

Family Technology Discussion Points

Discussions to have:

Agreements made by family:

Where can the computer be used?
Only in public areas? Bedrooms ok?

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Should we have a limit to the amount of screen time each day or week? What about on weekends?
(computer/tv/itouch/xbox/etc)

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Do we want to have screen free times or screen free zones? (at the dinner table/on family outings/etc)

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Are there any websites/games that are off limits?
(violence/sexual/public chat rooms/social media sites/etc)

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What time does the computer need to be shut down for the night?
Consider time management strategies to make sure homework is completed before that time

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When doing homework on the computer, can other sites be open?
(skype/facebook/other websites/etc)

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Should there be a limit to the amount of time spent on games/skype/social sites/etc? Can they be used before homework completed? During homework? What about on weekends?

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Consequences

Lots of parents are afraid to set limits. They think it will build a wall between them and their teen. In truth, limits actually show your teen that you care. The tricky part is finding a balance between your need for control and your teen's need for independence. But it's totally worth the effort.

A University of California (Berkeley) study found that parents who set clear, consistent rules but *also* give their teens some freedom are definitely doing something right. Their teens score higher on tests; are more mature, positive, and skilled in social situations; and are much less likely to use alcohol and drugs than other teens.

Work together with your child to develop the technology agreements on the other side, remembering that some of our adolescents need a lot of structure to be successful; others don't. Once agreements have been settled, look at the list below and discuss what the consequences might be for not following those agreements. Cross out any that will not work for your family and add in your own options. The understanding being that, if the agreements are broken, you will choose an appropriate consequence from this list. Some things to keep in mind when deciding on consequences:

- **Make sure consequences are reasonable.** Consider the frequency and severity of broken agreements. Link consequences directly to the agreement that was broken whenever possible.
- **Only set consequences that you are able to and are willing to enforce.**
- **Make them clear, not vague.** Saying “If you go over your computer time, you will not get to use your computer.” is vague. Saying “If you are on the computer past our agreed shut-down time, you will lose an hour of computer time on the weekend.” makes it clearer.

Adapted from: <http://teenbrain.drugfree.org/tools/underconstruction/boundaries.html>

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Consequences Menu

Verbal reminder of agreement

Computer will have all non-school-related programs/applications removed

Restricted time on computer for ____ day(s).
Time allowed: _____

No technology usage for one weekend

Computer may be used only for homework for ____ day(s)

Shut-down time for computer/other technology is earlier for ____ night(s)

Computer may be used only in public areas

No internet usage on computer for ____ day(s)

Computer usage on weekend restricted to _____

Program used to block usage of social media sites

Lose use of phone, itouch or other technology for ____ day(s)

Loss of socializing time if work is not getting completed

Need to show parents completed homework before using computer for other things

Need to discuss with parents each night how much of your homework involves the computer