



Tech...Tech...Tech....BOOM!!!

“Navigating Technology and Innovation”

Dear Parents,

Ready, Set, Go!!! You’ve planned, prepared and taken the necessary steps to get this school year off to a wonderful start....Now let’s do this! There is no better feeling than being prepared! On the contrary, there is nothing more frustrating than feeling like you’ve prepared for everything and then the ONE thing you missed comes up and tries to take you out. BREATHE...!!! We all have those moments! it’s okay! Give yourself a break! For some of us those moments come when technology does not make life as easy as it’s supposed to. We’ve all heard it...technology is great when it works but when it doesn’t it REALLY doesn’t! Technology does not have to get the best of you.

Let’s prepare now to tackle any challenges technology may present to us. We previously shared some tips on tech safety in the weekly titled, “Where’s the Remote Control?: Managing Screen Time with Children, Teens and Adults”. Review those tips as you begin the school year in addition to new hacks below.

Remember, we’re pumped up and ready to get started! Let’s make this a great school year! As always, “Parent’s Stay Positive!”

1. Virtual learning hacks that may be helpful

- **Learn about virtual learning tools**
 - Platforms like Google Classroom, Canvas, and Edmodo are possible options for teachers to stay involved in your child’s learning and development.
 - While making contact with schools and teachers, make sure to ask about any technology and software support or trainings being offered by the school

- **Stay organized with a password manager or notebook**
 - With all the different tools, programs, and websites your child is accessing, that's a lot of usernames, passwords, and websites to remember — not to mention if you have multiple children! Keep track of everything with a password manager program or simply a notebook with passwords and/or hints
- **Boost your Wi-Fi**
 - With multiple people plugged in for online work and learning, a strong and fast internet connection is helpful, especially if you're doing a lot of video chats. If your Wi-Fi is moving at a snail's pace, try these adjustments to speed things up:
 1. Make sure your router is in an open, central place, away from other devices
 2. Regularly update your router's software by looking for updates on its admin page
 3. Secure your network by going to your router's admin page online, choosing security level WPA2, and entering a strong password
- **Get extended family and friends involved**
 - Encourage family members or friends who can't spend face-to-face time with your kids right now to get involved with their e-learning. Have them lead a fun activity, do story time, or help with homework (Example: grandparents reading a favorite book over video chat)
- **Take advantage of free online games and educational tools for kids**
 - Break up their daily school routine with a fun virtual trip somewhere! Sure, we can't go to museums or zoos right now, but many of these places are bringing the fun to you. See what Fiona the Hippo and other animals at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden are up to on their YouTube channel....or if your kids are missing the magic of Disney World, you can virtually experience their rides and attractions

2. Parental Controls (Safety, Privacy, & Security)

- **Do your research**....make sure you are familiar with learning and recreational apps, systems, and other resources your children are using to stay connected
- **Talk to your children**....Set rules together; and make sure they know their technology schedule...and that you are monitoring them
- **Be aware of passwords**....explain privacy features and monitor accounts remotely when possible, to avoid unwanted use or break-ins to accounts

- **Avoid leaving your child unattended and alone with technology...**
Keep your child nearby while using technology; make them aware that you are monitoring their usage:
 - Be present and set times to check-in with your child throughout the day
 - Outside of schoolwork, plan for "Technology-Free" periods during the day

3. Set Realistic Expectations

- **It's okay to allow screen time for your child!**
- **Set clear limits and expectations...**try writing out a plan, or draft a safety contract with your child/teen; Do not assume they know the rules – set explicit rules for usage
- **Age Appropriate Use...**Teens may need technology for longer periods of time than younger children; be fair with your children, set reasonable guidance for time restrictions.
 - 0 -5: It is suggested that technology time not begin too early.
 - Consider engaging infants and young toddlers with human attention and affection when possible
 - Begin to introduce your toddler age 2+ to limited technology time that supports early learning
 - 6-10: Balance 1 hour of technology, with 1 hour of non-technology based activities (i.e. reading, math, cooking, art, science, etc.)
 - Limit total, daily technology usage to less than 6 hours if possible
 - 11-14: Balance the load of online academic activities, with less screen time for non-academic activities (video games, movies, social media, etc.)
 - Find what that works for you and your family
 - Be mindful of the need to share technology with other siblings
 - Ensure you have non-technology related games and activities planned for breaks in screen time
 - 15-17: Encourage independent learning, problem solving, and time management
 - Help your teen develop a schedule for screen time
 - Time dedicated daily to learning (on online classes, connecting to teachers, researching projects, etc.)
 - Allow time for safe recreational use (video games, watching movies, TV, social media)
- **Develop a technology agreement to outline time needed for internet use**

- Here's an example: "Diego agrees to complete 2 hours of study time in order to receive 3 hours of free time on weekdays, and 4 hours on weekends. If Diego fails to meet his study time minimum, 1 hour will be deducted from weekend technology use"
- **Do not give into technology use that has not been earned by chores/homework or other responsibilities**

4. Model appropriate screen time, internet usage and social media behavior for your children

- Be mindful of your search history when electronic devices are shared in the home with children
- **Don't make it easy for children to access sites not appropriate for them on shared devices**

*****Access to Technology*****

Please note that we understand that everyone does not have adequate access to technology during this time. Access to technology is necessary to stay on top of assignments for your child during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Please reach out to your child's school or teacher to request support with obtaining access to technology needed and assistance with assignments. If you have the access you need and the skills to be comfortable navigating it, consider ways to support others around you who may not...each one, teach one!

*** For more information and support with virtual learning visit the [CMS website here](#) for how-to-guides, videos and pointers***