

DR. FRASER'S DIGITAL PARENTING TOOLKIT



WHO AM I?

**I'm Dr. Mike Fraser,
a New York State-Licensed Clinical Psychologist.**

**I'm a father of three and for over 30 years
I have worked with children and teenagers
in a wide range of settings.**

**I'm an expert in teaching parents how to manage
screen use and I am offering this FREE toolkit to share
my experience and knowledge with you so you can be
the best parent you can be**

AND

**so you can protect your child from the negative
impact of screens so they can be at their best!**

THIS TOOLKIT CONTAINS MY TOP 10 TIPS

- 1. TECH STRONG PARENTING VIDEOS**
- 2. DIGITAL PARENTING QUIZ**
- 3. PARENT-CHILD PHONE CONTRACT**
- 4. LIFE SKILLS HANDOUT**
- 5. PARENTAL CONTROL APPS**
- 6. EXCELLENT WEB RESOURCES**
- 7. ARTICLES RE: CYBERPREDATORS**
- 8. STARTER PHONES FOR CHILDREN**
- 9. ARTICLE ON SCREENS AND SLEEP**
- 10. MUST-READ BOOKS FOR PARENTS**

Tech Strong Parenting

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS MANAGING SCREEN TIME



PARENTS,

Do you wonder:

HOW OLD SHOULD MY CHILD BE TO HAVE A SMARTPHONE?

*HOW DO I SET EFFECTIVE SCREEN LIMITS
ONCE MY CHILD HAS A SMARTPHONE?*

IS MY CHILD AT RISK FOR SCREEN ADDICTION?

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@DRMIKEFRASER](https://www.youtube.com/@drmikefraser)

TECH STRONG PARENTING is full of PRACTICAL videos.

You will learn skills you can put to use IMMEDIATELY!

I invite you to watch these videos WITH your child!

DIGITAL PARENTING QUIZ

WHAT KIND OF DIGITAL PARENT ARE YOU?

QUESTION #1: I let my child sleep with their phone/device. A. YES B. NO (1 POINT)

QUESTION #2: I have FULL ACCESS to the phone/device I grant my child the privilege of using. A. FALSE B. TRUE (1 POINT)

QUESTION #3: Does your child get physically aggressive or verbally disrespectful to you (e.g., cursing/threatening) if you talk about handing over the phone/device or if you request to see their phone? A. YES B. NO (1 POINT)

QUESTION #4: Who “calls the shots” with the phone/device you grant your child the privilege of using? A. MY CHILD B. I, THE PARENT (1 POINT)

QUESTION #5: Do you know how to BLOCK unwanted/inappropriate content from your child’s phone/device? A. NO B. YES (1 POINT)

QUESTION #6: Do you MONITOR your child’s device/social media use such that you can see what they see? A. NO B. YES (1 POINT)

QUESTION #7: Do you effectively LIMIT the amount of time your child uses a screen? A. NO B. YES (1 POINT)

QUESTION #8: Does your child understand that their screen is a PRIVILEGE and NOT a RIGHT? A. NO B. YES (1 POINT)

QUESTION #9: If you told your child in a firm voice that s/he had 10 seconds to hand over their phone or they would lose their privilege for the next day, what would happen next?

A. Roll eyes, laugh at you and walk away with phone in hand

B. Yell, “No way!”

C. Run away from you (clutching their phone)

D. Threaten you back

E. Hand it over (maybe with one more prompt), not necessarily with a smile (1 POINT)

QUESTION #10: Do you believe your child is using their phone/device SAFELY, RESPONSIBLY and RESPECTFULLY? A. NO B. YES (1 POINT)

DIGITAL PARENTING QUIZ

RESULTS:

9-10: RESPONSIBLE DIGITAL PARENT:

Still requires ongoing attention and monitoring. Don't let your guard down. Tomorrow there will be a new trend, app, or platform that you will need to learn to stay technologically up to date.

4-8: DIGITAL PARENTING NEEDS IMPROVEMENT:

Learn more about tech, apps, and what your child is doing online. Talk to your child about being safe, responsible and respectful in the tech world. You have work to do.

1-3: NEGLIGENT DIGITAL PARENTING:

Your child is at risk for or already may be experiencing a decline in academics and/or increase in depression/anxiety/anger and excessive exposure to confusing and inappropriate material.

**WHATEVER YOUR SCORE, THE TARGET IS CONSTANTLY MOVING.
AS PARENTS, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARN AS MUCH AS WE CAN
TO HELP OUR CHILDREN MANAGE THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE.**

PARENT-CHILD SMARTPHONE CONTRACT

**CLICK LINK BELOW TO DOWNLOAD A
FREE
SAMPLE SCREEN CONTRACT**

***THIS CONTRACT WILL HELP YOU
HELP YOUR CHILD USE A SCREEN***

***SAFELY, RESPONSIBLY &
RESPECTFULLY***

[IPLDGE-CHILD-PARENT-FORM.PDF](#)

LIFE SKILLS AND SCREENS

Parents are giving their children smartphones at younger and younger ages.

**GRADES DROP.
HOMEWORK GETS PUT OFF.
MOODS SHIFT.
CHORES AND RESPONSIBILITIES GO UNDONE.
SLEEP IS DISRUPTED!**

Review my LIFE SKILLS handout with your child.

There is nothing unreasonable on this sheet!

If your child wants a smartphone, he or she should be able to do everything on this list.

If not, they are not ready and they are not mature enough YET to have a smartphone.

DOWNLOAD A FREE COPY OF THE LIFE SKILLS SHEET HERE:

[FRASER-LIFE-SKILLS-TIMELINE.PDF](#)

PARENTAL CONTROL APPS

PARENTS,

**IF YOU EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO
WEAR A SEATBELT IN A CAR,**

**DON'T GIVE YOUR CHILD A PHONE WITHOUT SOME
FORM OF PROTECTION!**

**Here is a link to a Consumer Reports-like
review of Parental Control Apps:**

**[HTTPS://WWW.TOMSGUIDE.COM/US/BEST-
PARENTAL-CONTROL-APPS,REVIEW-2258.HTML](https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-parental-control-apps,review-2258.html)**

EXCELLENT WEB RESOURCES

HERE ARE TWO EXCELLENT SITES FOR PARENTS/TEACHERS

STAY REFRESHED WITH UPDATED RESOURCES/VIDEOS ON A WIDE
RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY-RELATED TOPICS:

[HTTPS://WWW.COMMONSENSEMEDIA.ORG](https://www.common SenseMedia.org)

[HTTPS://WWW.INTERNETMATTERS.ORG/](https://www.internetmatters.org/)

CYBERPREDATORS



IT IS CRUCIAL TO EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF ONLINE PREDATORS.

HERE IS A LINK TO THE NYTIMES SERIES ON CYBERPREDATORS:

IF YOUR CHILD PLAYS MINECRAFT, ROBLOX OR OTHER ONLINE GAMES WITH THEIR FRIENDS, YOU SHOULD READ THIS:

[HTTPS://WWW.NYTIMES.COM/INTERACTIVE/2019/12/07/US/VIDEO-GAMES-CHILD-SEX-ABUSE.HTML](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/07/us/video-games-child-sex-abuse.html)

STARTER PHONES FOR CHILDREN (6-13)

“But my child needs a fully loaded iPhone so they can walk down the street.”

“I need to be reachable by my child 24 hours a day, and without a fully loaded smartphone they will not be able to survive!”

“All of my child’s friend’s parents gave them a fully loaded iPhone, and they won’t have any friends if I don’t buy them one.”

UGH!!

CHILD-FRIENDLY PHONES EXIST!

CHECK THESE OUT AND SEE
WHAT MAY WORK BEST FOR YOU:

GABB, PINWHEEL, BARK

It's 10pm. Do You Know Where Your Child's Smartphone Is?

SCREEN TIME VS. BED TIME, by Michael Fraser, Ph.D.

Parents, teachers and students: the war has been waged. Electronic screens are robbing our children of important hours of sleep. Research has already shown that—both delayed bedtime and shorter total hours of sleep—the lost hours of sleep result in a variety of symptoms that adversely affect children's ability to focus and concentrate at school, as well as negatively impact their mood and relationships. Our young people (as well as adults) are fighting a war between Screen Time and Sleep Time.

Over the past two decades, increased focus has been paid to the general impact of "Internet Addiction" and "Video Game Addiction" on a host of behavioral problems. Whereas in my previous articles I have highlighted specific groups of young people who are more susceptible to the electronic "addictions," I believe that a much larger percentage of young people may be at risk for insidious problems that can be traced to electronic screens.

In this article, I hope to share some of my clinical experiences (of course protecting the confidentiality of my patients) in the hopes that something practical can be learned. My goal is for this practical knowledge can then be transferred into action that will help our kids.

In many ways, my clinical work has taught me to make simple distinctions. For instance, I believe there are parents who are able to teach and enforce limits with their children and other parents who struggle with this. There are parents who put serious thought into the kinds of technologies they put in their children's hands and parents who don't think much about it. However, all parents—whether they like it or not or want to or not—have to deal with the fact that their children are using electronic screens (either their own or someone else's) and will need to learn how to manage their use in a responsible way. Any child or teen who owns a handheld electronic screen can be considered at risk.

The intersection of young people and handheld electronic screens is messy. As parents, we often don't see problems coming, until it's too late. Ask any parent whose child/teen made "in-app" purchases on their iPhone or smartphone if they could have predicted their kids would be racking up charges on their credit cards with a simple 'tap' of the screen.

Apple and Google have both faced lawsuits requiring them to pay back millions of dollars to parents for such purchases. Not even big tech foresaw this problem!

In line with this, I have observed that many parents I meet with are under the false assumption that their children should “just know” the right thing to do with technology. This is, simply put, wishful thinking by adults. I fully understand why we hold onto the wish that our teenagers will “know what’s right” and act accordingly when we put a smartphone in their hands. But the fact of the matter is that, although adolescents may intellectually “know” what they are doing (i.e., right from wrong), they are pushed and pulled by neurobiological and social forces that often compromise their ability to act accordingly. Steinberg and Cauffman (1996) referred to this as “Psychosocial Immaturity.”

In other words, teens know they shouldn’t spend so much time in front of screens. They know that sleep is important. They know they need a good night’s sleep to function at their best at school. They know that the more they watch Netflix and YouTube and the more they get sucked into the social networking vortex of updates and messaging, the less time they have to homework. They KNOW these things.

But this “knowledge” doesn’t change their behavior. If left to their own devices—literally and figuratively—many (not all) will NOT be able to manage the temptations that these devices create. The friend in trouble who texts at 2AM. The one-more-episode Netflix temptation that robs them of yet another 30-60 minutes of sleep. The belief that “I can’t fall asleep without it.” Believe it or not, generations of humans found a way to sleep without electronic devices. If it is truly problematic for your child to sleep without the aid of an electronic device, they should be evaluated by a physician.

It is striking to me that the vast majority of teens I meet with have admitted to me that they believe they have lost sleep due to excessive use of their electronic devices. They also admit they believe they need to cut back (sometimes a little, sometimes a lot). But what very few teens will admit to their parents is that they could use some help managing their device. But more often than not, parents will put their teens in full charge of the device; and then later complain when their child is not managing it properly.

Loss of sleep, irritability...grades suffer...less socialization...increase in disconnection...passive activity time increases...less exercise...

Teens can be wily. They can be young lawyers, looking for loopholes in the code. I know this because they tell me so. And, moreover, it's their job to be this way. Their brains are developing to think more abstractly and they are trying out their newfound abilities to formulate and defend arguments with their parents, teachers, and other adults in their lives.

They will try to convince you, Mom and Dad, that they "need" the electronic device. If you try to limit their use of the device, some teens will yell at you. Some will tell you they hate your sweater or your cooking, or that you don't love them. Others will cry, tantrum and turn their back on you, blaming you for making them a social outcast by making them unavailable to their peers from the hours of 11pm to 7am. In extreme cases (I've seen this), they will get physically aggressive. Any teenager reading this knows what I'm talking about, and they are relating to this because it's simply part of where they are in their development. Again, they know they need limits, but they also know how to manipulate their parents to get more and more time on the devices. No doubt, these are amazing devices. But because the devices are so amazingly versatile and can be used for so many purposes, they can become very difficult for parents to effectively and consistently manage their use.

We are all learning as we go, and what we are learning is that as the devices change and as young peoples' accessibility to these devices increases, so do our habits. As I've written before, we adults have an obligation to teach our youth how to balance electronic screen use. How many of us (adults) touch our smartphones at the dinner table? How many do it while we drive? How many of us take our devices to sleep?

Our children WATCH what we do. If we see them doing the same and they call us out on our own bad habits, it's no longer good enough to say, "Well I'm an adult and I pay the bills, so I can do whatever I want." That is the best way to create distance between you and your child. Instead, acknowledge how hard this must be for them. Most parents did not have access to these kinds of devices when they were younger.

CHALLENGE yourself to teach them by your example. SHOW them the difference between work use and play use. Teach them balance by putting the device away when you eat, when you drive, when you're out in nature. Talk about it together. Work it out together. I truly believe this is the best thing we can do to properly prepare them for their future.

I don't believe there is anything different, per se, about teenagers today than those of 20 or 30 years ago. Since the advent of the television set, people have been discussing the ill-effects of too much time in front of the TV screen on young people. However, the quantity and quality of screens that our young people today are expected to manage is apples and oranges different from that world. Teens aren't different, the world certainly is.

So here's my takeaway message:

For Parents: Be aware of where your child's smartphone is—especially at night. Chances are you pay the bill for it. Talk with your child about how you expect it to be used. Set limits. Enforce the limits. Do it with the purpose of the well-being of your child. Do it with love.

For Young People: Think about how you are using the technology that your parents put in your hands. Try to establish good electronic habits that allow you to balance your school work, your family and friendships, your activities and your health. If your parents let you drive a car, you would (should) respect that privilege. Think of this the same way. Show your parents (and yourself) how responsible you can be. Pay attention to that 'feeling' you get when the phone is not in your hand, in your pocket, or at arm's reach. Ask yourself, "How long could I go without my screens?"

We are all learning as we go. Most importantly, let's keep the dialogue open with our children so we can master the technologies in our lives, and not let them master us.

PARENTAL TIP: Don't let your teen convince you that they "need" their device for an alarm clock. Buy them a separate alarm clock and discuss with them why it is important to turn in their device at night. If they "need" their device for "music" to help them to "relax" so they can fall asleep, set a limit on this, check on them, and have them turn over the device at the end of the time limit. Most of all, try to talk together with your teen in a calm way about what I'm saying in this article so it doesn't turn into a tug-of-war argument over the electronic device.

TWO MUST-READ BOOKS

PARENTS, I KNOW YOUR TIME IS VALUABLE.

IN MY OPINION, THESE ARE TWO BOOKS YOU
MUST READ NOW:

