

TAMING TECHNOLOGY:

PARENTING THE ONLINE CHILD

CAROL CHURGIN, MSW, LSW
COPE CENTER
MONTCLAIR NJ 07042
973-783-6655
CCHURGIN@COPECENTER.NET



HOW PARENTS/CARETAKERS ENGAGE WITH CHILDREN ABOUT USING TECHNOLOGY

- **Digital Enablers** – allow their children to determine their own use of technology
- **Digital Limiters** – just say “NO”
- **Digital Mentors** – take active role in guiding their children in their use of technology



WHAT'S YOUR “TECHNOLOGY” PARENTING STYLE?

ARE YOU A...

....Digital Enabler?

...Digital Limiter?

...Digital Mentor?

What Would You Like to Be?



WHY IS IT SO HARD TO SAY “NO” TO TECH?

- The REALITY: **we all** need to be online
- Apps and software are engineered to draw the user in
- Games: strong pull to keep playing and get to the next level
- Rewires the brain
- For the parent/caretaker – serves as pacifier, babysitter, storyteller, rabble rouser, cheerleader

Usual difficulties as a parent/caretaker to set and maintain limits



TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME & BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- Increased diagnosis of clinical depression and anxiety
- More easily distracted
- Less emotional stability
- More problems finishing tasks
- More problems making friends
- Sleep problems
- Addiction



SIGNS OF ADDICTION



- Does it prevent them from doing his normal activities?
- Is there a lack of interaction with peers or family?
- Have grades in school or performance at work dropped?
- Have there been changes in their behavior?
- Are they unwilling to manage their use?

Alcohol, drugs, gambling, shopping ... even

TECHNOLOGY



HOW TO PARENT YOUR ONLINE CHILD...



1. Identify your family values
2. Pick your spot
3. Set limits
4. Establish Consequences
5. Conduct Family Meetings
6. Sign Family Media Contract



IDENTIFY YOUR FAMILY VALUES

Family Values - foundation of thoughtful and consistent parenting in all aspects of family life

- Ask: what matters to you and your co-parents?
- Family rules are based on these values
- Live them
- Communicate them
- Result: Easier for children to know what is expected





PICK YOUR SPOT

- ✓ Spend time and energy on what you value
- ✓ Determine your boundaries in advance
- ✓ Know your limit and stick to it
- ✓ Be consistent



SET LIMITS

- What is your line in the sand?
 - What is "too much" screen time?
 - What is too violent?
 - What is age appropriate?
 - Where and when is technology being used?
 - What is dangerous to oneself/someone else?
- How are you going to communicate the limits?



ESTABLISH CONSEQUENCES

- Be firm, fair and consistent...rules apply to everyone in the family
- Reinforce desired behaviors to prevent undesired ones
- Clearly communicate rules and expectations
- Have a menu of consequences ready in advance
- Natural consequences come in handy
- Punishment should fit the crime
- Consider developmental level



CONDUCT FAMILY MEETINGS



- Discuss how technology will play a role in the family and support family values
 - limits & consequences
- Use your active listening skills
- Be open to children's feedback to have full collaboration and buy-in

SIGN FAMILY MEDIA CONTRACT



TIPS FOR A BALANCED & HEALTHY APPROACH

Model the behavior you want:

- No tech in bedrooms...use a real alarm clock
- Devices are off limits during family time
- Create tech-free family fun and be tech-free yourself at times
- Don't have your phone in your hand when talking to your child
- GPS is the only acceptable use when driving... Ringers/alerts off



BE A



- Apply the parenting skills you already have in a thoughtful way
- If you aren't able to limit your children's device use now, how will you be able to limit other behaviors as they get older?
- The rules apply to you too!
- Talk...have regular age-appropriate conversations and check-ins
- Teach your child to be media savvy and be a good online citizen



THANK YOU!



COPE Center
104 Bloomfield Ave.
Montclair NJ 07042
973-783-6655

