

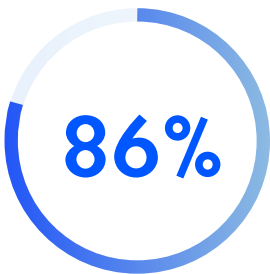
HAVE THE "TECH TALK" AND HELP YOUR KIDS ESTABLISH A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Parents often want to ensure that their children have a positive, productive and safe relationship with the technology they use. Technology has become a vital part of families' everyday life – helping improve learning outcomes and keeping families connected throughout the day. Parents also understand that technology is critical to their children's future.

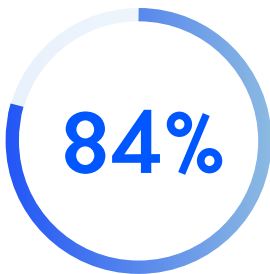
[From a recent Trusted Future survey of American parents:](#)

- What you earn is increasingly tied to what you learn, 87% of parents believe technology will help their children to keep learning throughout their lives – which can lead to a more prosperous future.
- 85% of parents also believe that being adept at technology, and having basic technology skills will also help their children access good paying high-tech jobs of the future.
- Nearly three-quarters think technology will make the lives of future generations easier than those of their parents.

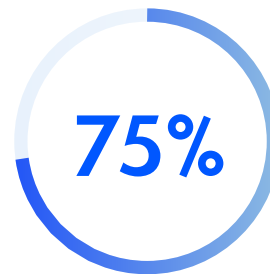
But parents overwhelmingly agree that technology has created new challenges for parents. In order to unlock these opportunities and harness the potential that new technologies can bring, we must overcome these challenges, build trust into the very heart of our digital ecosystem, and give our kids the tools they need to succeed. In addition to teaching our children the basic cyber hygiene best practices that will persist into adulthood, parents recognize that they must work with their kids to ensure that they develop a healthy relationship with technology.



of parents think they should discuss online privacy, safety, and security with their kids.



of parents believe that it is important to tell young kids to think twice before they click on a link, the same way they tell their kids to look twice before crossing the street.



of parents (and 79% of parents of teenagers) believe the "tech talk" is as important for teens as the "sex talk."

I TO EMPOWER YOUR KIDS TO NAVIGATE THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE “THE TALK”... “THE TECH TALK”

Engaging your kids about the safe and healthy ways to engage with technology is as essential to modern parenting as having the “sex talk.” Don’t put it off. Re-visit the discussion in an age-appropriate manner as your kids grow. Don’t assume that your always-online, tech-savvy teen fully understands the security and privacy “dos and don’ts” of online.

1 SET REASONABLE LIMITS.

While it is important to respect your child’s agency and growing sense of independence, setting limits is essential to good parenting. But don’t craft limits or rules around technology and internet use in a vacuum. Take the time to discuss the importance of safe and healthy internet use with your children, understanding that those conversations will look different as children age. As your kids mature, be ready to update and modify prior limits, just as you do in other contexts. For example, for young kids, browsing the web and using internet search engines should be a joint child-parent activity. If you wouldn’t feel comfortable letting your children have unsupervised play dates, don’t let them use the Internet without supervision either. For older kids, in contrast, you might find yourself adopting a more hands off approach, perhaps relying more on content filtering and monitoring software.

- *Take advantage of screen time tools to make some of these limits “automatic,” decreasing the need to actively monitor and enforce these limits. In Trusted Future’s survey of parents, 67% of parents expressed support for screen time tools that help them keep track of how much time their kids spend using different apps.*

2 DEFEND BEDTIME.

Among pediatricians, child development experts, and educators, there is broad and nearly universal agreement that families should strive to cultivate good sleep habits. In our survey of parents, 69% expressed support for screen time tools that allow them to set a specific time, like bedtime, when apps and notifications are blocked. Take advantage of these tools to decrease friction and argument around bedtime rules.

Even if you don’t set any other screen time limits, you should take steps to limit pre-bed tech usage. In addition to the negative impacts on health and school performance from insufficient sleep, teens may be more likely to engage in risky behavior or consume inappropriate content when everyone else in the house is asleep and the prospect of parental monitoring seems remote. To encourage good sleep practices, take advantage of settings that allow parents to restrict use of a device or certain apps during night hours. If access to a device is too great a temptation (and/or you are not confident that your child won’t be able to circumvent any controls that you place on the device), consider removing devices from your kid’s room at night. Some families find it helpful to create a device charging station for all of the family’s devices in a central area

or in your room. If that isn't feasible for whatever reason, some parents adopt the habit of unplugging the home Wi-Fi router before going to bed.

- **Walk the talk:** *You will encounter less resistance and have more success if your kids see that you are also complying with sleep and downtime rules.*

3 KNOW THE SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY TECH USE AND BE PROACTIVE.

Check in regularly with your kids, especially during the teen years, to make sure they have a healthy relationship with their technology use – especially as it relates to their social media and gaming. Watch for unexplained changes in your child's behavior and talk regularly with them about what they are doing online and with whom. If you become concerned, spot check their social media accounts to make sure they are having healthy interactions. When the amount of time spent using technology or a particular app or game becomes problematic, some families find it helpful to create a family schedule. Be sure to get input from every member of the family regarding overall screen time limits or specific time limits for specific devices or activities. In recent years, device makers have introduced a number of features that can help encourage a healthier relationship with technology.

4 RAISE A GOOD ONLINE CITIZEN.

If your kids are using social media, be explicit about how they should behave. Tell them that you expect them to treat others with respect and kindness online just like you do at school and on the playground. If you notice that they are engaging in hurtful behavior towards others on social media, intervene sooner rather than later.

5 TALK TO YOUR TEENAGER ABOUT SEXTING.

As your children become teens, include discussion of sexting and other online intimate activity when having the "tech talk" with your kids. For good reason, many parents focus on ensuring their kids do not engage in unsafe interactions with strangers online. But kids can also get into plenty of trouble when talking to friends and classmates online. According to a study from the American Academy of Pediatrics, 1 in 5 youths have been exposed to unwanted sexually explicit material online. A 2018 study published in JAMA Pediatrics, found that around a quarter of teens have received sexually explicit texts and emails and least 1 in 7 teens have sent sexts. Worse yet, 1 in 12 teens have had sexts they have sent to another person forwarded to others without their consent.

Given how common it is, it is irresponsible to assume that your teen would never engage in such activity. Don't just tell your teenager to never sext though. Talk with them openly and without judgment about the risks associated with sending explicit messages or sharing intimate images. Remind them that sexually explicit photographs can easily be saved and forwarded to others without their knowledge or consent. Point out that many victims of revenge porn also believed that they could trust the person with whom they originally shared their intimate photograph

or video and never expected that that person would one day share it with others. Above all, encourage them to be cautious when engaging with crushes or romantic partners online.

6 **ENSURE THAT YOUR KIDS FEEL COMFORTABLE TURNING TO YOU WHEN THEY ARE IN TROUBLE OR DISTRESS.**

Despite your best efforts, your kids may still get tricked by a phishing scam into sharing their online credentials. They may still encounter inappropriate content or receive messages that make them feel comfortable. They might get targeted by a cyberbully or, alternatively, find themselves caught up in a toxic social media environment that encourages unkind and cruel behavior towards others. A combination of social media, targeted advertising, and the impact of easy access to online pornography might lead your teenager to develop body image issues or experience depression or other mental health challenges. When any (or all) of those things happen, you want to make sure your kids know that they can safely come to you for help and advice.

7 **PARTNER WITH YOUR KIDS.**

Like most things dealing with parenting, there is no simple answer or one-size-fits-all solution. Every child, every family, is different. Don't be rigid if things aren't working. Be flexible and partner with your child. Don't make the mistake of relying only on parental controls and privacy settings to keep your kids safe. Resourceful kids can and will find their ways around those safeguards. But more importantly, failing to fully engage your kids about *why* they should care about security and privacy and *how* they should do so when they use technology does a disservice to your child when they leave your care and enter adulthood.

8 **DON'T FORGET TO SET MODEL BEHAVIOR AND "WALK THE WALK".**

Kids are not the only ones in the family that can fall into unhealthy patterns when it comes to technology, social media, and the Internet. If you find yourself in this situation, consider talking about it with your kids and working with them to come up with a shared family plan to reduce unhealthy tech use.

Ultimately, the digital world is just like in real life, kids model their behavior off of what they see. If you are a bully online, your kids probably will be too. If you demonstrate poor digital hygiene, your kids probably will too. If you have an unhealthy relationship with technology, your kids probably will too.

- *When it comes to excessive screen time use that intrudes on family time and negatively impacts performance at school or work, parents are often the worst offenders. Child psychologists agree that screen-induced distracted parenting negatively impacts your kids in [myriad different ways](#). Monitor your own screen time usage and consciously work to ensure your own relationship with technology is healthy and productive.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

TRUSTED FUTURE

[8 Steps to Better Protect Your Privacy Online](#)

[9 Essential Steps to Keep Your Device Secure](#)

[5 Key Steps: How to Stop your Mobile Activity from Being Tracked](#)

WATCH: [Trust Talk: Protecting Child Safety](#)

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

[Digital guidelines: Promoting healthy technology use for children](#)

COMMON SENSE MEDIA

[Parents' Ultimate Guide to Parental Controls](#)

[Privacy and Internet Safety](#)

[How do I decide which parental controls to use?](#)

[Should I let my tween girl use social media?](#)

[What are the basic safety rules for cellphones?](#)

CONNECTSAFELY

[Family Guide to Parental Controls](#)

FAMILY ONLINE SAFETY INSTITUTE

[How to be a Good Digital Parent Toolkit](#)

IKEEPSAFE

[Guidance for the Safe and Healthy Use of Technology – Youth/Parent Fireside Chat](#)

CISA

[Keeping Children Safe Online](#)

[Staying Safe on Social Networking Sites](#)

[Parents and Educators Tip Card](#)

[Chatting with Kids about Being Online](#)

FBI

[Keeping Children Safe Online](#)

FTC

[Kids and Mobile Phones](#)

[Talk to Your Kids](#)

[Kids and Computer Security](#)

[Parental Controls](#)

[Protecting Your Child's Privacy Online](#)

[Kids: Texting and Sexting](#)

[Kids and Socializing Online](#)

USA.GOV

[Online Safety in the Age of Digital Learning](#)

OFFICE OF THE PRIVACY COMMISSIONER OF CANADA

[12 quick online privacy tips for parents](#)

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CYBER SECURITY

[Cyber security for kids: How parents can talk with their children](#)

AUSTRALIA'S ESAFETY COMMISSIONER

[Parents, Young People, & Kids](#)

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY ALLIANCE

[Tips for Parents on Raising Privacy-savvy Kids](#)

INTERNET MATTERS

[Helping parents keep their children safe online](#)

KQED

[How Parents can Model Better Screen Time Behavior for their Kids](#)

NY TIMES

[How and When to Limit Kids' Tech Use](#)

PBS

[Online Safety Tips for Parents](#)

CONSUMER REPORTS

[Internet Safety for kids: How to Protect your Child from Online Danger](#)

[How to Use the Parental Controls on a Smartphone](#)



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