Calvary
KIDS' MINISTRY

Preschool

TECHNOLOGY
PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

Are you blown away that your preschooler can swipe and click even faster than you can? How did they figure out how to find that Disney video in the sea of app icons on your screen? These keen abilities are exactly why it's a great time to start a conversation about the big world of technology. Your preschooler is a long ways from having their own phone and social media accounts, but every day they are watching, listening, and learning. They need you to guide their introduction into this world and set them up for success. Remember your role in the preschool phase is to help them . . . . . .

ENJOY
The advantages

→

So your child will . . .
EXPERIENCE BOUNDARIES & HAVE POSITIVE EXPOSURE

This guide is designed to help you connect with your child in the phase they are in, by giving you some words to say to navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal for your preschooler in mind:

TECHNOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY
Leveraging the potential of online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.

IN THE NEW BABY PHASE, (YOU) THINK THINGS LIKE . . .

"Does it really matter if I forgot to record the last feeding in the app?" *(Answer: No. As long as the baby ate, she doesn't care.)*

"Is there anyone out there who can relate?" *(Use technology to connect to other adults.)*

"Look at this baby!" *(Take as many photos as you like. You will enjoy seeing them later.)*

IN THE FOLLOWING PRESCHOOL YEARS, SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"No juice by the computer."

"Tablets don't go in the bathtub."

"Let's turn off the TV now."

"I'm texting Grandma to ask a question." *(Talk openly about technology as you use it.)*

"I put my phone away when we are eating so we can talk to each other." *(Set limits for screen time.)*

"You need to ask before you use the computer." *(Know when they are on a device and what they are using it to do.)*

> **"Let me show you what a galaxy looks like."**
> *(Use technology to enhance your conversations.)*

"Let me see what you did." *(Show interest in what they do with technology.)*

"It's time for you to put the tablet away."

JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The preschool years are the years you want to embrace their physical needs. They need to be physically close to you so use screen time as opportunities for 'lap time' where you can cuddle and share the experience. In this phase, your child thinks like an artist, and you can help them learn by engaging their senses through what they see and hear. Remember that screen time doesn't have to be isolating but can be used to stimulate great moments together. Stay informed. Stay involved. Start the conversation.

To enhance the conversation, here are a few conversation starters and activities your family can try:

Have screen-free time. Grab a bin or box that can become "home" for all technology when it's not in use. Help your preschooler decorate whatever container you choose. Show them how the technology goes inside the bin and how to remove it (if it requires taking off a lid, unzipping a zipper, etc.). Let them help you decide where to store the bin. Talk to your preschooler about when they can and cannot access the technology from its "home."

Create screen-free zones. Keep activities in your car, diaper bag, or purse that are not technology-related. It's so easy to default to a tablet or phone to entertain your preschooler when you're out and about. Giving your child another option may curb the impulse for technology to be your kid's go-to. Ideas: a coloring book and crayons, an Etch A Sketch, tracing paper and pencils, books, a cookie sheet with magnetic letters, a dry erase board with markers, magnetic puzzles, etc.

Teach with Technology. Technology isn't just for entertainment, it's an important tool for learning. Introduce early reading and math concepts through websites and apps that involve matching games or associating words with images. There are even some apps that will read books aloud to you and your child. Spend some time investigating some of the best, and get recommendations from friends.

PARENT CUE

Calvary KIDS' MINISTRY

Elementary

TECHNOLOGY
PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

They might have not asked yet, but kids want to know when they'll be able to get their own phone, have their own social media profiles, and interact with friends online. Start the conversation about technology now, and begin setting clear guidelines. Kids know they can get their license at sixteen, which gives them something to look forward to. Set expectations about when they can get their 'technology license' too. Technology can be a positive experience as long as parents stay informed and involved. Remember, your role in the elementary phase is to help them . . .

EXPLORE
The possibilities

→ So your child will . . .
UNDERSTAND CORE VALUES & BUILD ONLINE SKILLS

This guide is designed to help you meet elementary-age kids where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind:

TECHNOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY
Leveraging the potential of online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.

TO ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS (K-3), SAY THINGS LIKE:

"Never use Google (or any search engine) alone."

"I don't know, but we can look that up together." *(Use technology to enhance your conversations.)*

"I'm texting Grandma to ask a question."
(Talk openly about technology as you use it.)

"Siri doesn't always know what we are asking." *(Turn on safe search, and don't let Siri answer your kindergartner's questions.)*

"You have ten more minutes and then it's time to put the iPad away."
(Set limits for screen time.)

"Let me see what you did." *(Show interest in what they do with technology.)*

"Never post a phone number or address without checking with me."
(Kids are often naïve about sharing personal content with strangers.)

TO ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS (4-5), SAY THINGS LIKE:

"What do you think is a healthy amount of time online?"
(Collaborate on expectations, rules, and consequences.)

"Can you help me figure out how to . . ."

"Tell me more about how that works."

"**Have you ever seen someone say really mean things online?**"

"Let me find out more about that and I will let you know." *(Look up things like age limits, content ratings, and connection to strangers.)*

"Can we play together?" *(Make technology social by playing online games together.)*

"Have you seen anything online that surprised you?"

"We should respect people online just as much as we respect them in person." *(Talk about how devices sometime escalate bullying.)*

"Sometimes people pretend to be someone they aren't online." *(Caution against contact with strangers.)*

JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The elementary years are full of possibilities and you want to engage their interests in a healthy way. Use technology to share things you enjoy. Stay curious about what they are seeing and learning, and help them to feel safe in bringing questions to you. When they push back against your rules and guidelines, engage them in talking about the 'why' behind the rules. Stay informed. Stay involved. Keep the conversation going.

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Let them earn it: Reward what you want repeated by allowing your kid to earn technology time by using access as currency. For example, if your child reads for 20 minutes, they earn 10 minutes of technology time. If your child completes certain chores, instead of money, they're given minutes to use on approved electronic devices. If your child gets a good behavioral report at the end of the school week, they are given a set amount of time over the weekend to use their tablet or device.

Keep it social. Keep your kids' technology in plain sight. Designate a common area in the house where your kid(s) have permission to use their technology. Have them help you set it up with a comfy chair, lamp, charger, and any other supplies frequently used with their devices. As you set it up, talk about the importance of having rules and boundaries when it comes to using technology. Talk about all the ways keeping what happens *online* in plain sight keeps everyone safe.

Talk about the good and the bad. It may feel early, but it's important for your elementary schooler to know that there are people who use the Internet for good *and* for evil. Give your kid a "pop quiz" on online safety by providing them with a variety of scenarios and asking them how they'd respond. Praise them for answers that support your family's boundaries, and redirect when they don't.

PARENT CUE