

Suggested Activities

Print and try some of these fun skill-building activities with your kids!

Family Movie Night

Plan a family movie night. You can have your child pick something or watch something you loved from your childhood. Or, if your child likes to watch a streaming series, ask to join them for an episode or two. Resist picking up your phone! Ask your child 1) what they like about the movie/show and characters. 2) What they think is going to happen next in the plot. 3) How does the movie/show make them feel (happy/sad/excited/nervous/etc.)

YouTube Together Time

Watch a YouTube video together (can be anything you find appropriate or perhaps your child's favorite channel). Talk about the ads that pop up and what they mean. Talk about the recommended videos that show up, encourage appropriate choices, and see what your child wants to click on. Talk to them about what you think is appropriate video content, and what is not.

Setting Up for Us Time

Set up device free dinners or device free zones and designate a basket or box where devices go to be quiet for a while. If you feel like being crafty, make the bag or box and have your child help make or decorate it. When your devices are in there, communicate that you are doing this so you can focus just on them and the things you want to do or play together.

Technology That's Hard to Put Down

Take turns looking at your 'screen time' output and talk about what you usually do on your device and whether it brings you joy or stress. Ask kids which apps and games are hardest to put down, and which ones let them have boundaries or allow them to feel like they are easily in control.

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Our Non-Tech Favorites

Pick a board game you want to play, song you want to dance to, art activity that makes you feel good, outdoor place you want to visit, or pet you want to snuggle. Each family's non-tech favorites are different, so find a few that work for you and make them a regular routine. Write them down here:

Choosing the Good Stuff

Talk with your child about what type of channels/shows they watch or what digital games they play. Play a quiz game where you rate each video or game on a scale of 1 to 5 on qualities like:

- I use my brain when I watch this (vs. My brain turns off when I watch this)
- The people are kind (vs. The people are rude)
- I feel good about myself when I watch this (vs. I feel worse about myself when I watch this)
- This feels like our family (vs. This feels unrealistic)

How We Manage Emotions

What's your family's emotion coping plan? How do you each like to deal with stress or upsetting feelings? Find healthy ways to cope that feel right for your family, like movement (stretching, taking a walk), using your senses (music, hugging, stress putty), deep breathing, or talking about your feelings without yelling. Write down your coping plan here:

How Technology Makes Us Feel

Both parents and kids, think about what apps or games you use the most. How do they make you feel during and after using them? Good? Cranky? Riled up? Worried? Maybe take a break from the ones that don't make you feel good.

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Digital Disengage Challenge

This is a family challenge to put your devices down! It's hard to pull your attention away, but make a plan to turn it off, hand over the device, or put it away when it's time to do something else. Count up points when family members can put their device down the first time someone asks them. The person with the most self-control points at the end of the week wins!

Weird or Creepy Content

Ask your child to tell you about the weirdest or creepiest thing that they've seen online lately. Don't overreact! Help them understand what it was, why it showed up, and how to avoid it next time.

Scam Finder

Talk about the types of scams you've seen lately. Spam phone calls? Too-good-to-be-true advertisements? An influencer saying something outlandish? This helps your child build a critical eye.

Pop-up Ad Whackamole

If your child is watching videos or playing a mobile game, teach them to close, "X" or "skip" the ad, and to let you know when they did it! Have them help you figure out which apps or games have the most annoying pop-ups, uninstall them, and find fun alternatives.

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Private vs. Shareable

Quiz your child on what is private versus what is OK to be shared. Their last name? Address? School name? Phone number? Home town? Password? All private! Their high score? Favorite game? OK to share!

To Post or Not to Post

Do you regularly post photos of your children? If so, sit down with them on the couch and go through your social media feed with them. Ask them to rate your posts – from recent to when they were just babies – with one of three responses:

- I love that you shared it!
- Meh, don't really care.
- I kinda wish you hadn't....

You don't need to necessarily take photos down but listen to your kids with an open mind about why they wish those photos stayed on your phone, and not on the internet.

Chat Etiquette

If your child uses a video game or video platform that allows chatting and comments, have them show you what it looks like. Look at the chat together and talk about: who is being respectful and positive? Who isn't? How do they know that other players are really kids? Help them restrict their chat to "friends" online, or try turning off the chat for a week or 2 – some kids don't miss it.

Offline Family Photo Album

Instead of posting photos online, select a few that are special to your family to print out and put in an album in your home. Have your children help pick out the ones that give them the best memories and help arrange their order in the album. Keep the album in an easy-to-reach place so that kids can look through it during downtime (rather than grabbing a device!).

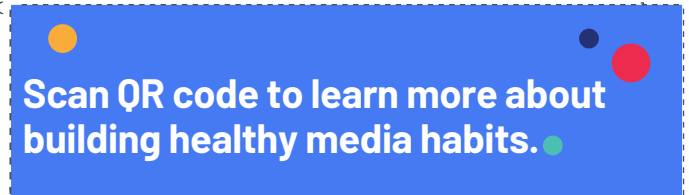
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