7 Best Practices
for Parenting in the Digital Age
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Safety first!
Trust your child as much as you can while understanding that monitoring their activity on the internet is about safety.

Be an active parent.
Don't wait for your kids to run into an issue with their technology use before talking with them. Discuss and model the appropriate use of technology from the beginning!

Help your kids learn balance.
There are many dangers in the digital world, but there are great things about it too. Don't forget to teach children about both!

Establish good dialogue with your child.
Maintaining a steady line of communication with your child is essential to parenting in all areas, and technology is no exception.

Educate yourself about the digital world.
Do research about the kinds of things you hear children discussing, whether your own or someone else's, so you can be knowledgeable about current trends. Also, have your children teach you what they're doing!

Remember that kids feel safe when parents set limits and boundaries.
Let your kids know that you have their back. The rules are there to help them learn and grow, not to stifle or discourage.

Explicitly teach "techno-manners."
Make sure that your children understand the importance of being respectful to themselves and others online and offline. This includes maintaining an appropriate level of privacy, communicating with care, and recognizing what constitutes safe social interactions.

Recommendations
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

For All Children:

- Turn off televisions and other devices when not in use.
- Avoid using media as the only way to calm your child. (Research shows that this can lead to difficulties in self- and emotional regulation.)
- Monitor children's media content as well as what apps are used and downloaded.
- Keep bedrooms, mealtimes, and parent/child playtimes screen-free.
- No screens 1 hour before bedtime.

For Children Under 5:

- Avoid digital media use (except video-chatting) with kids under 18-24 months.
- For kids 18-24 months, only introduce high-quality programming and use media together with child.
- For kids 2-5 years of age, limit to under 1 hour per day of high-quality programming that is shared with an adult to help scaffold/process.
- Avoid fast-paced programs/apps with lots of distracting or violent content.

For Children 5-18:

- Develop, consistently follow, and routinely revisit a Family Media Plan.
- Ensure that children get the recommended amount of daily physical activity and sleep.
- Do not allow children to sleep with devices in their rooms.
- Discourage entertainment media while doing homework (no multitasking).
- Have ongoing communication with your children about online citizenship, safety, respect, bullying, and privacy.

Setting Up a Media Plan

What kind of digital parent do you want to be?

Clearly outline your rules and expectations.

Are you going to limit time?

Are you going to filter?

Are you going to monitor?

What is acceptable online behavior and what is not? (Use real-life examples from the news.)

Utilize Common Sense Media: http://www.commonsensemedia.org/advice-for-parents

Make a contract.

Sample cell phone contract:

http://www.cyberbullying.us/cyberbullying_cell_phone_contract.pdf

Sample internet/social media contract:

http://puresight.com/Useful-tools/family-online-safety-contract.html

Resources for Monitoring & Parental Control

Network-based
(taps into wifi)

Disney's Circle

Software
(device & app management)

Net Nanny
Cyber Patrol
Norton Family Premier
AVG Family Safety
Meraki Mobile Device Management

Alternative Browsers
(easy, cheap, & okay)

Apple's Parental Controls
Mobicip
Android Parental Control

Mobile Providers
(easy, pricey, & effective)

AT&T Smart Limits
Verizon Safeguards