Episode 154
How to keep kids safe online

Introduction

Olivia and Stan called about their concerns with screen time for their seven-year-old son, Stephen, and how he would throw tantrums when asked to turn a device off. We initially worked on dealing with the tantrum but the bigger issue was helping them navigate how to keep their children safe online as they grow.

Three things that we will cover in this podcast:

1. How to approach screen time with your child.
2. Parent monitoring apps to help you
3. Using Effective Communication to talk about difficult topics

By the end of this podcast you will understand the things you should consider about screen time with your child, some recommended filters, and how to talk about digital literacy using Effective Communication to avoid problems. It will help you feel more comfortable in this area.

How to approach screen time with your child.

a small study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) showed significant impact on brain development when children between ages three to five years were exposed, unsupervised, to more than the amount of recommended screen time.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that children ages eight to 10 spend an average of six hours per day in front of a screen, kids ages 11 to 14 spend an average of nine hours per day in front of a screen, and youth ages 15 to 18 spend an average of seven-and-a-half hours per day in front of a screen. Link

As your child grows, a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work as well. You'll need to decide how much media to let your child use each day and what's appropriate.

Consider applying the same rules to your child's real and virtual environments. In both, play with your child, teach kindness, be involved, and know your child's friends and what your child does with them. Also, keep in mind that the quality of the media your child is exposed to is more important than the type of technology or amount of time spent.

To ensure quality screen time:

- *Preview programs, games and apps before allowing your child to view or play with them. Organizations such as Common Sense Media can help you determine what's appropriate. Better yet, watch, play or use them with your child.*
- *Seek out interactive options that engage your child, rather than those that just require pushing and swiping or staring at the screen.*
- *Use parental controls to block or filter internet content.*

- *Make sure your child is close by during screen time so that you can supervise his or her activities.*
- *Ask your child regularly what programs, games and apps he or she has played with during the day.*
- *When watching programming with your child, discuss what you're watching and educate him or her about advertising and commercials.*

Also, avoid fast-paced programming, which young children have a hard time understanding, apps with a lot of distracting content, and violent media. Eliminate advertising on apps, since young children have trouble telling the difference between ads and factual information.

At some point your child will be exposed to content that you haven't approved and devices without internet filters. Talk to your child about the situations that could occur and the behavior you expect.

Encourage your child to think critically about what they see on their screens. Ask your child to consider whether everything on the internet is accurate. Does your child know how to tell if a website is trustworthy? Help your child understand that media are made by humans with points of view. Explain that many types of technology collect data to send users ads or to make money.

Setting limits for older children

Set reasonable limits for your child's screen time, especially if your child's use of screens is hindering involvement in other activities. Consider these tips:

- *Prioritize unplugged, unstructured playtime.*
- *Create tech-free zones or times, such as during mealtime or one night a week.*
- *Discourage use of media entertainment during homework.*
- *Set and enforce daily or weekly screen time limits and curfews, such as no exposure to devices or screens one hour before bedtime.*
- *Consider using apps that control the length of time a child can use a device.*
- *Require your children to charge their devices outside of their bedrooms at night.*
- *Keep screens out of your child's bedroom.*
- *Limit your own screen time.*
- *Eliminate background TV.*

Parenting monitoring apps

Link to monitoring apps online
https://www.consumersadvocate.org/parental-control-apps/a/best-parental-control-apps?pd=true&keyword=parental%20control%20apps&gca_campaignid=1439470442&gca_adgroupid=77724909985&gca_matchtype=e&gca_network=g&gca_device=c&gca_adposition=&gca_loc_interest_ms=&gca_loc_physical_ms=9029750&gclid=CjwKCAjwhaaKBhBcEiwA8acsHHwUwCKgSkWSznhlJeEjh4gbZ33T9p8A1Pib9QJzAgIEDMT0JWShoBoCIHAQAvD_BwE

Using Effective Communication to talk about digital literacy

Steps to Effective Communication:

1. Pay attention to child
2. Repeat back what you heard in their own words
3. Clarify you understand them
4. State your opinion
5. Clarify they understand
6. Come to a solution

I practiced this with Olivia to help her know how to talk about Stanley's tantrum behavior and the cause of it as well as stating her own opinion. Role-played it.
Purpose is to help children be safe online and help parents set appropriate boundaries.
Hang in there, you can do this.

End