

## PARENT TIPS

### CYBERBALANCE

#### Create a healthy media environment in your home.

The most important tip to parents for creating and maintaining cyberbalance in the household is to **model healthy online/offline balance for your children**. Explain the importance of having a varied diet of experiences in order to support family members' overall development and, in particular, their social development.

It is important to note that most social media networks, such as Facebook or Instagram, are not for children under 13. There are some social networking sites designed for the kids under 13, and these have built in, required parental consent and protective measures.

#### TOP 10 DIGITAL PARENTING TIPS

1. **Model healthy online/offline balance and engage in digital parenting.**
2. **Monitor digital devices and set time limits.**
3. **Turn off screens at least 1 hour before bedtime.**
4. **Charge mobile devices away from the bedroom.**
5. **Enjoy media-free meals where the emphasis is focused on building strong family relationships.**
6. **Encourage the habit of completing tasks like homework, before engaging in social media, mobile device conversations or games.**
7. **Address obsessive and addictive behaviors.**
8. **Identify a list of device-free activities your child enjoys.**
9. **Discuss managing strong emotions when using digital devices. Resolve conflicts offline, not online.**
10. **Provide varied experiences to support social, emotional, and physical well-being. Technology is not there to replace family, friends, or staying physically fit.**

## WHY SHOULD PARENTS TEACH CYBERBALANCE?

Modeling cyberbalance can understandably be difficult, when adults' work responsibilities, communications, and entertainment can all rely on digital tools. But now, more than ever, parents need to proactively set limits on where and when media can be accessed. The media environment of your home makes a tremendous impact on your children.

Kids bodies and brains are impacted by their digital habits. They spend more time engaged with media than they do in any activity other than sleeping. And who can blame them? The digital world is loaded with interesting and

entertaining activities designed to capture and hold our attention. Device use impacts sleep, focus, and physical wellness. Hunching over screens puts serious strain on the neck and back, and can negatively affect self-esteem and memory.<sup>1,2</sup> Charging phones in the bedroom or using devices right up until bedtime reduces our capability to relax and sleep soundly.<sup>3</sup> Most parents report concern about the amount of time their child spends using digital device and are looking for guidance. Scouts rely on parents and leaders to help them manage their time and establish healthy tech habits.

## SOLIDIFYING YOUR SCOUT'S CYBER CHIP LESSONS

Parents can help reinforce the lessons their scouts learned about Balancing screen time by reading *Faux Paw Goes to the Games – Balancing Real Life with Screen Time* together with your scout. This is a great time to establish rules for screen time and media use.

Work together to come up with a list of rules for internet and media use. Where possible use your child's own words to frame the rules in positive and proactive ways. This list may provide a guide to support this activity.

- I will make and keep rules about when I go online and how long I stay online.
- I take regular breaks from screens to keep my body strong.
- I will use my devices in family spaces, not in private spaces like bathrooms or bedrooms.
- I will charge my devices away from my bedroom in family spaces.
- I will pay attention to one activity at a time.
- I will keep a list of activities I can enjoy without technology.

## RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Leader video available at [iKeepSafe.org/Scouting](http://iKeepSafe.org/Scouting)

iKeepSafe BEaPRO™ Parent App – [iKeepSafe.org/beapro-parent-app](http://iKeepSafe.org/beapro-parent-app)

<sup>1</sup> Cuddy, Amy. "Your iPhone Is Ruining Your Posture—and Your Mood." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 12 Dec. 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Nair, Shwetha, et al. "Do Slumped And Upright Postures Affect Stress Responses? A Randomized Trial." *Health Psychology*. 2015: (6): 632-41.

<sup>3</sup> Levenson, Jessica C., et al. "The association between social media use and sleep disturbance among young adults." *Preventive Medicine*. 2016: (85): 36–41.

Visit [iKeepSafe.org/Scouting](http://iKeepSafe.org/Scouting) to download all Wise Tech Choices material.