Electronics and Your Child

What kind of electronics are they using?
- Social Media
- Video Games
- Cell Phone
- Tablets
- Chromebook/Computers

What are they doing?
- Consuming and creating content
- Navigating the digital world
- Connecting with others constantly
- Making mistakes
- Sharing information

Types of social media apps:
- MicroBlogging
- Social Networking
- Streaming
- Temporary
- Texting
- Anonymous
- Chatting/Meeting/Dating
- Gaming

Types of video games:
- FPS: First Person Shooter
- RTS: Real Time Strategy
- MMO: Massively Multiplayer Online
- RPG: Role Playing Game
- Sports
- Puzzles
- Simulations
- Combat/Stealth Shooter

Why they are using it?
- To make connections
- To gain attention and acceptance
- To obtain information about others
- Entertainment

What is at stake?
- Relationships
- Reputations
- Sleep
- Grades

Why can it be harmful?
- Fear of missing out (FOMO)
- Jealousy
- Addiction
- Sleep deprivation

Signs that parents should be aware of?
- Excessive preoccupation with technology
- Lack of control
- Neglecting other things in life
- Spending a lot of money on technology

How Can Technology Negatively Impact Children?
- Technology can impact a child's physical health (e.g., vision, hearing, posture, motor skills, weight).
- Children are easily distracted by technology when they are completing homework or studying at home.
- Children have shown an increase in technology use and a decrease in their in-person interactions which can impact social skills.
- Children who have access to technology in their bedroom are often staying up late at night using or playing these devices which often results in: tardies, sleeping in class, unavailable to learn, missing or late assignments, drop in grades, and social and academic withdrawal.
- "Pathological gaming" (the term used for what some call a video game addiction) has been linked to a number of mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, insomnia).
- Playing violent video games can lead to increased aggression in children.

What Can Parents Do?

Teach
- Be a good example of how to use social media.
- Maintain open communication with your child about technology and appropriate use.
- Make sure your child knows they cannot be anonymous on the Internet.
- Talk to your child about what should never be posted online and the dangers of posting too much information. Teach them about an online reputation.
- Explain that posting online is just like writing in permanent marker – it cannot be erased.
- Engage your child in continuous conversations about how to behave online.
- Discuss why strong passwords are important, how to create them and the need to keep them private.
- Walk through hypothetical situations, using real friends and family. That way, your kids will understand the policy in the context of real empathy and emotions.
- Have your child look for and point out things that their peers are doing "wrong". This will get them to cast a critical eye on social interactions, using real examples, and will give you a window into their judgment.

Set Expectations
- Establish and enforce household rules for technology usage.
- Give clear expectations and for all electronic use.
- Complete a "use agreement" with your child and talk about respecting others online.
- Make sure that your child is not using screen time at least an hour before bedtime when possible.

Monitor
- Watch your child play or play video games with your child.
- Monitor the rating of video games your child is using to make sure they are age appropriate.
- All major cell phone providers have parental control options available. Check with your provider on how to enable this feature.
- Obtain all of your child's passwords for all devices and apps.
- Stay informed on your child's Internet habits, review their user history and observe their social media activity. Know who their friends and followers are.
- Make sure to check all screens on your child's phone and look in all folders.
- Be aware of changes in your child's behavior that may indicate cyberbullying.
- Stay informed and do regular Internet searches to be aware of new apps that your child might be using.
- Utilize parental control apps on devices (e.g., Qustodio, FamilyTime, OurPact).

Provide Alternatives
- Remind your child that electronics are a privilege and not a right.
- If your child cannot handle access to the internet and apps, you can look into non-smartphone options (e.g., Jitterbug, voice only phones, Relay)
- Schedule weekly time to do non-technology related family activities (e.g., board games, sports, reading, bike riding or walking).

Resources
- Online Tools for Parents and Children - **https://www.netsmartz.org/Home**
- Advice for Parents - **https://www.commonsensemedia.org/**