTEEM IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

skills



Learning new skills builds confidence and self-esteem. What's something your teen wants to learn? And what small steps can you take to help them?

service



Doing things outside of ourselves can have a powerful positive influence on our mood and well-being. In other words: doing good for others is good for us, too. Service can be as simple as a random act of kindness, or it can be a more formal gig.

self-care



Take time to do things that help you live well and improve your physical health and mental health. Tech time can be part of self-care, but it should include other things, too, like going for a walk, eating a favorite meal, reading a book, taking a hot shower, or visiting someone we love.

sleep



Sleep is essential for mental health, and most teens don't get enough. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that children aged 6–12 years sleep 9–12 hours a night, and teenagers sleep 8–10 hours per night.

socializing



The teen brain craves interactions with friends and peers, and research backs up the importance of social interactions. Connecting with friends can involve screens, but should also involve quality, screen-free time to hang and do fun things.



# 5 WAYS TO START FEELING HAPPIER + MORE CONFIDENT

What's one new SKILL that I want to learn?

What's something I can do this week to HELP someone else? (Volunteering? A random act of kindness?)

What can I do this week for SELF-CARE, to recharge my batteries?

What can I do to make sure I get 8-10 hours of SLEEP?

Who is one FRIEND I want to connect with this week?  
What's something fun we can do together?



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# TALKING POINTS



## to GET AHEAD OF RISKY CONTENT

### ASK QUESTIONS

- Do you ever see stuff online that's upsetting or worrying?
- I've been hearing about social media accounts that post about [eating disorders/self-harm]. Do you think people your age come across these accounts a lot? What kinds of things do you think they see?
- I've been hearing more about hate speech and racist content online and how hard it can be to avoid. What have you noticed related to that?
- Sometimes, I see things on social media that seem really true, but then I realize they're total misinformation. Has that ever happened to you? What have you heard about conspiracy theories online?
- What would you do if you came across this stuff?

### SHARE INFO

- There is a lot of stuff out there online that can be harmful, like content about self-harm or dangerous dieting, or language that's racist or hateful toward certain groups. It's important that things you see online make you feel good and fit with your values.
- There's a lot of information online that's untrue or misleading. It's easy to believe something is true when there's a lot of information about it online, but that's not always the case. It's important to pay attention to the source of that information.
- Remember that if you start clicking or looking at harmful content, the apps might think you want to see more of it and keep showing it to you. That can pull you into a dark part of the internet.

### SET BOUNDARIES

- Come talk to me if you come across harmful content, or have questions or concerns about anything you've seen online.
- Unfollow or unsubscribe from accounts that post harmful content
- [If applicable] Ask me before following or subscribing to new accounts, downloading new apps, or playing new video games



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# TALKING POINTS



## To GET AHEAD OF "STRANGER DANGER"

### ASK QUESTIONS

- Do you ever hear about people your age talking online to people they've never met in person? What are some reasons kids your age might want to make new friends online?
- What do you think you would do if you got a message from someone and you weren't sure if you knew them or not?
- How do you figure out when people you're talking to online are safe or unsafe?
- What would you do if an online friend who you trusted wanted to meet up in person?

### SHARE INFO

- There are people online - including adults who pretend to be kids - who have bad intentions and might be trying to harm you.
- Even if people seem like they're your age, you can never know for sure that people are who they say they are online.

### SET BOUNDARIES

- Never share your personal information (full name, school, home address) with anyone you're talking to, even if it seems like the person is your age.
- If anything creeps you out, or if any stranger messages you directly or asks for your personal information, you should not respond. You should let me know, and consider blocking the account.
- I need to know who you're talking to online - no secrets about who you're messaging or connecting with.



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# TALKING POINTS



## to GET AHEAD OF RISKY BEHAVIOR

### ASK QUESTIONS

- Values are things that are important to you, and to the kind of person you want to be. What are some of your values when it comes to how you act online?
- Do you ever see other people your age acting in ways online or in texts that you disagree with?
- How do you know what's okay and not okay to post or text?

### SHARE INFO

- The values that are important to our family, like kindness, respect for others, and responsibility, are just as important online as they are in-person.
- Sometimes, the things we type can come across as more harsh than we intend because the person we're sending it to doesn't hear our tone. And sometimes, we say things that we know are a little mean that we probably wouldn't say to someone's face because we can feel bolder behind our screens.
- It can be easy to forget that the things we do online—even if they seem private, like messages, or limited to a smaller group of followers—can easily become public and difficult to take back.
- It can also be hard to remember that we can't always delete things later—almost everything we do with tech ends up stored in the cloud, and it's hard to take things back once they're out there.

### SET BOUNDARIES

- Always treat others (and yourself) with kindness and respect online.
- It's never okay to cyberbully others, or to use aspects of people's identities (like their race, sexuality, or gender) as something to tease or make fun of.
- We all want to be funny, but good jokes shouldn't put down other people or hurt their feelings. If you make a mistake and take things too far, it's important to apologize - not just "I was kidding" but "I'm sorry."
- It's never okay to share naked photos of yourself, or to ask anyone else to send them to you.

# THE PORN TALK

## what to cover when you talk to teens

# S

### SET THE SCENE

"Hey, I've been meaning to talk to you about something now that you [have your own phone / are spending more time online / are getting older]. I want to talk to you about porn. It's an important topic to know about when you're spending time online. Porn is short for pornography. It's pictures or videos of sexual behavior that are made for adults. "

# E

### EDUCATE

"Porn is not realistic, and it's a bad way to learn about sex. It's not an accurate depiction of the types of sex and relationships that most adults are having or want to have. The people in porn are actors and their bodies are often altered or edited. Porn doesn't usually show people talking about consent, communicating in healthy ways, or using condoms or other protection. Sometimes, porn can even be violent. Once you see these images, it can be hard to get them out of your head. I really don't want this to be the way you learn about sex."

# X

### E(X)PRESS YOUR VALUES

"Healthy sexual relationships are based on trust, mutual respect, communication, and consent. Sex should always be fun and feel good for both people, and it should always feel comfortable and safe. Most healthy sexual relationships involve emotional and physical intimacy. But you don't usually see these types of things in porn, and actually, what you see is often fake and confusing."

# E

### ENCOURAGE FURTHER CONVERSATION

"It's totally normal to be curious about bodies and sex. I know it can be uncomfortable, but you can always come to me with questions, concerns, or if you just want to talk."

# D

### DIRECT TO OTHER RESOURCES (INCLUDING YOURSELF)

"What do you think? What questions do you have for me?"

"If you want to learn more..." (Parents Magazine has some solid resources by age - check out their list: "[15 Best Sex Education Books and Resources for Kids](#)")



# sample script monitoring plan

THE GOAL	TALKING POINTS
<b>INTRODUCE THE TOPIC + SHOW YOU CARE</b>	Hey, I've been thinking about how things are going with your phone [social media, other tech], and I realized we never really talked about how to make sure we're on the same page. I love you and I care so much about you.
<b>PROVIDE RATIONALE</b>	I want you to know I trust you. It's my job as a parent to make sure you're safe, and part of that is making sure things go well with your phone [social media, other tech].
<b>FRAME IT AS A LEARNING PROCESS</b>	Learning to use tech safely and responsibly takes practice, and I'm here to help you while you're learning.
<b>EXPLAIN YOUR PLAN</b>	One way I'm going to make sure you're safe is by [occasionally checking what's happening on your phone] or [having you show me what's happening on your phone] or [asking you to show/tell me who you're talking to and what you're posting], etc.
<b>PROMISE NOT TO JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS</b>	Your kids know there are zones that are phone-free, whether it's the dinner table, grandma's house, the car, your place of worship, or their bedrooms. You keep screens out of these spaces as a way to set boundaries.
<b>MAKE A PLAN TO RE-EVALUATE</b>	Let's keep talking about this, and we'll revisit this plan next month.

## What if they say it's a violation of their trust?

Try something like: "I trust you, and I know that you're going to use your phone responsibly. But everyone makes mistakes, and I want to make sure I can help you learn when that happens. There are also some things that are out of your control when you start using a phone (like things people send you), and it's my job to make sure you're safe. Plus, your parents' friends might be checking their phones too, so I want to help you remember that stuff on your phone isn't private."

# SETTINGS AND FEATURES

*to manage safety*

*at the*  
**Wifi**  
**Level**

Manage devices while they're connected to your home Wifi network.

**Technical Tools:**

- Check with your Internet provider (e.g., AT&T, Comcast) to set up via your router's settings
- Circle Home Plus software

*at the*  
**Device**  
**Level**

Manage settings for individual devices (at home and away from home)

**Technical Tools:**

- iPhone: Set up Family Sharing
- Android: Set up Family Link
- Playstation, Xbox, Nintendo Switch
- Third-party options: Bark, Aura, Qustodio

*at the*  
**App**  
**Level**

Manage social media, gaming, and other apps.

**Technical Tools:**

- YouTube Restricted Mode
- TikTok Family Pairing
- Instagram Family Center
- Snapchat Family Center
- Minecraft Family Account Management
- Fortnite Parental Controls
- Roblox Parental Controls

## Questions to Consider

**content** → What can they see? What can they search for?  
What types of apps can they download?

**contact** → Who can they talk to? Who can talk to them?

**conduct** → What are they posting? Who can see it?