

# TIPS TO MANAGE Screen Time



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Digital technology has become an excellent tool to make and enhance social relationships, however, it can also expose users to risk. These tips from **Challenge Success** explore how parents can lead by example and help their children maintain balance, safety and positive relationships in the digital age.

**Restrict the use of devices in the car.** Car rides offer a great opportunity for conversation with your child. Answering the phone in the car can inadvertently send a message that a conversation with the person on the other end of the phone is more important than a conversation with them.

**Prohibit devices at the dinner table.** Dinner time should be family time. Model the behavior you would like your child to practice. Show them that they are the priority at the dinner table.

**Talk with your children about appropriate online conduct.** Even if your child's usage is innocent, it's likely that they've witnessed poor behavior by others.

**Don't text your kids during the school day.** It's distracting when parents text their child during the school day. Most importantly, make sure to abide by school cellphone rules.

**Avoid reaching for your phone first thing in the morning.** What you see in your inbox immediately places you in a reactive mode. Give yourself a chance to create your own priorities for the day.

**Have your children disengage from technology at least 30 minutes, preferably an hour, before bed.** Studies have shown that screen time right before bed is not conducive to a good night's rest.

**Set a time in the evening for all devices to be shut down.** Not only will your child get more sleep, but this "curfew" will also help support time management skills.

**Don't use your phone as an alarm clock.** If a phone is by the bedside, your child will be tempted to respond to texts and social media, interrupting sleep.

**Look through your child's texts and let them know you're doing it.** This teaches your child that their online activity is never truly private.

**Be curious.** Show interest in what your child is doing online — they are often doing something productive and would value your genuine interest and support. This will also help them to feel comfortable telling you if they are a victim of cyber-bullying.