

Top 10 List - A Must Read

6/27/2015



As parents, we constantly focus on developing healthy habits! We love technology because it gives us communication, games and entertainment, and great shopping! But sometimes we become overwhelmed and begin to control us rather than us controlling the technology. Whether or not the device belongs to the child matters! So let's set up some guidelines that focus on healthy living rather than the device-specific limitations.

1) **Understand the difference between what is dangerous and what is just private!** Telling kids that if something bad will happen doesn't resonate at all. They know plenty of people who use their real name or has happened. Spouting off about their addresses, the school they go to, or their current whereabouts is avoided. However, drawing too much attention and developing relationships with people online they don't know is a problem.

2) **Create a contract the whole family can live with.** Check out <http://lorigetz.com/parents/acceptable-use-agreement-for-kids/> started. It's not just a contract your child needs to sign, but rather a working document that requires the whole family to **LIVE WITH TECHNOLOGY.**

3) **Change the conversation from device specific to desired behaviors:**

1. Privacy: What is a shareable moment/event?
2. Friends: What is the difference between someone you may share a common interest with on a game and a friend that you know and trust?
3. Balance: There is a time, a place, and a tool for everything. Finding the right combination is important.

4) **Get the devices out of your rooms while you sleep:** It affects the production of melatonin, keeps you hard to fall asleep. Binge watching, checking in, or sending one last post or picture can set bedtime back hours.

5) **Charging Pads/Stations:** Rather than constantly trying to take away the technology... Let the technology have a designated charging area in the kitchen or laundry room. When the kids want or need it, all they have to do is go to what they want or need it for, and for how long. This makes you more a part of their online world. Create Time Out zones where everyone has an opportunity to disconnect from the device and reconnect with the people around them. Time out zones and while in the midst of having a face-to-face conversation with you is a great place to start!

6) **The Internet is a community:** The largest community we will ever visit with more than 1 trillion places to go.

people there. If you wouldn't let your child walk out your front door and not ask them where they are going, why would you let them wander this vast community without at least asking where they are going? Not every place online is meant to be used. Talk about the net as a community, and decide where they can go and with whom they can communicate. Try kidrex.org as your preferred search engine. It's not perfect, but it can make the web a little bit smaller.

7) **Test it/Try it/Change it:** Just because you have been doing something the same way forever, doesn't mean you are not happy with the behavior, let your child know, "we need to make a change because your behavior is not working now..."

8) **Self-Control...the App:** It's tough for teens to exercise self-control when it comes to multitasking behavior. Try [Control](#) on your Mac to stop the distractions.

9) **ABC all tech!:** **Ask** for it, **Bring** me along, **Check** first. Rather than learning about new apps after they are installed, set up restrictions (either verbally or within the settings of the device) to stop kids from downloading new apps without your permission. They **Ask**. This way they **Bring** you along so you can **Check** first, and decide if the app/account is right for them.

10) **Go where they go!** If your child is into gaming, you should be too. If they love to Instagram, Tweet, or play video games, understand how it works so you can decide on appropriate guidelines. Spend a little time with them doing what they love.

Lori Getz, M.A., is an educator, mother, and Internet safety expert. She has appeared on the "Dr. Phil Show" and several other local news and radio programs (including the Ryan Seacrest show on KIIS FM). She often speaks to parents, teachers, and students across the country. Lori has been published in several areas, including as a columnist for momlogic.com and most recently was featured in Rachel Simmons new edition of "Odd Girl Out." Her insight into the professional and personal life working with children, tweens, and teens.