Rules Of Thumb

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FOR FAMILIES

START

What exactly does it mean to be a START family? We're glad you asked! Here are our top recommendations for raising digitally healthy kids. This is neither a comprehensive checklist nor a magic wand; but when families pursue these principles, kids have a better chance at developing an internal compass to guide screen time decisions.

S

Start With Yourself.

MODEL HEALTHY TECH USE FOR YOUR KIDS

When studies show the average person checks a smartphone 80 times per day, we need to think about what we are modeling for our kids. They need to see us using screens with intention—embracing them when they support our core values, while avoiding screen time that interferes with these same values. Of course, we will never be perfect...but an honest look at our own digital habits is a great first step toward building empathy, trust, and digital health as a family.

T

Turn-in Zones.

CREATE DEVICE FREE RHYTHMS AND SPACES

Establish device-free zones throughout your daily routine—a time to recharge and reconnect with one another. A great place to start is mealtimes and bedtimes—keep phones out of sight when you are eating and have kids charge their devices outside of their bedrooms at night. Though they might protest at first, kids are often relieved when they are released from the pressure to always be "on." The benefits of regular unplugging are powerful, and can become lifelong habits that foster your child's mental health and digital well-being.

A
Accountability.

APPLY FILTERS + SETTINGS + OPENNESS

While there is no filtering or parental control product that is 100% foolproof, our kids deserve the highest level filters we can provide. For additional accountability, avoid using devices in private. These are only safety nets; the first line of defense should be open relationships with trusted adults who can help children navigate the dangers they run into online. Accidents are bound to happen, and when they do, adults should be prepared to remain calm so kids know we are safe harbor.
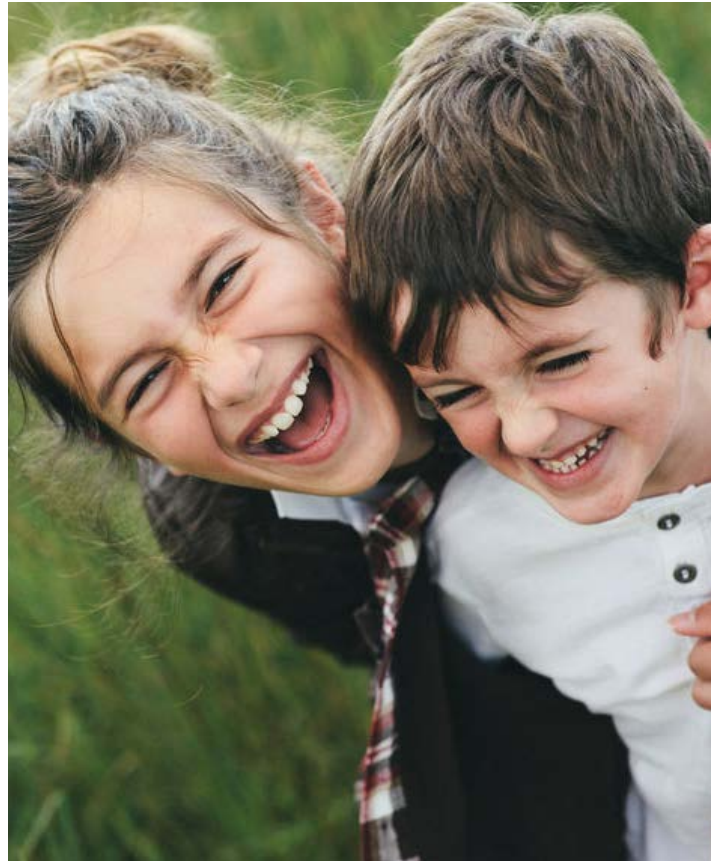
R
Ride. Practice. Drive

USE A DRIVER'S ED APPROACH TO TECH TRAINING

Before you hand your kids the keys to a car, you prepare them to navigate risky situations and road hazards. They spend many years shadowing you in the backseat, followed by driving with a learner's permit—with you logging hours by their side to equip them with the needed skills. Just like a car, tech comes with great responsibility—and requires an intentional training process. If you get overwhelmed, pause and remember "Ride. Practice. Drive."

T
Time Well Spent*

CONNECT ONLINE + OFFLINE

Keep your eye on what matters most—the life right in front of you. Be intentional about deepening connections with people in your family and community—both online and offline. Show your kids how to be captivated by life—not screens. Teach them to ask themselves this simple question: "At the end of your life, all you have is your time and attention. What will you say was time well spent?"

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