

## PARENT TIPS

### CYBERBALANCE

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

Parents, the most important tip for you to remember when establishing and maintaining Cyberbalance in your 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.

Teach them by example. Show them what it looks like to value face-to-face interaction and time away from digital realities. Make a special effort to remove distractions like cell phones, computers, and the TV when they come home from school or spend time with friends, and ask them to tell you about what they learned or did.

#### 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?

Today's rising generation has been immersed in the digital world since birth. While this means they are extremely tech-savvy, it means that online versus offline realities are not as clearly differentiated and they can easily become over-dependent on technology.

Now, more than ever, parents need to help their "digital natives" thrive by proactively setting limits on where and when media can be accessed. The media environment of your home makes a tremendous impact on your children.

This can understandably be difficult, when adults' work responsibilities, communications, and entertainment can all rely on digital tools. However, making time to bond offline builds your relationship and demonstrates to youth how valuable offline activities can be.

## SOLIDIFYING YOUR SCOUT'S CYBER CHIP LESSONS

At this age children continue to need assistance in transportation and help to manage their schedule and plan their weeks. However, they are also beginning to autonomously make plans and choose how they spend their time. As parents in the digital culture, teaching youth responsibility and time management must include strategies for enjoying a diverse diet of experiences and activities: with technology and without.

Try tracking screen time at home for a week, and have your Scouts think of a couple rules they see as suitable for their age group, using positive wording. For example:

- I keep a list of activities I can enjoy without technology.
- I take regular breaks from screens.
- I spend an equal amount or more time with friends offline as I do online.
- I finish homework and chores before watching TV, playing video games, using the computer, or going online.

- I focus on one activity or task at a time.
- I charge my devices away from my bedroom in family spaces.
- I turn my phone off a couple hours before going to bed in order to have time to unwind.

Highlight the importance of a behavior by asking your Scouts to self-monitor during specific online activities. Self-monitoring helps them become more aware of what they are doing and increases the likelihood of modifying or specifying their actions. Encouraging further analysis can lead them to discriminate between effective and ineffective strategies – empowering your son to independently recognize healthy use of technology.

Note that most social media networks, such as Facebook or Instagram, are not for children under 13. There are some designed for youth under 13, and these have built in, required parental consent and protective measures.