

Engage your faith by...

## PHILIPPIANS 4:9

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me-- practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Parenting a baby or toddler is overwhelming. There is so much to learn and so many opinions to hear from countless sources. Take some time in this phase to focus on what God has to say through scripture and prayer. Observe how Jesus teaches others with grace and conviction. See how God shows his deep love and his huge power. Abide in the example that God has set and find peace in him as you set boundaries and make big decisions.

### Resources...

#### > Web

childmind.org  
commonsensemedia.org  
iMom.com  
Safekids.com  
ConnectSafely.org

#### > Books

**The Tech-Wise Family:** Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in It's Proper Place  
by Andy and Amy Crouch

**The Big Disconnect:** Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age  
by Catherine Steiner-Adair and Teresa H. Barker

**Unplug:** Raising Kids In a Technology Addicted World  
by Lisa K. Strohman and Melissa Westendorf



#parentingmatters

PARENTING  
resources

## Parenting matters: TECHNOLOGY

□ BIRTH ~ 2 YEARS OLD □

### LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Your baby is discovering the world around them and learning how to interact with each new challenge and experience. Even at this young age, screens have an mesmerizing ability to capture the attention of your squirmy, fidgety, always-on-the-move child. As a parent, you are relying on technology to capture memories, search for answers, and stay connected to the adult world. Now is the time to define what boundaries you will put on technology, to realize the power of natural play, and to start leading by example.



## You parent them well when you...

### KNOW:

Technology impacts your child's neurological development, sleep and behavior. By a child's 3rd birthday, their brain has reached 85% of its adult volume and by the time they turn six, their brain is 95% developed. Everything that your child is exposed to in the first years of their life affects them mentally, socially, physically and spiritually. Know that limiting screen time and choosing high quality programs for your child can help them learn to engage the world around them in healthy and positive ways.

### EXPECT:

It will be incredibly tempting to play another episode. You are overwhelmed, busy and tired, and that screen works wonders to help you get a little more done. As true as that is, expect to see your child copying more of what they see and hear both in real life and through technology. Keep this in mind when choosing shows for them to watch and apps for them to play. Expect to spend some time watching kids shows and weeding out the quality from the nonsense in order to set your child up for success.

### PREPARE:

Setting boundaries may not seem quite as important now as it will when they are older, but laying a foundation of expectations is important. Decide on technology free zones such as the dinner table, the car or around bedtime. Look for ways to help your child play and engage without screens. Set up playdates, make time to explore nature, and give your child sensory activities to keep them busy rather than turning on a show. Connect with your family to decide on screen time limits and commit to upholding the boundaries you create.

### TALK:

Start conversations with your spouse, caregivers and family members about the importance of technology boundaries and the values that you have as a family. Clearly communicate what your limits are and why they exist. Talk to your child about the world around them! Make the most of your time with them by pointing things out, explaining your actions and asking them questions. Model what positive personal relationships look like.

## Your next steps are...

### text:

Challenge yourself to set an example for engaging with technology. Put an action plan in place that includes some of the following:

- Decide what your tech free zones are, both • physically in your home and in your family experiences.

- Set a goal for how much technology-free time you • would like to spend with your child each day.

- Commit to reading at least one book or article about how technology effects your child.

- Establish boundaries on how much screen time your child experiences each day.

- Touch base with anyone who cares for your child and help them get on board with your plan.

### Questions for Parents:

How have we used technology to better our relationship? To better our parenting?

How has technology harmed our parenting or negatively effected our family time?

What boundaries should we set for technology in our family? When do we leave technology out of our family time? How long should we let our kids experience screens each day?

How can we effectively hold each other accountable to the boundaries we have established? How will we show grace when we fall short?:

Engage your faith by...

## COLOSSIANS 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Your child is a sponge. They are constantly observing the world around them, and their behaviors are reflecting exactly what and who they are seeing. Focus yourself on God and commit your words and actions to serving and reflecting him. Do all things in a way that honors God so that as your child mimics and learns from you, they reflect God as well. Use technology and boundaries as tools to better know and praise God together as a family.

### Resources...

#### > Web

childmind.org  
commonsensemedia.org  
iMom.com  
TVGuardian.com  
HealthyChildren.org - Search: Kids & Tech

#### > Books

**The Tech-Wise Family:** Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in It's Proper Place  
by Andy and Amy Crouch

**Boundaries with Kids:** When to Say Yes, When to Say No, to Help Your Children Gain Control of Their Lives  
by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

**The Collapse of Parenting:** How We Hurt Our Kids When We Treat Them Like Grown Ups  
by Leonard Sax



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## PARENTING resources

Parenting matters:

# TECHNOLOGY

3 ~ 5 YEARS OLD

### LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

You're realizing that your preschooler has an uncanny intuition on

how to work your technology, without really being taught. They are engaging with what they watch in new ways, which ups the ante on what you show them. They are asking questions and making observations that maybe haven't occurred to you. Screens have a power over them and it's hard to resist the temptation to hand them a tablet in the grocery store, on the plane, at the doctor's office, and any time they need something to focus on. Now is the time to define your boundaries, encourage socialization, engage their curiosity and lead by example.



## You parent them well when you...

### KNOW:

Preschoolers learn best when they are engaging with other kids, experiencing nature, and exploring with all of their senses. Your child is thinking like an artist, so the more you can let them think creatively and get messy, the better they grow. Technology can be educational in many ways, but it is not a replacement for natural play and socialization. Know that the best way for your child to develop well is by interacting with other kids and adults and figuring out the world through play.

### EXPECT:

There will be questions, and lots of them! You will have to think quickly and look up answers that you don't know. Expect to address things like talking animals, right and wrong, relationships and real vs. imaginary as your child starts to think these things through. Be conscious of these things as you choose programming for your child to watch. Be ready to get some pushback when screen time is over as your child is getting better at voicing their feelings. Expect to stick to your limits, even when it's not easy.

### PREPARE:

Set boundaries around technology in your family. Decide on daily screen time limits and choose quality shows and apps that are educational and interactive. Designate tech free zones both physically in your home and in your family time. Look into filters for your internet and phones and learn to use them so that you can decide what works best for your family. As you make these decisions, keep in mind the values that you are working towards. These limits aren't punishments, they are ways to help your family grow and connect better.

### TALK:

ring your child in on the conversation about technology. Explain to them why boundaries and limits are healthy. Talk about how technology can be dangerous, but assure them that you will keep them safe. Give them a few quality options and let them choose what they want to watch or play. Talking it through helps give them ownership and encourages them to make wise choices. Be sure that you are talking about these things with your spouse, family and other key players in your child's life, and consider talking to parents with older kids for tips on navigating this phase.

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## Your next steps are...

### Questions for Kids:

What would you rather do: watch TV, play outside, or play with friends? Why?

Can you tell me something that you've learned from watching a show, video or movie?

Sometimes we have to turn off the TV or take away the screens, how does that make you feel?

Spend some time making a list of things that you can do as a family that don't include screens. Hang the list on the fridge or put it in their room and check things off as you do them!

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How have we used technology to better our relationship? To better our parenting?

How has technology harmed our parenting or negatively effected our family time?

What boundaries should we set for technology in our family? When do we leave technology out of our family time? How long should we let our kids experience screens each day?

How can we effectively hold each other accountable to the boundaries we have established? How will we show grace when we fall short?:

What is a question or topic our child has asked about that's caught us by surprise? How well did we react?



Engage your faith by...

## PHILIPPIANS 4:6B

...In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

As your kids grow, their eyes will be more opened to the real world. You will continue to protect and shelter them, but they will come across things in their lives that you wish you could protect them from. As you lead your child, confirm that inappropriate things exist, but that God calls us to focus on the great things that he has created, including ourselves. Setting boundaries is critical, but do more than that. Help them see the talents and skills God has gifted them with. Some of their talents may utilize technology, don't be afraid of that, the goal is to use their time wisely and honor God throughout their lives.

### Resources...

#### > Web

childmind.org  
commonsensemedia.org  
iMom.com  
raisingboysandgirls.com  
digitalkidsinitiative.com  
theonlinemom.com  
<http://bit.ly/2wYCZFB>

#### > Books

**Growing Up Social:** Raising Relational Kids in a Screen-Driven World  
by Gary Chapman, Arlene Pellicane

**Disconnected:** How To Reconnect Our Digitally Distracted Kids  
by Tom Kersting

**Right Click:** Parenting Your Teenager In A Digital Media World  
by Art Bamford, Kara Powell, Brad M Griffin

**The Tech-Wise Family:** Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in It's Proper Place  
by Andy and Amy Crouch



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## PARENTING resources

### Parenting matters: TECHNOLOGY

□ KINDERGARTEN ~ 3RD GRADE □

#### LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Your kindergartener is beginning to read and can now understand things that pop up on the web that before would have slipped by unnoticed. By the time your child is in third grade they are fully capable of navigating most electronic platforms, probably better than you. What safeguards do you have in place to guard their heart?



## You parent them well when you...

### KNOW:

By age eight, 96% of children have watched TV, 90% have used a computer, 81% have played a video game and 60% have played games or used apps on a cell phone or tablet. Because of all this exposure, 1 out of 10 kids have seen pornography by their 10th birthday, most often accidentally through a search engine or pop-up. The time that kids spend on screens increases the likelihood that they will read, hear or see something that they shouldn't. Monitoring software works to limit the chance of them stumbling upon inappropriate content (\*\*).

### EXPECT:

Kids will push for more screen time, and will grow better at defending why they "need" to stay connected. They will want to video chat with their friends and message via gaming system (Xbox or Playstation) or conversation apps found on phones, computers and tablets. Expect to actively encourage your kids to choose non-screen activities and make sure you bill them equally so that time without screens is not a punishment.

### PREPARE:

Set thoughtful guidelines for time limits and tech free zones. Connect with your spouse and other key players to ensure that you are on the same page. Be ready to explain to you kids why boundaries are important, why you chose these ones, and how you are committed to sticking to them. Be prepared for your child to test their boundaries, this is a healthy part of their process and accepting it will lessen the chances of you giving in under pressure.

### TALK:

Share with your kids the boundaries you've chosen and allow them to give input. Stick to your foundation, but invite them in on the conversation to increase their ownership. Explain that there may be a time when they accidentally see something inappropriate. Encourage them to practice "Close-Walk-Talk", where they close out of the screen, walk to a parent or guardian and talk about what they saw. Ensure them that they won't be punished and you won't be angry as long as they are honest and let you know right away.

## Your next steps are...

### text:

Engage your child's interests outside of technology. Set a side a day time each week to be together as a families tech free. Then, create a bucket list of ideas and set a goal to check them all off over the course of the next year. Share pictures with us on Facebook (@mpkids) or Instagram (@mountainpark\_kids), #parentingmatters

Below is a list of ideas to get you started:

- Have lunch or dinner outside
- Make a kite & fly it
- Make play dough or bubbles
- Catch bugs & observe them
- Paint with sidewalk paint
- Make a book together
- Paint rocks
- Plant a garden
- Make your favorite cookies together
- Search for constellations at night
- Go on a nature scavenger hunt
- Make homemade popsicles
- Build a fort & read in it
- Go fishing
- Build a birdhouse (or a fairy house!)
- Go to a museum
- Make fresh strawberry lemonade
- Play hide and seek in your backyard ... with a toy! (hide the toy!)
- Make homemade pizza with fresh veggies

### Ask your kids:

- > What are ways we can use technology to help us do other things? (Find a constellation in the sky, learn about different plants and animals, look up a recipe, etc.)
- > If the power were out for a whole day what would you love to do?
- > What would happen if we spent all of our time just watching TV and playing video games?

Engage your faith by...

## ROMANS 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Your preteen will see and hear songs, words, movies, videos and other things that you wish they hadn't. It is your role to help them to lead a life for God and not for followers, likes, high scores or peer approval. There is a delicate balance between protecting them and letting them find their own way. Encourage friendships with kids who help your child stand firm in their beliefs and who share interests and hobbies. Help them build a peer group that will keep them focused on what is right and pure rather than what is popular and worldly.

### Resources...

#### > Web

childmind.org  
commonsensemedia.org  
iMom.com  
raisingboysandgirls.com  
digitalkidsinitiative.com  
theonlinemom.com  
<http://bit.ly/2wYCZFB>

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by Art Bamford, Kara Powell, Brad M Griffin



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Parenting matters:

# TECHNOLOGY

4TH & 5TH GRADES

### LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Fourth and fifth graders are starting to take steps toward

technology independence. It is likely that they are communicating with friends through a texting app or FaceTime. The odds of them stumbling across inappropriate content and understanding what they are seeing is greatly increasing. Filters are a great start, but a foundation of open and honest communication is critical as you progress through this phase.



## YOU CAN HELP GUARD THEIR HEART BY...

### KNOW:

Nothing that is said or posted online can ever be erased, everything done online contributes to a digital footprint. Future employers, coaches and colleges are able to evaluate a digital footprint (all comments, posts, photos, videos, etc. posted online) and make decisions based on what they see. Your child likely has no awareness of the permanence and lack of privacy that the internet assures.

### EXPECT:

Resistance is normal! Your child won't be jumping for joy over having limitations and boundaries, but that is ok. It's your job as a parent to make decisions based on awareness and experience that kids just don't have yet, knowing that you are setting them up for a more successful future. Be thoughtful and God-honoring in the guidelines you set and the way that you enforce them. Expect to explain (more than once) why you chose them and expect to stick to them even when challenged.

### PREPARE:

Keep a log of your child's passwords for their email, devices and all social media accounts. Check these accounts and keep an eye on what your child is posting and what they are seeing. Establish that you are their accountability partner, helping them focus on making wise choices, and that this is not a punishment. Consider showing them your social media accounts regularly as well to increase trust and lessen their likelihood to resist.

### TALK:

Curiosity is a big motivator for your child. Even if they aren't looking for it, there is a high likelihood that they will stumble across pornography or other inappropriate content. Don't hesitate to have some frank, developmentally relevant conversations about sex. The more they can talk to and hear from you, the less likely they are to seek answers online. Decide on a family code word to use if they accidentally see or hear something inappropriate but they aren't able to discuss it right then and there. Make sure you follow up on these conversations. If you haven't yet, install filtering and monitoring software and explain to your child what it does and why it is helpful (\*\*).

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## Your next steps are...

Connect with your spouse about what the technology rules and limitations are in your home. Mutually agree on a few principles and commit to upholding them. Make sure that you have this discussion together before engaging the rest of your family.

Once you've finalized your principles as parents, invite your children in on the conversation, ask them what they believe are reasonable time limits, where you should have tech free zones, and what apps, games, shows and movies are appropriate. Help them understand why boundaries are healthy and helpful. Come to a family consensus but remember that you are the parent and protecting your children is ultimately your responsibility.

### Digital Footprint Activity

Beforehand, gather the following props: padlock, small tube of toothpaste, toothbrush, permanent marker. Gather your family together and allow at least 30 minutes for this activity.



The padlock reminds us to set strong passwords and keep your profiles and devices secure.



The toothpaste reminds us that much like once toothpaste comes out of the tube it is nearly impossible to put back in, once you post something online, it is nearly impossible to take back. Unkind words about others, inappropriate pictures or videos, can show up when future employers are searching your digital footprint when deciding if you are right for your dream job. Colleges and universities make the decision to accept you or not in part by what your digital footprint says about you.



The toothbrush reminds us that just like you would never share your toothbrush with friends, neither should you ever share your passwords with friends. The only exception to the rule is you as the parents.



The permanent marker reminds us that everything done online is permanent. Comments made on profiles, pictures and videos posted, websites searched. Even Snapchat is permanent!



Engage your faith by...

## PSALM 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

God gives us the unique role of leading our children. This can be super intimidating. Often this role seems like more of a burden than a blessing, but you don't have to do it alone. You have the Lord to guide you and the church to support you. When you feel lost or overwhelmed, rest in the fact that God is your strength and your shield, protecting and guiding you. Trust in him in all things. When you struggle to set and enforce technology expectations, lean on the Lord and on your Church.

### Resources...

#### > Web

[childmind.org/article/when-should-you-get-your-kid-a-phone/](http://childmind.org/article/when-should-you-get-your-kid-a-phone/)  
[Focusonthefamily.com](http://Focusonthefamily.com)

#### > Books

**Right Click:** Parenting Your Teenager In A Digital Media World  
by Art Bamford, Kara Powell, Brad M Griffin

**Irresistible:** The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked  
by Adam Alter

**The Tech-Wise Family:** Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in It's Proper Place  
by Andy and Amy Crouch



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## PARENTING resources

Parenting matters:

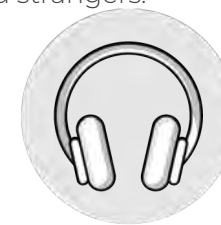
# TECHNOLOGY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

### LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Devices "have become the most valuable commodity" in the Middle School hierarchy. Middle Schoolers climb the social ladder through Snapchats and Instagram likes. Diplomacy in their digital

social behaviors about whether or not to "like" a crush's photo or jump into a social media squabble is a source of daily anxiety and stress. Motivated by acceptance, they may try on several different digital identities based on the latest trending websites, apps, and crowd sourcing from peers and strangers.



## YOU CAN HELP GUARD THEIR HEART BY...

### KNOW:

All middle schoolers are different! Keep in mind that age, personality, maturity, and interests will all affect the way that your student engages with technology. Know that your student may struggle in ways that their siblings, friends and neighbors don't. Be sure to tailor your expectations to your individual student and be aware of their unique traits and behaviors.

### EXPECT:

There will be pushback! When you enforce boundaries, your student will likely not surrender their screens easily. Technology is a huge part of Middle School culture, so when they are separated from their screens, they can feel alienated and outcasted. You will need to build mutual trust, so expect to have consistent conversations and to work intentionally to trust each other. Also expect to reiterate your family technology boundaries (maybe more than you think is necessary!) and to explain how those boundaries help honor your values.

### PREPARE:

There is a strong likelihood that your child has engaged in some type of unhealthy behavior online. They may have seen pornographic images, been bullied (or bullied someone) online, or shared something that they should have kept private. Chances are, they are afraid to tell you because they can't anticipate your reaction. Prepare for these moments so that you respond in a caring, thoughtful and level-headed way. Enter these conversations with grace and be sure to stay calm, handling these issues well can help establish positive and constructive communication patterns for the future.

### TALK:

Communicate consistently with your Middle Schooler! Ask them what they are encountering online and answer any questions they may have. Technology is here to stay, you can't avoid it but you can talk regularly and openly about it. Together as a family, explore ways that you can positively influence your community and your world using technology. Use tech resources such as devotions and scripture apps to talk about God together in your home.

## Your next steps are...

Setting up technology boundaries can be intimidating and overwhelming. It might even be awkward to discuss certain topics. Three critical conversations you need to have with your Middle Schooler are about healthy web habits (what to view/not to view), the effects of the internet on self image, and communication boundaries. These conversations are a healthy and necessary step in raising safe and technology savvy teenagers. Conversations may happen around the dinner table or on the way to practice. The following 8 questions are conversation starters for discussion with your students.

### 8 Critical Questions

- Tell us about a time something was posted online that made you feel valued?
- If you were to stumble upon a pornographic image online, how would you respond?
- What are healthy and safe profile settings online?
- Has there ever been a time where someone picked on or devalued you through a social media/online post?
- How can we use technology as a family to bond more together?
- What is an example of a safe way to communicate something personal online?
- How can we create healthy boundaries for our devices in our home?
- What is an example of something inappropriate to share online?

Setting up technology boundaries in this phase is critical. Your student might have access to a device for the first time or are now engaging with apps in a new way. Use these questions as a platform to create a Family Technology Boundary Contract for how every member of your family can uniquely commit to using tech wisely.

Engage your faith by...

## HEBREWS 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are- yet he did not sin, Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Seek out empathy for your students in the midst of their journey. There is often shame and weakness in failures and shortcomings. As parents, you can affirm this hurtful belief, or you can stand against it. When you empathize with their struggle, you create space for them to be honest and open. This same honesty and openness helps them find the grace and confidence to live differently.

### Resources...

#### > Web

Focusonthefamily.com  
covenanteyes.com  
commonsensemedia.org

#### > Books

**Right Click:** Parenting Your Teenager In A Digital Media World

by Art Bamford, Kara Powell, Brad M Griffin

**Irresistible:** The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked  
by Adam Alter

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# TECHNOLOGY

HIGH SCHOOL

## LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

Feeling like your High School student is controlled by a little gadget controlling their mind, body, and soul. Your student probably does almost everything on their devices. Every facet of

their life resources technology platforms. In fact, a landslide majority of their communication is done via technology - through social media, texting, phone calls, online gaming, and Snapchat.

In fact, students are creating digital identities. The world (best friends, family, old friends who live states away now and random people they have never met) interacts with them through this identity. The danger of this digital identity is that it stays with



## You parent them well when you...

### KNOW:

Your student is battling for independence and striving to make their own rules. This phase is less about setting up boundaries and more about creating space to uphold those boundaries and values. Know that even when they tell you they know everything, they do not! Students don't always understand the implications that technology has on their lives in the present and in the future. Your role is to be a safe place for them to process through how to set up healthy web habits and how to approach their failures in grace.

### EXPECT:

Anger, frustration and embarrassment when you find out your student has overshared personal information, viewed pornography, or bullied someone online. Your student is striving to prove that they can make their own choices and be independent, so when they fall short they will not be quick to admit it. Expect to have grace filled conversations regularly. Be aware of your body language, the tone of your voice, and the space you create for these conversations because you are training them up in how to make wise choices in their tech habits.

### PREPARE:

You will be having less face to face conversations with your students. They are developing more active social lives and are therefore spending less time at home. Don't be offended when they communicate with you over technology. Prepare to make the most of your in-person interactions by engaging in genuine ways. Don't be afraid to be a part of their tech lives through emoji filled family group chats, sharing funny videos and taking an interest in what they show and tell you.

### TALK:

Discuss the impact of technology on many facets of life. Talk about how technology impacts friendships, romantic relationships, college acceptance, education, family time, job prospects, etc. In order to show your student that these things are a priority, you should make them regular conversations in your home. Look for ways to verbally review your family expectations and to encourage healthy relationships apart from technology.

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## Your next steps are...

Parenting your High Schoolers in regards to technology can feel like trying to catch a runaway train. Your teen are really tech-savvy. They can probably navigate the tech world far quicker and smoother than you can. At some point, they will go off the rails. You might find porn on their smartphone. You might uncover an inappropriate SnapChat. You might find out that they are bullying a peer online.

Our first response to these situations may be a freak out, but we're going to encourage you to engage in active listening. Active listening is a process of identifying the issue, dialoguing back and forth in order to fully understanding one another, and working together in creating an action plan to move forward. Here is a framework a framework for you to guide a conversation with your student.

### Active Listening Response Guide

#### • Identify:

Directly mention what has happened. Explain how are they are breaking your family rules / expectation.

#### • Dialogue:

Always listen first. Let them fully explain (or explain what they are willing). Repeat back to them what you hear so they know you fully understand them (they can do the same for you). With many of the above situations, their reactions may come out of a place of embarrassment, shame, or betrayal. While these reactions seem unjustified to you, they feel very justified and real to your student. Validate those feelings before you correct them.

#### • Action Plan:

Work together to make an action plan. Look for steps forward to make sure issue does not happen again. And then ... follow through. Make this a priority, so they know it matters to you.

If you have not already set up boundaries, our Middle School Tech Guide is a great resource.