

PARENTING MATTERS: TECHNOLOGY



3-5 YEARS OLD



LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

You're realizing that your preschooler has an uncanny intuition when it comes to working your technology. They are engaging with what they watch in new ways, which ups the ante on what you show them. They are asking questions and making observations that maybe haven't occurred to you. Screens have a power over them and it's hard to resist the temptation to hand them a tablet in the grocery store, on the plane, at the doctor's office, and any time you need them to be still. Now is the time to define your boundaries, encourage socialization, engage their curiosity and lead by example.



YOU PARENT THEM WELL WHEN YOU...

KNOW:

Preschoolers learn best when they are engaging with other kids, experiencing nature, and exploring with all of their senses. Your child is thinking like an artist, so the more you can let them think creatively and get messy, the better they grow and learn. Technology can be educational in many ways, but it is not a replacement for natural play and socialization. The best way for your child to develop well is by interacting with other kids and adults and figuring out the world through play.

EXPECT:

There will be questions, and lots of them! You will have to think quickly and look up answers that you don't know. Expect to address things like talking animals, right and wrong, relationships, and real vs. imaginary as your child starts to think these things through. Be conscious of these things as you choose programming for your child to watch. Be ready to get some pushback when screen time is over as your child is getting better at voicing their feelings.

PREPARE:

Set boundaries around technology in your family. Stick to your limits, even when it's not easy. Decide on daily screen time limits and choose quality shows and apps that are educational and interactive. Designate tech free zones both physically in your home and in your family time. Look into filters for your internet and phones and learn to use them so that you can decide what works best for your family. As you make these decisions, keep in mind the values that you are working towards. These limits aren't punishments, they are ways to help your family grow and connect better.

TALK:

Bring your child in on the conversation about technology. Explain to them why boundaries and limits are healthy. Talk about how technology can be dangerous, but assure them that you will keep them safe. Give them a few quality options and let them choose what they want to watch or play. Clearly tell them that they can watch one episode or play one round. Talking it through helps give them ownership and encourages them to make wise choices. Be sure that you are talking about these things with your spouse, family, and other key players in your child's life, and consider talking to parents with older kids for tips on navigating this phase.

YOUR NEXT STEPS ARE...

Questions for Kids:

What would you rather do: watch TV, play outside, or play with friends? Why?

What is something you have learned from watching a show, video or movie?

Sometimes we have to turn off the TV or put away the screens, how does that make you feel?

Spend some time making a list of things that you can do as a family that don't include screens. Hang the list on the fridge or put it in their room and check things off as you do them!

Questions for Parents:

How have we used technology to better our relationship? To better our parenting?

How has technology harmed our parenting or negatively affected our family time?

What boundaries should we set for technology in our family? When do we leave technology out of our family time? How long should we let our kids experience screens each day?

How can we effectively hold each other accountable to the boundaries we have established? How will we show grace when we fall short?:

What is a question or topic our child has asked about that's caught us by surprise? How well did we react?

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Your child is a sponge. They are constantly observing the world around them, and their behaviors are reflecting exactly what and who they are seeing. Focus yourself on God and commit your words and actions to serving and reflecting him. Do all things in a way that honors God so that as your child mimics and learns from you, they reflect God as well. Use technology and boundaries as tools to better know and praise God together as a family.

RESOURCES...

> App

ParentCue • Connect Church and Home
Pure Flix • Video Streaming

> Web

ChildMind.org • Brain Development and Behavior Research
CommonSenseMedia.org • TV and Movie Ratings
iMom.com • Relatable Topical Parenting and Family Posts
TVGuardian.com • Real Time Language Filter
HealthyChildren.org - Search "Kids & Tech" • Technology Safety Articles

> Books

The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in It's Proper Place by Andy and Amy Crouch
Boundaries with Kids: When to Say Yes, When to Say No, to Help Your Children Gain Control of Their Lives by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
The Collapse of Parenting: How We Hurt Our Kids When We Treat Them Like Grown Ups: by Leonard Sax



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