

Everyday Digital Parenting

Nobody warns you how difficult digital parenting is – and finding the right answers is just as hard. So what really matters with children and screens – and how do you manage the inevitable disagreements?

Parent Zone's Rules, Tools and Communication approach is a good place to start. It helps you focus on the right things and reduce digital disagreements.

Setting the right rules

Children need rules for screens – whether it's what they do, how long they do it, or specific things like financial spending limits. Whichever rules you set, try to make sure they follow the four Cs:

Clear – simple to understand and to apply.

Consistent – and not changing every week.

Collaborative – and be open to adapting.

Connected – based on values, not control.

Managing better communication

Communication is key. Children will come across stuff online that worries, frightens or just confuses them. Let them tell you about it. Don't take over the conversation, don't be afraid to disagree and don't feel you have to fix everything. But do try to be:

A sounding board for your child's ideas, even don't always agree with everything.

A guide to navigate the confusing or misleading stuff or to help them find the truth.

A role model including being honest with them about the things you find hard too.

Using the right tools

User empowerment tools are not perfect – but used well they can be incredibly helpful. They help make sure rules are followed but still give your child freedom. Check them across devices and platforms your child uses – and make sure they are set up as you want them. For example:

Content controls that allow your child to explore with more peace of mind for you.

Screen time controls that reinforce important downtime around sleeping routines.

Block and Report tools help your child stop other people from being unkind online.

Smartphones. Screens. Social Media. What do you need to know?

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