



Family Tech Talk Volunteer Guide

Description

During this activity, families will have a “tech talk”—kids and their parents will discuss what they are actually doing online, talk about their experiences with social media, and establish their online rules and ways their family values will play out online. At the end of the activity, please have attendees write their top thoughts and reflections on the poster paper. You will present the poster for 30 seconds at the end of the night.

Activity Time

15 minutes

Resources Needed

- 1 Volunteer leader
- 1 copy of the Family Tech Talk Handout per pair (at least 50 copies for 100 people)
- Desks or tables for families to sit at
- Pens for each table
- Timer
- 1 poster paper for wrap up comments

Helpful Definitions

- **Social Media Off Times** – You can have your device, but you will be using it for other activities such as research for your next great science experiment.
- **Zero Device Hours** – Times during the day that you will not be using a device at all. For example, everyone charges their device in the kitchen during bedtime.
- **Social Media Values** – Your philosophy on how you interact with people online.
- **App** – App is short for "application," which is the same thing as a software program. While an app may refer to a program for any hardware platform, it is most often used to describe programs for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets.
- **Streaming** – the act, the process, or an instance of streaming data or of accessing data that is being streamed.

Directions to Start the Activity Session

Welcome families as they enter your activity space. Provide each pair with a handout. When everyone has arrived at your station, use the script below to introduce the activity.

To start the activity, SAY:

Hello, my name is _____. Today we will have a family “tech talk.” This is a great way for you to start a discussion about how you as a family want to approach all things tech. During the next 15 minutes, you will use the handout to accomplish a few things!

- First, you’ll get a chance to introduce each other to your favorite apps. This is your time to share why that app or game is so special to you!
- Next, you’ll write down one thing you wish you knew about each other’s favorite app (or game) and vice versa.
- You’ll then make a commitment to each other to try one of the other person’s favorite apps or games. Who knows, maybe you’ll find a new favorite!
- After that, you’ll make a promise to watch an online show together. By online show, I mean something you watch on YouTube, Instagram TV, Twitch, Netflix, Hulu, etc.
- Then, we’ll pivot a little bit to discuss when your family will take breaks from your phones and social media. Studies show this is important to your mental health, no matter what your age!
 - Together, you’ll establish when your families “social media off times” are throughout the day. And, your zero device hours? When is it okay to be on your device but not going to games or apps and when should you not be on your device at all?
- To make sure your social media breaks and zero device hours are enforced, you’ll then talk about potential consequences if this plan is broken, or rewards if it is followed. Discuss this and come to a compromise together.
- Finally, you’ll work together to create an outline of your family’s tech/media/online values. For example:
 - We should only like or forward things that have a positive message
 - We don’t post embarrassing photos of other people.
 - We don’t post photos of people without checking with them first.

When we communicate with each other about technology, we create a safer space. This discussion can lead to more fun as you connect with each other. Remember, the way you act offline should be the same online. Your family tech talk needs to fit within your own family values. Ready? Let’s get started!

During the Activity

Walk around to each group. If people seem stumped, try and provide examples to help them come up with more ideas. Encourage kids and parents to come up with stuff together.

To help families start their conversation on “social media off times”, zero device hours, rule consequences/rewards and social media values; encourage them to think about:

- Making all meal times zero device hours (not just dinner!)
- Homework: this doesn’t mean “no screens” but makes the distinction between socializing and working.
- If it is okay to have a social media account, when is it okay to use it? For example—Children can have social media accounts, but they can’t check them after bedtime.



- Playing video games for 30 minutes each day is ok, but only after homework and chores are finished.

After 5 minutes SAY:

You have 10 minutes left.

After 10 minutes SAY:

You have 5 minutes left.

Close the Session

After 15 minutes SAY:

Time is Up! I am going to check that each of you has worked through your handout and then I will sign off on your passport.

Make sure you keep this conversation going! Pick a place in your house to post this handout where everyone can see it. Remember things online change every day! Please take two minutes now to write a thought, reflection or something you learned from the session on the poster paper.

Close the Activities

At the end of the third session, SAY:

Please take out your phones at this time and open the survey that was sent to you by the PTA when you registered for this event. We will have a few minutes in the close out session to complete this as well.

