

# E.J. Moss Counselor Connection

EJ Moss Intermediate | Lindale ISD

## TIPS FOR BALANCING YOUR FAMILY'S TECHNOLOGY

### What's in this Month's Issue:

- Tips for Balancing your Family's Technology
- Try it at Home!
- SEL Book of the Month
- Did You Know?
- National School Counselor Week
- Calendar of Events

We're likely all guilty of this from time to time...checking an email during family movie night, sending a quick text at the dinner table, scrolling through social media during a trip to

the park. This might not seem like a big deal, but our children are watching and taking note. The media habits that we as adults model can become those of our children. This is why it is important to teach and model healthy habits in our daily lives.

Common Sense Media, the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of all kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in the 21st century, puts forth the following recommendations for balancing screen time around children:

- **Set device-free times and zones-** Some potential examples include no technology at the dinner table or in the bedroom, or gaming only on the weekends.
- **Establish screen-time goals for yourself-** Track your screen time and then set a goal to decrease it. If you don't know why you are picking up your smartphone, then put it down.
- **Keep distractions to a minimum-** During family time, encourage everyone to turn off notifications or silence their devices.
- **Watch and play movies, games, and shows together-** Enjoy technology together. Ask about the characters in the movie or game. Discuss the choices they are making and what potential consequences may result. Make real-life connections to story-lines to bridge the worlds of online and real-life.

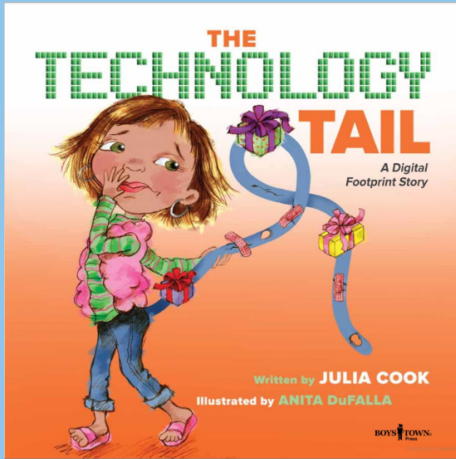
Beyond balancing your own media use as a model for your children, establishing rules and expectations can provide a structured approach to limiting your child's technology use. Here are some examples:

- Technology use is only permitted after all homework and other home responsibilities are completed.
- Establish a time limit for technology use and set a timer to assist in enforcing this rule.
- Consider identifying technology-free days. This doesn't apply to school-based technology needs but rather social, entertainment, or gaming use.
- Create a central hub in your home where all devices are to be stored. Allowing devices to be kept in your child's bedroom may lead to late night use which can lead to sleep disruption and unmonitored screen use.
- Monitor screen use and identify what sites or games are not appropriate for your child to access and are off limits as well as the specific consequences should they choose to not comply with the rule.
- Praise your child for reporting any content they see that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable. By not reacting in an upset or angered way, your child will be more inclined to continue to report in appropriate or upsetting content/cyberbullying in the future.

These healthy habits are not only important to encourage social connections within families and among friends, but they also support life-long media balance skills and a healthy self-esteem.

Child Mind Institute. Healthy Limits on Video Games. 17 January 2023.  
Child Mind Institute. How to Set Healthy Limits on Screen Time. 27 October, 2021.  
Common Sense Media. Be a Role Model: 4 Ways to Balance Screen Time Around Children. 14 October 2022.

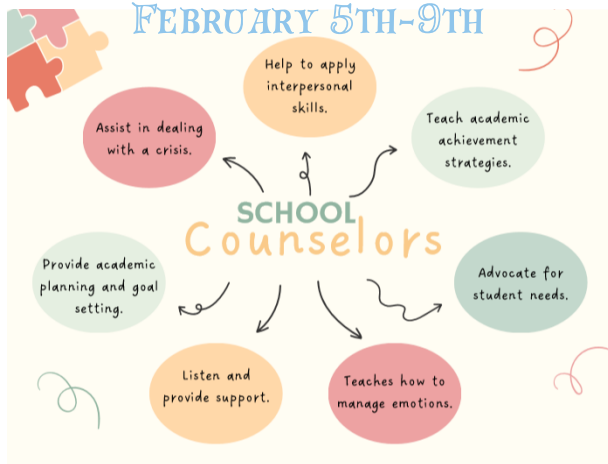
# SEL Book of the Month



The Technology Tail is a cute, creative story about children and their texts, tweets, posts, and pics. Don't be mean and irresponsible! That's the straight-to-the-point advice "Screen" has for young readers who are active on social media. Whether tapping out messages on their computers, tablets or phones, "Screen" wants kids to know their words --the kind and the cruel-- will follow them for life, creating a digital trail that can't be erased.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR WEEK

FEBRUARY 5TH-9TH



## Upcoming Dates

- 2/6: 4th grade RLA STAAR Field Test
- 2/8: 6th grade RLA STAAR Field Test
- 2/9: School Counselor Day
- 2/16: End of 4th Six Weeks, First Things First, & Kona Ice
- 2/19: School Holiday
- 2/27: School Bus Transportation Appreciation Day & EJ Moss West Soar Award Store
- 2/27-2/29: 4th-6th TELPAS Reading Test

## Try it at Home!

# TIPS FOR INTERNET SAFETY

### EXPLORING THE INTERNET



Have an open conversation with your kids about safe browsing and computer use. Explain why online safety is important. Teach them that with the freedom to explore the internet comes responsibility. Keep your computer in an open area. If your computer is in a home office, make a rule that doors are always open when online.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE SHARED ONLINE

Nowadays, children begin using computers at an early age, and internet safety education is required. Teach your children to never give out information about their school, where they live, how old they are, or their phone number.



### KEEP NO SECRETS



Children are often instructed to keep anything a friend or sibling tells them private, but educate them that if they feel the action was damaging or hurtful they should not be scared to inform you.

### IN-PERSON MEET-UPS

Teach your child to never meet in person with anyone they first "met" on the internet. Inform your child if someone asks to meet up, to inform you right away. Some people may not be who they say they are.



### SOCIAL MEDIA

Educate yourself on how to stay safe when using social media and have open discussions with kids about the present dangers and long-term effects of inappropriate contact. This includes the dangers associated with posting their pictures or location online.

