



THE CATHOLIC ACADEMY
OF STAMFORD

Building Healthy Technology Habits

In this month's newsletter I would like to focus on building healthy technology habits. The topic of social media has come across my desk quite often in the last couple of months. It is a topic that we as adults are also learning to manage, not just our children. While doing some research and reflecting I have come across some tips for managing screen time, social media, and overall perception of technology.

In our school we use laptops, iPads, and smart boards to show videos or textbooks to teach curriculum. It is a wonderful tool. But there are moments when we also take a break from the screen to allow students to converse, have time to independently think and support their creative outlet in the part of their brain that is important to support healthy development.

In an article published by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center of Excellence Social Media and Youth Mental Health center, Lisa Guernsey has created a mnemonic called "The 5 Cs" to support and navigate technology with children. The article is addressed to parents and clinicians. She states the following:

Ask yourself the 5 Cs:

1. Child - Who is your child, how do they react to media, and what are their motivations for using it?
2. Content - What is worth their attention?
3. Calm - How do they calm down emotions or go to sleep?
4. Crowding Out - What does the media get in the way of?
5. Communication - How can you talk about media to raise a smart and responsible child?

A few key takeaways:

School Aged Children (5-10 years)

- It is important to carve out time to build upon the children's strengths and interests.
- Many kids start to love video games and Youtube at this age but can easily access content that is age inappropriate. Read reviews on Common Sense Media to find out what shows, games, and movies are the right fit for their maturity level. Watch shows and play video games together to see if you like the messages and behavior they convey.

- Teach children techniques such as deep breathing and listening to quiet music to help calm their brains.
- Talk with the children about balancing time on screens so that there is enough time to sleep, read, draw, do homework, hangout, play sports with other kids, and chat with family.
- Children have a burst of understanding of things like advertising, privacy, and concepts like right vs wrong. By regularly having open minded talks about media, you build critical thinking skills and can be the “voice in your child's head” when they become more independent in their teen years.
(Guernsey)

Young Teens (10-14 years)

- Being present with your child and being available in moments they are ready to share. This may mean putting away your own phone - even in brief moments like car rides. This gives you insight into how they are coping with school, friends, mood, bullying, or are stressed about world news.
- In this time of growing exploration and independence, youth may feel more emboldened to explore dangerous or inappropriate content. Questions like “have you seen anything lately that seemed weird or scary?” may lead your child to open up.
- The early teens years often include a wide range of emotions. Because devices and video games are such an easy distraction many teens say they use them to escape negative feelings. Avoid having phones and gaming devices in the bedroom at night, which are consistently linked with poor sleep.
- If your child has a phone, teach them to set “do not disturb” or focus mode during their school, homework, and bedtimes so they are in control of when devices grab their attention.
- Start conversations with open-minded questions (what’s this like for you? What do you think of?...) and put them at ease by talking about your own stresses with social media. Have check-ins with your child about how they are feeling about navigating their peer relationships online and offline.
(Guernsey)

Overall, the above-mentioned tips are tremendous, as provided by Lisa Guernsey. Having calm, relaxed, and open communication patterns with your child about the use of technology can ensure positive transparency. Children may also mention friendships or classmates' routines about social media. It is important to communicate with them that all families have different rules and expectations. It is okay if those are the rules at their classmates' house, but in your home, you set and create those rules with your loved ones, and they even come from generations past. We can not take technology away, but we can use it to create healthy habits and expand the children's emotional and mental intelligence to carve their paths in becoming young professionals.

Thank you, Mrs. Grijalva

Works Cited

Guernsey, Lisa . "The 5 Cs of Media Use ." *Center of Excellence Social Media and Youth Mental Health* , American Academy of Pediatrics , https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/CoE_5Cs_Young_Teens_Final.pdf. Accessed Feb. 2026.

Guernsey, Lisa . "The 5 Cs of Media Use ." *Center of Excellence Social Media and Youth Mental Health* , American Academy of Pediatrics , downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/CoE_5Cs_School_Age_Children_Final.pdf. Accessed Feb. 2026.