

TECHNOLOGY AND YOUTH: A PARENT'S GUIDE

- Your connection with your child is the *best defense* against tech overuse.
- Keep communication open, consistent, and compassionate.
- Technology isn't the enemy — disconnection is.
When families stay emotionally connected, kids can learn to use tech wisely, not be ruled by it.

Technology Use Rules

To help your child thrive in the digital world, set clear, consistent, family-wide boundaries.

1. Create a Family Tech Contract

- Make it *mandatory* before your child or teen receives a device.
- Include clear expectations, privileges, and consequences — all agreed upon *in advance* as a family, not in anger.
- Consider screen time limits within this contract. The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends:
 - Infants and Toddlers - no established benefits of media exposure with the exception of interactive video chatting to support long distance relationships.
 - Children 2-5 years - educational, age appropriate content with an engaged adult - <1 hour /day
 - Children 5-17years- a maximum of 2 hours a day of recreational screen time (including TV, computer/tablet, phone)

2. Use Consequences Intentionally

- Frame them as *teaching opportunities*, not punishments.
- Example: "We'll take a break from your phone until you show you can manage it responsibly."

3. Delay Social Media

- No social media before **age 16**. This protects emotional and brain development. Many countries are implementing legal policy around this as the concern for the mental health of children and teens is so significant.

4. Maintain a Device Curfew

- All screens off **1–2 hours before bedtime**.
- Charge all devices **in the parents' room** overnight.



5. Establish “No Phone Zones”

- Bedrooms
- Cars
- Meal time
- Family gatherings

6. Model What You Expect

- Parents must follow the same rules.
- Remember: *Your behavior teaches more than your words.*
- Model what you respect - turn off your own devices during family time, turn off screens in home when not in use

Recommended Resources

Websites

- [Cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca)
- [ProtectChildren.ca](https://www.protectchildren.ca)
- [info.thorn.org](https://www.info.thorn.org)
- <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/behavior-and-development/screen-time-and-young-children>

Books

- *The Anxious Generation* – Jonathan Haidt (2024)
- *Growing Up in Public* – Deborah Heitner (2023)
- *How to Break Up with Your Phone* – Catherine Price (2018)
- *The Big Disconnect* – Catherine Steiner-Adair (2013)
- *Brain Storm* – Daniel Siegel (2011)

These technology rules were adapted from information provided from our colleagues at Juno House <https://junohouse.ca>