



## Dear Family,

Between virtual learning and social distancing, kids are spending more time online than ever. Figuring out how to manage it all can be tough! But don't worry—we've got you covered. We've gathered some helpful resources to support your kiddos in being happy, healthy, and connected online. Inside, you'll find a mini poster for your fridge with go-to family night ideas, a breakdown of what tech talks to have at each age, and all sorts of tech resources to make online time fun and engaging for the whole family.

# Your Family Guide to Happy & Healthy Tech Habits

(and Staying Connected to  
the People Who Matter Most)



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

**Messenger Kids**

A family messaging app that helps to connect kids to their friends and loved ones

## Raising Kind, Responsible Kids:

# What Digital Citizenship Is and Why It Matters

Digital citizenship means making smart choices when using technology. The best part? You can teach digital citizenship by modeling the skills and knowledge kids need, all while having fun! You can help your kids soar as digital citizens by teaching them how to:



- Connect safely
- Engage with others online kindly and respectfully
- Protect their privacy
- Create strong passwords and recognize scams and phishing



# Let's Talk About Tech!

How do you get the conversation going around technology?

These conversation starters to the rescue!

We've divided them by these important key topics.

## Connecting Safely

Talk about how kids connect to the internet (e.g., dial-up, Wi-Fi) and why it matters.

- ★ What method(s) do you use to connect to the internet? Let's learn more about how that method works (e.g., watch a video online).
- ★ Why do you think sharing personal information, like credit card numbers, over an unsecured network is risky?
- ★ Why is it important to be careful about sharing our family's Wi-Fi password?

## Privacy Settings

Make a point of talking about privacy settings and how kids can control what they share.

- ★ How are you using privacy settings to protect your information?
- ★ Did you know that images may contain metadata telling when and where they were taken? Let's see if your digital device/platform has a way to turn that off.
- ★ Do you ever use location services to check-in to places? What steps are you taking to protect your location when you don't want to share it?



## Passwords

A strong password is one of the simplest ways to protect the information we share online. Help your child create a password that is at least 7 characters long; uses a random mix of letters, numbers, and symbols; and contains no personal information.

- ★ Have you ever felt pressured to share your password with someone? What did you do?
- ★ Why is it important to have a different password for every account?
- ★ How can we make sure your privacy is respected? How can we make sure I have the tools I need to keep you safe?

## Sharing Information

To help your child master the basics of sharing personal information, teach them that context matters. In some cases, they may have to share information to gain access to some apps and websites, such as their names, email addresses and birth dates.

- ★ What personal information are you cautious about sharing online?
- ★ What clues do you look for to tell if a website/app/platform is trustworthy?
- ★ What can you do if someone you've shared personal information with breaks your trust?

# Why We Love Messenger Kids for Connecting With Friends and Family Online

Messenger Kids is a family messaging app that lets kids have fun with their friends and family in a parent-controlled space. Here are some features:

- ★ Free messaging and video chat\*
- ★ Parents manage the contact list
- ★ Parents can set “off times” for the app
- ★ Kids express themselves with kid-appropriate stickers, GIFs, and filters
- ★ No ads or in-app purchases

\*Video chat and messaging are free over Wi-Fi (otherwise standard data charges apply)



To download the app, visit [messengerkids.com/BTS](https://messengerkids.com/BTS)

## Genius! 7 Ways Parents Foster Smart Technology Use

We asked parents to tell us how they talk about digital citizenship at home. Here's what they said:

“In my house, we talk about how tech use makes us feel. Excited? Sad? Calmer? **I think learning to self-monitor is a good lifelong practice.**” —*Kimberley M.*

“I encourage my kids to turn off many of the notifications from apps and games. That way they don't get distracted when they are trying to do something else.” —*Vicki B.*

“**We use device ownership as a way to teach responsibility.** Devices with broken parts are taken away, and the kids ‘pay’ for the repairs in chores.”

—*Morgan M.*

“**We plug in phones in a central place until homework is completed,** then again at bedtime. I do it too! It's a great way to make sure we're connecting as a family.” —*Dana T.*



“**I encourage conversations around tech in a family meeting,** giving everyone a voice. You don't always have to agree with each other, but you do need to show understanding through listening.” —*Anisa L.*

“I think it's super important to teach kids how to text because otherwise they end up with 843 texts saying ‘sup’ or send things they shouldn't. So we allow our kids to text their friends but **set aside time each week to look at the texts together** and talk about texting etiquette.” —*Erin M.*

“My kids both have watches that count their steps, and we only allow them to have **screen time after they have been active for 60 minutes.** We want to teach that taking care of your body comes first.” —*Hannah H.*



“I love that I can monitor all of my daughter's messages and any contacts have to be approved by me. I feel safe allowing her to chat and enjoy the app. She likes to send funny photos and tell stories, and loves that even Grandma can send back silly pictures.”

— Sarah Vanderkooy,  
mother to an 8-year-old daughter



# 25

Family Night Ideas

# Ways to Connect Online & Offline With Your Kids



Create a family website or blog.

Make origami creations or engage in a craft everyone enjoys.

Blast music and have a dance party.



Use Messenger Kids to video chat with a family member you haven't seen in a while.

Have a family campout in the backyard or the living room.



Invention challenge! Search for household items (boxes, tape, paper, etc.) and challenge kids to come up with an invention, using the materials.

Have your child be the teacher and show the rest of the family how to play their favorite game or app.



Messenger Kids play break! Try the mindfulness filter to teach your child it's okay to take a minute to breathe.

Have kids write down topics they've been curious about or questions they have about the world—use the internet to look up answers together.

Take a virtual field trip—pick a place you would like to travel as a family and use the internet to research what it looks like, the climate, and landmarks.

Start a family book club—listen to an audiobook or read a book aloud together and discuss.

Have each family member share their favorite show, video, or game—play or watch them together.

Help kids research what fruits and vegetables will grow in your area and plant a family garden.

Make your own movie by writing a short script with your child and then recording it as a family.



Go on a photo scavenger hunt—have kids find shapes or letters in their environment and snap a photo of each.

Find a new recipe and have the kids help cook it.



Host a video playdate where your kids connect with their friends using Messenger Kids.

Watch an online tutorial and build something together.

Find a podcast that interests the whole family and listen to it together.

Use an augmented reality app to take silly family photos.



Head outside to stargaze—use a constellation app to map out major landmarks in the sky.

Get moving—use a hiking app to find the best local hikes in your area and hit the trails.

Write a story together—fiction or nonfiction.



Look up some simple science experiments, like mixing baking soda with vinegar, and try them at home.

Build an epic blanket fort.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

**Messenger Kids**

# A Teacher's Guide to Teaching Healthy Tech Habits

Happy & Healthy  
**TECH HABITS**

**Kids are spending more time online than ever.**

How can we help students develop positive tech habits during these uncertain times? We've got you covered. Inside, you'll find all kinds of resources for managing and supporting tech use. We've included a helpful guide on digital skills students need, role-play scenarios for tough tech moments, and even a mini poster about classroom tech rules. As a bonus, we've also enclosed family guides to share with families to support everyone in having a happy and healthy online life—both at school and at home. Let's all stay happy, healthy, and connected together!

From your friends at



**Messenger Kids**



Teaching Kind, Responsible Kids:

## What Digital Citizenship Means and Why It Matters

From LOLs to emojis, kids make choices every day as they navigate websites, apps, and other tools. Teaching digital citizenship means guiding kids to make smart choices—through the development of skills and knowledge—and to effectively communicate using technology, all while being kind and considerate. Whether at school or at home, you can help kids soar as kind digital citizens by teaching them how to:

- ★ **Connect safely**
- ★ **Engage with others online kindly and respectfully**
- ★ **Protect their privacy**
- ★ **Create strong passwords**
- ★ **Recognize scams and phishing**

# 5 Digital Skills Students Need to be Happy & Healthy Online



Seeing students plug away on their assignments using just the right technology is sure to bring any teacher joy. But how do you make sure that students are using their time wisely and responsibly? These important skills help to set the foundation.

## 1 Be Kind to Others

Have you ever forgotten that there is a real live, breathing person on the other end of the screen? It happens to kids and adults alike! We can help foster kind behavior by teaching acceptable ways to communicate online. This includes using respectful language, knowing the rules of the particular website or tool you are using, and observing the golden rule.

**Idea to try:** Create a media-use plan as a class that outlines expectations, rules, and behavior. Capture students' ideas in a chart to display and share. Use the resource as an ongoing guide to remind students of positive digital behavior.

## 2 Protect Your Privacy

When students share information online, it's important for them to consider who could see that information and whether they feel comfortable sharing it. Some information could mean bad things in the future if it's shared with the wrong people. In order to recognize the privacy choices that will keep students safe, they need to understand the effects of sharing their information.

**Idea to try:** Challenge students to find examples online where someone shared or posted something they would personally keep private. Ask them to explain their thinking and consider if it changes depending on the audience.

## 3 Create Strong Passwords

We often don't think a lot about the passwords we use for websites, apps, and services. However, the strength of your passwords determines the security of your information.

**Idea to try:** Invite students to create new sample passwords that are at least seven characters long; use a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols; and contain no personal information. Then go around the room and ask participants to share their password samples.

## 4 Connect Safely

Sometimes, we are given a choice as to which Wi-Fi network we would like to use. It's important for students to remember that there are serious risks if they connect to the wrong network. For instance, if they are on an unsecured network, it's possible for other people on the same network to see their information.

**Idea to try:** Discuss various locations where students might go online (at home, at school, at the library) and the activities they might do there (email, homework, online games). Talk about which activities are safer to do in certain locations and why.

## 5 Recognize Scams & Phishing

Unfortunately, there are sometimes malicious online users who might attempt to use security weaknesses to gather information about us. Students need to be able to recognize the warning signs of these bad actors in order to protect themselves.

**Idea to try:** Share sample email addresses and subject lines with your students that feature a mix of legitimate and "spam" messages. Talk with students about ways to identify messages from bad actors, including exaggerated claims, requests for personal information, odd characters or symbols, and misspelled words or websites.

# 10 Role-Play Scenarios for Tough Tech Moments

Everyday moments are ripe with digital-citizenship learning. Get your students talking about choices by trying out some of these scenarios.

1. Your friend shows you a website with material that makes you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?
2. While hanging with friends, you take a silly group photo. One of your friends wants to post it online, but you don't want to. What do you do?
3. Your best friend starts laughing at something in a group chat ... only you're not on it. How do you handle being left out of the chat?
4. You get a text saying you've won a free music subscription and all you have to do is click the link to receive your prize. Do you click the link—why or why not?
5. After school you decide to go online and see that one of your friends has just posted a mean comment about your teacher. What do you do?
6. A group of kids at school is going around pranking other kids and posting pictures to be funny. They want you to like all the photos so more people see them online. What choice will you make?
7. You want to open a new online account but your parents/guardians said no, not until you are older. All your friends are on it, and it would be easy to join without your parents/guardians ever knowing. What do you do?
8. An upgrade for an online game you like just came out, and you want to buy it. The only problem is you don't have a credit card, but you do know where your parents/guardians keep theirs. Would you use it? Why or why not?
9. Someone you don't know just requested to be your friend. He looks about your same age, and his profile says he goes to a different school in your city. Do you accept the request?
10. You just got forwarded a video of someone at school getting bullied, with a note to pass it on. What do you do?



## More Resources for Teaching Digital Citizenship

**InCtrl** [teachinctrl.org/cyberbullying](http://teachinctrl.org/cyberbullying)

Designed for grades 4–8, these lessons cover key digital-citizenship concepts through inquiry-based activities.

**Digizen** [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)

From social networking to cyberbullying, Digizen provides information on all aspects of digital citizenship.

**Get Digital**

[facebook.com/fbgetdigital](https://facebook.com/fbgetdigital)

Facebook's Get Digital has everything you need to teach digital citizenship. Explore topics like privacy, password protection, and more.

Plus, a way for kids to connect with friends and family



[messengerkids.com/BTS](https://messengerkids.com/BTS)



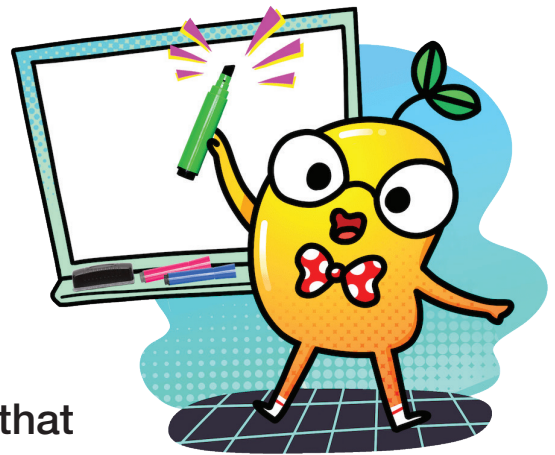
We love this family messaging app because, by default, kids can only connect with parent-approved contacts. The controlled environment makes it easy and fun for kids to express themselves via video calls and messages.



# In Our Class, We ...

1.

**Only talk online** with people we know and trust offline, and we use respect and authenticity.



2.

**Speak up** and report online behavior or content that makes us uncomfortable.

3.

**Use strong passwords** (at least six characters; combination of numbers, upper, and lowercase letters; special characters).



4.

**Watch for online scams** (people asking for personal details they don't need to try to trick you out of money or information).



5.

**Stay on task.** Only visit the websites your teacher tells you to.

