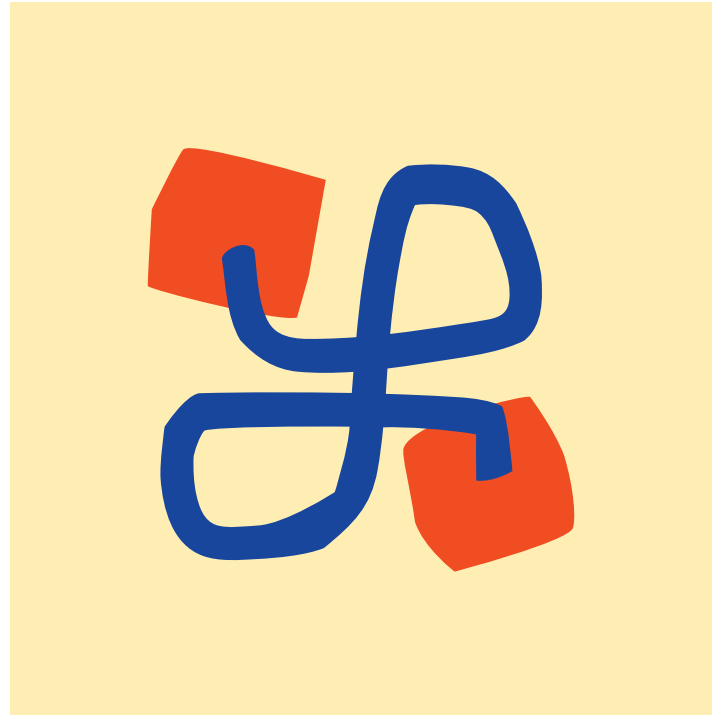# Technology

They might have not asked yet, but kids want to know when they'll be able to get their own phone, have their own social media profiles, and interact with friends online. Start the conversation about technology now, and begin setting clear guidelines. Kids know they can get their license at sixteen, which gives them something to look forward to. Set expectations about when they can get their 'technology license' too. Technology can be a positive experience as long as parents stay informed and involved.

Your role during this phase is to…

Help them explore the possibilities so your child will understand core values and build online skills.

This guide is designed to help you meet elementary-age kids where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind: Technological responsibility means leveraging the potential of online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.

Tips to Help Elementary Schoolers Navigate Technology

To elementary-age kids (K-3rd)...

SAY THINGS LIKE

"Never use Google (or any search engine) alone."

"I don't know, but we can look that up together." (Use technology to enhance your conversations.)

"I'm texting Grandma to ask a question." (Talk openly about technology as you use it.)

"Siri doesn't always know what we are asking." (Turn on safe search, and don't let Siri answer your kindergartner's questions.)

"You have ten more minutes and then it's time to put the iPad away." (Set limits for screen time.)

"Let me see what you did." (Show interest in what they do with technology.)

"Never post a phone number or address without checking with me." (Kids are often naïve about sharing personal content with strangers.)

To elementary-age kids (4th-5th)...

SAY THINGS LIKE

"What do you think is a healthy amount of time online?" (Collaborate on expectations, rules, and consequences.)

"Can you help me figure out how to . . ."

"Tell me more about how that works."

"Have you ever seen someone say really mean things online?"

"Let me find out more about that and I will let you know." (Look up things like age limits, content ratings, and connection to strangers.)

"Can we play together?" (Make technology social by playing online games together.)

"Have you seen anything online that surprised you?"

"We should respect people online just as much as we respect them in person." (Talk about how devices sometime escalate bullying.)

"Sometimes people pretend to be someone they aren't online." (Caution against contact with strangers.)

Remember

The elementary years are full of possibilities and you want to engage their interests in a healthy way. Use technology to share things you enjoy. Stay curious about what they are seeing and learning, and help them to feel safe in bringing questions to you. When they push back against your rules and guidelines, engage them in talking about the 'why' behind the rules. Stay informed. Stay involved. Keep the conversation going.

Tips to Help Elementary Schoolers Navigate Technology

Enhance the Conversation

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Let them earn it: Reward what you want repeated by allowing your kid to earn technology time by using access as currency. For example, if your child reads for 20 minutes, they earn 10 minutes of technology time. If your child completes certain chores, instead of money, they're given minutes to use on approved electronic devices. If your child gets a good behavioral report at the end of the school week, they are given a set amount of time over the weekend to use their tablet or device.

Keep it social. Keep your kids' technology in plain sight. Designate a common area in the house where your kid(s) have permission to use their technology. Have them help you set it up with a comfy chair, lamp, charger, and any other supplies frequently used with their devices. As you set it up, talk about the importance of having rules and boundaries when it comes to using technology. Talk about all the ways keeping what happens online in plain sight keeps everyone safe.

Talk about the good and the bad. It may feel early, but it's important for your elementary schooler to know that there are people who use the Internet for good and for evil. Give your kid a "pop quiz" on online safety by providing them with a variety of scenarios and asking them how they'd respond. Praise them for answers that support your family's boundaries, and redirect when they don't.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application.

To discover more ways to understand this phase, check out the Parenting Your... *book series. For more on this subject, check out the* Parenting in a Tech World *online course. Both are available at* **parentcuestore.org**.

For more information on The Phase Project and other great parent resources, visit theParentCue.org.

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