This Media Balance & Well-being Guide provides key points, guiding questions, and links to resources to help parents/caregivers plan for healthy and balanced student technology use.

BIG IDEAS	KEY POINTS FOR PARENTS	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1
Anticipate challenges and take proactive action.
 	
	• **Anticipate student challenges** and turn them into **learning opportunities**.
	• **Model**, **teach**, and **mentor** students around **appropriate technology use**.
	• **Use reflective language** that supports student problem solving when challenges arise.
		• How is social emotional learning connected to technology use?
		  • **Resources:** Social & Emotional Development
		  • **Resource:** CASEL Parent Toolkit
		  • **Resources:** How Can We Help Kids with Self-Regulation?
		• What executive functioning skills might my child need to use technology appropriately?
		  • **Article:** Understanding Executive Functioning Issues
		  • **Articles and Strategies:** Collection of Articles about Executive Functioning
		• When I have a concern about a school-related digital learning space, do I work in partnership with my child's school to resolve issues quickly?

2
Ensure screen-time is educational.
 	
	When using digital media, **look for opportunities to teach media literacy and character traits**.
	
	When using digital media, consider:
	• the **content**
	• the **context** (when, where, why, how and with whom)
	• the **different needs of children** in relation to technology and media use
	• the **added value** of the technology/media use
		• How can I learn more about the digital media my children want to use?
		  • **Resource:** Choosing Apps, Games, Media and Services Wisely
		• How can I use digital media to teach my child about character traits such as empathy, ethics, or civic responsibility?
		  • **Resource:** Character Strengths and Life Skills
		  • **Article:** What is Media Literacy and Why is it Important?
		• How does technology provide my child with more control over when and where they can access learning?
		  • What is Blended Learning

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3
Use technology in a goal-directed and purposeful manner.
 	
	• Technology use should be **intentional** with a **goal or purpose** in mind.
	• Using technology to avoid uncomfortable feelings such as boredom impacts our ability to **find productive ways to manage feelings.**
		• Do I support my child in using technology to set goals, plan, organize, and manage their time and projects?
		  • **Resource:** Portrait of a Graduate Family Resources
		  • **Resource:** Naviance Family Connection
		  • **Learning Descriptors:** Goal Directed Learning
		• Do my children engage in purposeful digital creation, communication, and collaboration?
		• Do I help my child identify productive strategies for dealing with uncomfortable feelings?
		  • **Video:** 6 Ways to Help Your Kid Stop Multi-tasking During Homework
		  • **Article:** How Can We Help Kids with Self-Regulation?

4
Balance online and offline learning experiences and materials.
 	
	• **Face to face** and **digital communication** and collaboration are both **necessary** and need **direct instruction, practice, monitoring, and mentoring**.
	• Children need opportunities to use a **variety of materials** for learning.
	• **Be mindful** of the **volume** of digital media **consumption.**
		• Do I actively prepare my child for online social interactions?
		  • **Article:** Understanding Social Media in the Context of Executive Functioning
		  • **Strategy:** Choosing Apps, Game and Media Wisely
		  • **Strategy:** Establishing Expectations at Home
		• Do my children have opportunities to use a variety of resources in different formats? (print, video, text, audio, simulations, arts and crafts, sports equipment, musical instruments)
		• Does my child engage in a healthy balance of online and face to face activities?
		  • **Strategies:** Digital Wellbeing
		  • **Strategies:** Apple Screen Time
		  • **Tool:** Media Time Calculator - plot a 24 hr day to help visualize how time is spent.
		  • **Article:** American Academy of Pediatrics Media Use Recommendations
		  • **Strategy:** Device Free Dinner
		  • **Resource:** Family Dinner Conversation Starters

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5
Prioritize active use of technology for creation, critical thinking, and collaboration.
 	
	• **Authentic use** of technology for **group work** builds communication and collaboration skills.
	• **Using technology to help** others enhances our sense of well-being and belonging.
	• Too much **passive use** of technology **correlates with increased depression, anxiety and attention issues**.
		• Do I favor and foster opportunities for my children to actively plan, organize, create, and collaborate with peers using technology?
		• Do my children actively use technology for activities such as coding, simulations or to research topics?
		  • **Resources:** FCPS Library Resources
		  • **Resources:** FCPS Coding Resources
		  • **Resource:** PhET Simulations
		• Am I mindful of the amount of time my children spend passively receiving information from technology?
		  • **Learning Descriptors:** Active Learning
		  • **Resource:** Portrait of a Graduate Family Resources
		  • **Resource:** Naviance Family Connection

6
Use high quality, age appropriate, and FCPS approved educational resources
 	
	• Use digital tools and other media that are an **appropriate match for a child's needs, abilities, interests, and developmental stage**.
	• FCPS students have access to a library of approved tools and digital resources in the FCPS Digital Ecosystem.
		• Do I teach my children how to select high quality digital resources that match their learning needs and interests?
		  • **Resource:** Choosing Apps, Games, Media and Services Wisely
		• Do I help my children learn media and information literacy skills?
		  • **Article:** What is Media Literacy and Why is it Important?
		• Do I engage with my child's school to learn about the digital resources available through FCPS?
		  • **Resource**: FCPS Library Catalog and Databases
		  • **Resource:** FCPS Technology Resources
		  • **Reviews:** Movie and TV Reviews (including YouTube)
		  • **Reviews:** Common Sense Media App Reviews
		  • **Reviews:** Entertainment Software Ratings Board

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7
Use routines to develop healthy habits for techology use.
 	
	• **Technology can impact your health,** much like nutrition, sleep and exercise.
	• **Monitor your body, mind,** and **actions** when using technology and make **healthy choices.**
		• Do I teach my children strategies for monitoring their body, mind, and eyes while they are using technology?
		  • **Routine:** 20-20-20 rule
		  • **Resources:** Health & Wellness
		• Do I have routines and expectations for technology use that consider my child's sleep, nutrition and exercise needs?
		  • **Routine:** No screens one hour before bed
		  • **Routine:** Charge phone outside of bedroom
		  • **Routine:** No phones at dinner
		• Do I teach my children self-regulation strategies and social emotional skills that will support safe and healthy choices when interacting in online spaces?
		  • **eBook:** Executive Function 101
		  • **Resource:** Parent SEL Resources
		• Do I refrain from texting while driving to model what I expect of my child?
		  • **Article:** The Dangers of Distracted Driving

BIG IDEAS	**KEY POINTS**	**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

8
Create and consistently follow expectations for technology use
 	
	Create and consistently follow home expectations that address:
	• what a **caring** and **culturally responsive environment** looks and sounds like
	• **when**, **where**, and **what** technology can be used and **under what conditions**
	• **care** and **maintenance** of equipment
		• Do I model and foster a caring and inclusive culture when using digital tools and services?
		  • **Resource:** Teaching Tolerance
		• Have I established expectations and consequences for technology use at home?
		  • **Resource:** Establishing Expectations Using a Four Pronged Approach
		• Do I follow through with agreed upon consequences when expectations are not followed?
		• Do I revisit expectations and consider a gradual release of control as my children show readiness and responsibility?

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- **Monitor** your own **digital footprint**.
- Monitor and **mediate children's interactions** in digital environments.
- Help children **understand, interpret**, and **analyze** what they see, hear and experience online.
- **Model** and **teach** self-regulation strategies for managing challenges when online.

- How can I arrange device use at home to best monitor my children's use of technology?
- Do I monitor the collaborative online spaces used by my children?
  - **Resource:** Establishing Expectations Using a Four Pronged Approach
- Do I help my children process the content, contact, and conduct they encounter online?
- Do I support my children in learning and applying self-regulation strategies when using technology?
  - **Article:** Understanding Social Media in the Context of Executive Functioning
  - **Article:** Risk Taking and the Teenage Brain
  - **Article:** One More Cupcake?...Promoting Self-Control Through the Ages

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Choosing Media Wisely Worksheet

Choosing Media Wisely	Common Sense Reviews	Entertainment Software Ratings Board	Establishing Expectations at Home	FCPS Digital Citizenship Site

Questions
• Can you communicate with people you don't know while using the app, game or service?
• Is the app, game or service age appropriate and is there questionable content?
• Does the tool or service use location services?
• Will they have the ability to buy additional features, also known as in-app purchases?
• Can they publish text, photos, or videos publicly?
• Is there live streaming?
• What information will it collect about your child and who can they share it with? (Check the Terms of Service and Privacy Policies)
• Who owns the content your child posts or shares?
• Does it reflect your family's values?

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