FAMILY
tech time

What is Family Tech Time?

This interactive tool is intended to support conversations in our families and our community around how to use technology to build healthy relationships rather than disrupt them. Thoughtful and intentional use of technology that considers the whole human (heart, mind, spirit and body) can connect us and expand our knowledge and abilities. However, navigating technology can be confusing or overwhelming for families and become a source of conflict.

Each family will find different sections relevant at different times, and it is recommended that the tool be used as a regular touchstone to inform family plans or intentions around technology. Parents and caregivers, please remain curious and reflective about your own technology assumptions and use. We are all learning together.

We hope this tool and document helps families work together to connect their technology use with their family values and develop a flexible plan that works for them. The goal is to empower all members of a family to support each other and be intentional in their technology use. It is never too early or too late to begin this conversation within your family.

Our intended audience is teenagers/young adults and their families, support systems or whomever they define as family.

Who created Family Tech Time?

This document was created by community for community. Partners include: School District 35 (Langley), Fraser Health, Inclusion Langley Society, Encompass Support Services Society, Langley Community Services Society, Langley Children Committee, and the Langley Literacy Network.

FAMILY
tech time

Body: We recognize that healthy choices influence and are influenced by our physical, emotional and mental well-being.

The biggest safety risk from screens to our bodies is distraction.

- How often do we use our devices/headphones while driving or walking?
- How can we minimize distraction from our screens during activities such as walking, jogging or biking?
- Are we aware of our surroundings or potential dangers when we're wearing headphones or focused on our screen? For example, are we aware of who is around us? Can we hear sirens or loud noises that may signal danger?

How are we prioritizing sleep?

- Should we have a central charging station for family devices at nighttime?
- Do we turn notifications off at night so our sleep is not interrupted?
- Are we turning off screens at least one hour before bedtime?

How are we taking care of our body when we use screens?

- For example, do we notice aches and pains from sitting a certain way?
- Experts tell us we should change positions or stand up if we've been sitting more than 20 minutes… Do we take time to stretch or change positions if we feel sore?
- How do we protect our hearing and our vision? For example, do we change the screen brightness or adjust volume to a safe level? Would you consider blue-screen glasses?

FAMILY
tech time

Mind: We think critically and reflectively. We are analytical and investigative, willing to question and challenge our own thoughts, ideas, and assumptions, and to challenge those of others.

What are our expectations around smartphones and devices for family communication?

- How quickly do we expect each other to respond to a text or call?
- Are there situations where we will not be able to, or should not, immediately respond? Or situations where we expect a response right away?

The biggest negative impact from smartphones and devices on learning is trying to multi-task.

- How can we minimize distractions from screens when we are trying to focus? For example, have you turned off your TEAMS notifications?
- Do we put our phone on mute, turn off screens, or adjust notifications when we are trying to focus on something?

Do you regularly review your screen time usage?

- What would we like to change? For example, was there an activity, event or opportunity that we would have preferred to have spent our time on?

All technology use involves a trade-off between privacy, convenience and connection.

- What trade-offs are we making with our technology use? What do we give and what do we get when we use: a Fitbit or Apple Watch to monitor our health?
- What trade-offs are we making with our technology use? What do we give and what do we get when we use: Amazon or Ali to shop online?
- What trade-offs are we making with our technology use? What do we give and what do we get when we use: TikTok or Snapchat to connect with others?

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When we use technology, the information we give to the apps belongs to the technology company, whether it is images uploaded, conversations or habits that are tracked.

- Do we know who we are sharing our information with and how it will be used?
- Do we understand how to use our privacy controls and settings?

Our information belongs to us and consent is needed for others to access or use that information.

- How do we seek consent from family and friends when sharing their information or images? For example, "Are you okay with me posting this picture of you?"
- How do we ask for others to seek consent from us? For example, "Please don't share any of my baby pictures or other photos on Facebook without asking me first."

In a family, there are different degrees of ownership of technology which can affect decisions around access, rights and privacy.

- To what degree do family expectations/agreements trump device ownership for all family members?
- Should we follow each other on social media or share passwords within our family?
- Do we want to be friends on certain platforms? (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, gaming platforms, etc.) Why or why not?

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Heart: We contribute to our own well-being and to the well-being of our family, community, and society.

What activities do we enjoy doing off screen, individually and as a family?

- How can we support each other so screens don't interfere with those activities? For example, "I really like it when you watch me play soccer. Can you put your phones away during that time?"
- What are some times and places when we want to turn off our screens and be together?
- When we are on screens, do we check in with ourselves around our purpose and emotional state? For example, can we name the purpose/reason we are on the screen?
- Are we learning, connecting with others or working?
- Are we enjoying ourselves or are we scrolling for the sake of scrolling?

One sign that technology use is becoming unhealthy is when we experience strong emotions when we don't have access to it.

- How do we feel when we can't access our technology? Angry, unhappy or bored?
- What do we do and how do we act when we feel this way? Is it impacting our family?
- How do we support our family members who are struggling?
- Is there anyone we can talk to when we feel this way? Do we know where to find text or talk help lines that are available to us?

What do we do when we see, experience or do something on social media or online that makes us feel uncomfortable or hurts us?

- For example, when an older family member says something offensive online, what do we do?
- For example, when we share a picture of ourselves that we aren't comfortable with?

How could we use screens to connect with each other or our community?
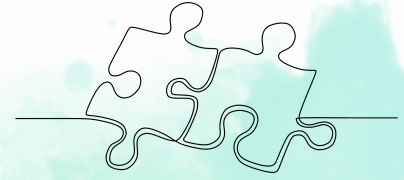
- For example, what would be a good time each week for us to watch a show or play a video game together?

Technology is constantly evolving.

- What new technologies are we excited about?
- How might future technology advances affect us?
- How can we ensure that our technology use continues to align with our values?

FAMILY
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Spirit: *We explore our identity in terms of self, culture, community and the place we live.*

Technology connects us.

- How do we use technology to connect with like minded individuals and networks to do good in the world?
- Which online spaces make us feel like we belong? Are there spaces online that make us feel like we don't belong?

Technology allows us to learn about ourselves and others.

- How do we use technology to explore our passions, interests and values?
- Do we know what online programs or resources are available to help us connect with our community and/or culture?
- How do we use technology to share pieces of ourselves with the world such as who we are, where we come from and our interests? When might we unintentionally share information about ourselves?
- How do we learn about and support other cultures online?
- All people have a right to their own stories. When we share a story about other people and groups online, how do we make sure we are sharing or amplifying authentic voices who have a right to tell that story? How do we know if we are allowed to share that person or group's story?
- How do we use technology to learn the stories of where we come from? Of where others come from?

Technology can help us participate in the world.

- How do we know what we are reading online is true? How do we double check information we are unsure about?
- How can we use technology to find out about and participate in the place(s) we live (e.g. events, programs, volunteer needs, etc.)?