

# TRIPLE PARENT WEEKLY

## Everyday Tips For Everyday Parents

### “Where’s the Remote Control!?”

### Managing Screen Time with Children, Teens and Adults!!!”

Dear Parents,

Zoom calls, emails, text, FaceTime, Facebook, Instagram, Google Classroom, Smart TVs, Firesticks... The list goes on! Technology has taken over our lives. Even though we felt it coming, it almost feels like this happened overnight! COVID-19 had thrown us in the fast lane of learning how to make a Tic-Toc video (smile). Technology, when used appropriately, can be a lifesaver for many parents, but when it’s misused it can present many stressors. Families that have access to cell phones, tablets, and reliable internet service have access to a world outside of their homes. This can be school during COVID-19 for continued learning, games and fun entertainment or a real danger if left unsupervised. As parents, we need to be cautious of internet dangers, set time limits and review appropriate usage expectations. Managing screen time can be more challenging now with social distancing measures in place. Added stressors such as multiple users in the home, various age groups, and varying understanding of technology usage – can make managing technology a real struggle. Now that schools in our area are out for the remainder of the school year, it’s time we prepare ourselves for the inevitable fights over screen time in our homes.

As always, “Parent’s Stay Positive... We’ll get through this together....”

### 2. Model appropriate screen time, internet usage and social media behavior for your children

- Try to take breaks from technology during the workday to tend to the needs of your children
- Be mindful of your search history when electronic devices are shared in the home with children
- Don’t make it easy for children to access sites not appropriate for them on shared devices

### 3. Parental Controls (Safety, Privacy, & Security)

- **Do your research**....make sure you are familiar with learning and recreational apps, systems, and other resources your children are using to stay connected
- **Talk to your children**....make your children aware of your monitoring; set rules together; and make sure they know the technology schedule
- **Be aware of passwords**....explain privacy features to your children and keep a log of passwords; RESPECT your children/teens, and monitor accounts remotely when possible, avoid unwanted break-ins to accounts – this can have lasting impacts on trust
- **Avoid leaving your child unattended and alone with technology**....Keep your child nearby while on technology; make them aware of your monitoring
  - Be Present and set time to check-In with your child throughout the day...plan for “Technology-Free” periods of the day!

### 1. Set Realistic Expectations

- **It’s okay to allow screen time for your child!**
- **Set clear limits and expectations**....try writing out a plan, or draft a safety contract with your child/teen; Do not assume they know the rules – set explicit rules for usage
- **Age Appropriate Use**....Teens may need technology for longer periods of time than younger children; be fair with your children, set reasonable guidance for time restrictions.

- 0 -5: It is suggested that technology time not begin too early.
  - Consider engaging infants and young toddlers with human attention and affection when possible
  - Begin to introduce your toddler age 2+ to limited technology time that supports early learning
- 6-10: Balance 1 hour of technology, with 1 hour of non-technology based activities (i.e. reading, math, cooking, art, science, etc.)
  - Limit total, daily technology usage to less than 6 hours if possible
- 11-14: Work to balance the load online academic activities, with less screen time for non-academic activities (video games, movies, social media, etc.)
  - Find what that works for you and your family
  - Be mindful of the need to share technology with other siblings
  - Ensure you have non-technology related games and activities planned for breaks in screen time
- 15-17: Encourage independent learning, problem solving, and time management
  - Help your teen develop a schedule for screen time
  - Time dedicated daily to learning (on online classes, connecting to teachers, researching projects, etc.)
  - Allow time for safe recreational use (video games, watching movies, TV, social media)
- **Develop a technology agreement to outline time needed for internet use**
  - Here's an example: "Diego agrees to complete 2 hours of study time in order to receive 3 hours of down time on weekdays, and 4 hours on weekends. If Diego fails to meet his study time minimum, 1 hour will be deducted from weekend technology use."
  - **Do not give into technology use that has not been earned by chores/homework or other responsibilities**

## 1. Advantages of Technology

- **Technology is a huge benefit to today's society...use it to benefit you.**
  - Engage your child in a screen time activity during the busiest time in your home-office
  - Staying connected to family and friends via phone calls, emails, video calls etc.
  - Having access to teachers, classrooms and academic resources virtually when school buildings can't be access
- **Try using technology to assist with various activities around the home (i.e. chores, physical activities, outdoor ideas, spring cleaning, organizing etc.)**
  - Following instructions on a phone to cook dinner
  - Set reminders/timers for timed instructions
  - Look up how-to videos for workouts and other ideas
  - Listen to music, podcast and audiobooks

### **\*\*\*Access to Technology\*\*\***

Please note that we understand that everyone does not have adequate access to technology during this time. Access to technology is necessary to stay on top of assignments for your child during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Please reach out to your child's school or teacher to request support with obtaining access to technology needed and assistance with assignments. If you have the privilege of having access to technology and the skills to be comfortable navigating it, consider ways to support others around you who may not (i.e. walking a loved one through steps over the phone to assist with connecting to Zoom calls or helping a parent navigate Facebook to attend their Sunday service).

