



***Resource List on Technology and Families***  
***Covenant Commentary, March 1, 2024***  
***Andrea Bergstrom and Tracy Bennett***

***Recommended Books***

The Common Rule and Habits of the Household- Justin Early

The Anxious Generation\*- Jonathan Haidt

iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy — and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood- Jean Twenge

How to Break Up with Your Phone- Catherine Price

Tech-Wise Family- Andy Crouch

Digital Minimalism- Cal Newport

Becoming a Screen-Savvy Family: How to Navigate a Media-Saturated World--And Why We Should, Focus on the Family

***Internet Resources for Parents***

Google's "Be Internet Awesome" Curriculum for younger users:

[https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en\\_us](https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us)

Guide to conversations with your kids about Internet Porn:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/09/24/scared-parents-guide-those-awkward-necessary-conversations-about-internet-porn/>

Understanding Parental Controls:

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/articles/parents-ultimate-guide-to-parental-controls>

American Academy of Pediatrics has a tool for a creation of family media plan.  
<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/fmp/pages/mediaplan.aspx>

[InternetMatters](#)

[Common Sense Media](#)

[Media Smarts](#)

[Childmind.org](#)

[Focus on the Family](#)

[Bark](#)- offers phones and monitoring software

[Youngminds.org](#)

[Stop bullying.gov](#)

[guardchild.com](#)

[www.aacap.org](#)

[Ww.bbc.com](#)

## **Studies**

Surgeon General's Social Media Advisory, 2023

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf>

Common Sense Media- their recent study

[https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2023-cs-smartphone-research-report\\_final-for-web.pdf](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2023-cs-smartphone-research-report_final-for-web.pdf)

## **Tips for Family Technology Contracts and Expectations**

1. *Model responsible and appropriate social skills and communication.*
  - a. *How we talk, they will talk. How we gossip, they will gossip. What we watch, they will want to watch.*
  - b. *Our addictions, could easily become theirs, set limits*
  - c. *Require non-digital communication in your home.*
  - d. *Have technology-free zones.*
2. *Talk to your kids about social expectations*
  - a. *What is ok to post and what isn't ok*
  - b. *Boundaries/limits*
  - c. *Clearly define cyberbullying*
  - d. *Internet Safety, predator awareness*
  - e. *Define social exclusion and gossip*
3. *Do your research.*
  - a. *Check age limits! Did you know most social media apps are not approved for children under the age of 13? This includes Pinterest, Instagram, SnapChat, Facebook, etc.*

- b. Learn about new apps, old apps, “Fake” accounts including Finsta, and parental controls, etc. Do not allow apps you are unfamiliar with*
  - c. Always “Friend” or connect with your children and closely monitor their use*
  - d. Don’t assume. Know what apps can do.*
- 4. Create a social media contract with your kids. We’ve attached a sample or look online for lots of variations.*
- 5. Create rules around the use of devices*
  - a. No technology in bedrooms, only common spaces.*
  - b. Adult supervision within earshot*
  - c. Know all passwords*
  - d. Regular, random searches on device*
  - e. No use of a device outside of designated time limits*

Sample Device Contract

**Smith Family Device Contract**  
**December 2023**

1. As a family we agree that our family is more important than screens. Therefore, working on our relationships, resolving conflict, completing household chores and doing our jobs well (work for Mom and Dad and school for the kids) must be done before screens come out. *I will not be able to spend time building my digital world until I am present and engaged in my real-life world.*
2. Treating others with kindness always trumps screens. Complaints or hesitations about turning it off or fighting over who gets what device will result in no screens.
3. These devices are yours to use, but we bought them and pay any fees associated with them while you live at home with us. Treat them well.
4. Passwords will be shared and all devices will be checked randomly. No deleting of texts or browsing history without permission and no adding apps without permission.
5. We will not use location apps but instead need you to let us know where you will be when and give us a heads up about needing any rides, etc.
6. All devices are to be plugged in the family room an hour before bedtime and need to stay in that location overnight.
7. There are to be no devices in bedrooms without permission (actual phone calls are an exception). Even homework or texting is to be done in a public space unless you ask permission.
8. Politeness will still prevail. No devices at meals, in church, when company is over, etc. When someone is talking to you, put the device down.
9. Device use is for connection with others, but always in a positive way. Lying, slander, or excluding others will not be tolerated. Pull yourself out of conversations, text threads, or games that start to skew in this direction.

10. Think before you connect with others. For texting, would you say this to the person to their face? For phone calls, do not record the other person without them knowing. For gaming, do not ever use your real name or any identifying information. For web use, never, ever maintain contact with someone you do not know in real life and of course never share any real names, locations, etc.
11. No porn ever. If you stumble upon it or a friend shows you something, alert a parent immediately.
12. No sending pictures of your private parts or anyone else's private parts. While you are all smart children, someday you may be tempted to do this. Don't. Some pictures never go away and it could follow you for years and beyond.
13. Take a couple of pictures, but then put the phone away. Experience things without a screen in front of you. The same is true for video.
14. Be self-aware of addiction. Can you turn off the game? Leave the phone? Be unplugged. If not, impose a break or ask us to do that for you.
15. As a family, we will enjoy a screen-free hour daily, a screen-free day weekly, and a screen-free week annually.
16. You will mess up (and so will we). We will take away your device as needed. We will sit down and talk about it. But remember we love you and are on your side. Always.

Signed (child): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (parent): \_\_\_\_\_

BIBLIOGRAPHY for many of today's ideas...

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<https://news.gallup.com/poll/512576/teens-spend-average-hours-social-media-per-day.aspx>

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<https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/teens-and-internet-device-access-fact-sheet/#:~:text=23%2C%202023.,Teens%20and%20digital%20devices,gaming%20consoles%20has%20remained%20stable.>

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<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/teenagers-and-sleep-how-much-sleep-is-enough>

[https://www.common sensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2023-cs-smartphone-research-report\\_final-for-web.pdf](https://www.common sensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2023-cs-smartphone-research-report_final-for-web.pdf)