

Technology has become integral to every part of our lives. Kids no longer read books, they read on their tablets. Typed papers have replaced hand-written essays. And for most, text messages or emails have replaced phone calls. This increase in technology does not mean it needs to invade your family time.

Here are 10 tips to help you maintain balance with technology in your home.

1. Technology should serve your family and bring you closer to each other, not make your family its servant and keep all of you apart. Have a Family Meeting to share your values about media usage. Don't assume your kids know how you feel.
2. Parents are their children's first and best teachers. Model appropriate use of technology for your kids.
3. Use of cell phones, computers, televisions, and other electronic devices is a privilege for kids, not a right. Cell phones and computers (of all types) are not private. Parents have a right and a responsibility to know what their kids are seeing, hearing, and saying on their electronic devices.
4. [Set a family media policy](#)—decide who can use which forms of technology, what constitutes appropriate content for each form of technology, when and where it's acceptable to use each form of technology, and how you will monitor usage. Make sure everyone in the family knows the policy. Have all family members sign the policy, and post it where everyone can see it.
5. Establish appropriate consequences, both positive and negative, for technology usage. Communicate those consequences clearly and often to your kids.
6. Establish "technology-free" zones and times in your home when you all "unplug" and concentrate on communicating with each other and enjoying each other's company. Meal time is a great time to go "tech-free" and talk!
7. Help your children achieve balance in their lives by encouraging them to stay physically active, enjoy reading, and learn to relax and have fun without electronics.
8. Take advantage of [resources](#) that "watch" media content, and use those resources to help you decide when you can say "yes" as well as when you need to say "no" to your kids' media/technology usage.
9. Talk with other parents. Let them know what your family technology policy is and ask how they handle technology and media exposure in their homes. Support each other in helping kids use technology safely and appropriately.
10. The Boys Town National Hotline is here to help if you have a concern about your kids. Call 1-800-448-3000.



For more tips on making the most of your family time visit, www.boystown.org/parenting.