



# GOOD PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE



by Dr. Victoria Chen

In today's world, it is very common for teens to have smartphones, computers, iPads and multiple social media accounts. While kids a generation ago would take a phone call on a home phone as the family sat nearby listening in, today they have their own devices that give them the ability to engage in a wide variety of activities within seconds and in the comfort of their own rooms. Needless to say, the power to have the world at their fingertips has created a new set of issues for today's parents.

The more we know about the dangers and concerns regarding technology use in today's teen world, the more we can take measures to help them learn to use them in a positive way and avoid potential pitfalls. Below are some ways that can help you navigate your way through the digital world when it comes to your children.

**Discuss proper technology usage with kids**, including safety concerns when driving, conversing with strangers, sending inappropriate texts and images, and regarding cyberbullying. Be firm in establishing what is appropriate - and what is not - and make it clear what should never be posted or shared.

**Teach kids when and how to use their cellphone appropriately**, including when it comes to following the rules at school, restaurants, and movies. Discuss technology usage rules that they need to follow in order to maintain the privilege of having their devices.

**Set boundaries and limits as to what they can do** (i.e. no cellphone use after 9 p.m. etc) and then hold them accountable if they cross those limits. They need to know your expectations and rules for proper use. Encourage them to limit their time spent on technology each day, so they don't become addicted and are able to still get stimulation and excitement outside of a screen too. Make family dinner time a technology-free zone.

**Have one spot in the home outside of your child's bedroom where phones and tablets are stored each night.** This way it will keep the devices from interfering with the sleep they need in order to do well in school and be healthy overall.

Taking pictures is easier than ever, so be sure to discuss camera use with them and emphasize the fact that posted or sharing some photos might be embarrassing to themselves or others.

Make sure your children are aware of the risks involved in installing and using particular apps and avoid downloading things from unknown sources. With identity theft and other illegal activities at an all time high, you should also discuss the risks of sharing too much information and how it can lead to serious issues regarding privacy. This includes photos, texts, phone numbers etc.

We live in a technology-driven world. Cellphones, computers, and other electronic device are everywhere, and they are not going to go away. Parents are largely faced with the choices of running from them so that their child doesn't use the devices, doing nothing and letting the chips fall where they may, or taking measures to teach kids how to use the devices safely and responsibly. Since there is little chance that we can hide away from technology and doing nothing is too risky, good parenting includes educating kids about the proper use of their devices.



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Learn more about Dr. Chen at [significanceorthodontics.com](http://significanceorthodontics.com)

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