

If you have other questions, ideas, or tech tips that have helped you and your family be smart(er) with technology please share your ideas by emailing Mr. L-D @ jared.l-d@washk12.org

You can also find our podcast by searching “Your Bright Future by Lava Ridge” on [apple podcasts](#) or on your favorite podcast app.

In our experience as counselors working with your students, we know that screens are essential in today’s world. We rely on them for work, learning, entertainment, and social engagement. By no means do we recommend a screen-free existence for your intermediate-age child; however, it is important to practice moderation and be thoughtful and proactive in how we use technology. We will aim to share tips and information on a bi-weekly basis via email and compile that information here.

Next:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVT7U-20ils>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TMPXK9tw5U>

1/10/24

The holidays have come and gone, and I bet they've left you with a few new devices in the house. Tablets and phones give kids access to a world of creativity, entertainment, and learning. But how do you pick the best platforms, games, and apps to fill them with?

If this describes your situation right now, I wanted to plug Common Sense Media’s [Ultimate Parent’s Guides](#). They have answers to your questions about the platforms your kids are begging to use on their new tablets. [Is Snapchat safe](#)? What is [Discord](#) all about? What privacy settings are available on [TikTok](#)? They’ve got everything you need to get those devices up and running so your kids can have fun—and so you can breathe easier.

12/20/23

Over the holiday break, we know that technology in all its amazing forms will be a welcome form of entertainment, connection, and gift-giving/receiving. For our tech tip, we encourage your students to have technology *enhance* their days not *consume* them. There is a huge difference between using video games and social media to connect with others versus sitting alone in your room isolated from everything besides YouTube and PlayStation. Savor each other and lean into activities that foster bonding and create memories.

If Santa brings a new device take the opportunity to set boundaries and expectations especially as we return to the school day routine in January.

11/29/23

In [The Emotional Lives of Teenagers](#) the author Lisa Damour has many good insights into helping our teens and tweens navigate a difficult time in their lives. I loved her insights and basic guidelines with tech use. Italics are added for emphasis.

“Here are some basic rules that can make a substantial difference: When first giving adolescents access to digital devices, *go slow*. Most tweens need little more than the ability to text, so that they can connect with their friends. If you decide to allow them to use social media, consider doing so only with the right to monitor their activity closely, at least in the beginning, and to limit how much time is spent socializing online. *Don’t hesitate to start with rigid rules*. Tweens and teens are usually so eager to embark on their virtual lives that they will agree to stringent parameters just to get started. You can also set boundaries for when and where devices can be used, and observe the same parameters yourself. Keeping meals, short car rides, and family activities tech-free can be a great way to start.

I also strongly believe that digital technology should not be in anyone's bedroom, *especially overnight*. While some teenagers need to do their homework in their room, once it's time to go to sleep, they can be expected to charge their laptops, phones, and any other digital tech elsewhere. I appreciate that this might seem like a Draconian approach to regulating devices, but hear me out. First, we have clear evidence from large-scale surveys that having technology in the bedroom overnight *undermines sleep, a resource that is already in short supply for most adolescents*. Second, using devices behind closed doors at any time of day or night seems to me to invite trouble. Teenagers can certainly wade into dangerous digital waters while sitting in our kitchen or den, but overall it's less likely when we can walk by at any moment. Further, it's all too easy for teens to make dumb or destructive mistakes when they're up late and their neurological brakes are tired. Why allow conditions where your kid can make an impulsive, but lasting, error at one in the morning?"

11/8/23

Video games can be a big, fun, and important part of our students' digital lives but like all things in life, it is important to have balance. We strongly recommend for your child's development and happiness that as a family you have clear limits on gaming, what those specifics are will be unique to you and your family but it is critical to have and develop other non-screentime activities. For this week's parent tip we wanted to share an amazing resource via ESRB where they provide easy-to-follow guides on how you can help set boundaries and/or limits on the most popular video game systems.

<https://www.esrb.org/tools-for-parents/parental-controls/>

One relatively simple tip a parent shared was to take the game controllers at bedtime, love it!

We did a podcast last November on the subject of video games, find it on [apple podcasts](#) or search "Your Bright Future" in your podcast player of choice. As always please respond with any questions, concerns or your own tips!



10/25/23

I recently had a parent send this to me and I found it has some great insights from an expert in the field. I encourage you to check out the entire article (@ <https://on.today.com/3tMXLHU>) but one tidbit I particularly liked was:

"She says it's important for parents to figure out what the time on phones or social media is displacing. If a child is watching funny TikTok videos and sharing them with friends instead of watching hours of TV, maybe that's not so bad. If they're glued to their phones instead of doing sports or reading or socializing, maybe that's a problem.

If you only focus on time, you're missing all that really important stuff underneath."

10/11/23 XX

Fall Break is here! I wanted to share a parent presentation, "Smart w/ Technology for Parents" Youtube video. In the presentation, I cover some screen time statistics, why this is an important topic, and what you can do about it. https://youtu.be/MEAH_CgZuj4

9/27/23

It's important to set expectations and remind your children that technology is a privilege, not a right. Make a phone/video game/computer contract. Create one that fits your family dynamics and expectations and [here is a great example](#) I found online to get you started. Extra credit protip, make it with your child to get buy-in. As always feel free to email back with any questions or tips that work for you and your family!

9/13/23 XX

This week's tech tip is to have a bedtime for screens.

We start school very early and many of our students come to school sleep-deprived because they've been up late on their screens. This also tends to be the time children access material that is against family rules or is not age-appropriate. Thirty minutes before bedtime put phones and devices to bed. One easy tip a parent shared is to have your children charge their phones/game controllers in your room so the temptation is out of reach. If needed buy a cheap alarm clock so they don't need their phone to wake up. For all of these tech tips feel free to blame me if you need a scapegoat "Mr LD is making me take your phone/controller haha". Thanks so much and have a wonderful day!

SLEEP DURATION RECOMMENDATIONS

