Kids & Technology: Staying Safe

Technology is a wonderful thing— if used responsibly, that is. To keep your kids safe, here are some parenting tips on using computers and cell phones wisely.

COMPUTERS...

Be involved. Spend time online with your kids and get to know what websites they're visiting. This will keep an open line of communication—not to mention you'll learn a lot from your tech-savvy children! Another idea: consider installing filters to block inappropriate websites.

Teach boundaries. Kids should never reveal personal information about themselves online without your permission.

CELL PHONES...

Safety first. Make sure your kids don't give out their phone numbers to strangers. Also, make sure they never drive while talking or texting.

Teach responsible use. For a lesson in money management, have your kids keep track of their minutes and pay their bills each month to learn budgeting.
Responsible text messaging is another critical issue. Texting in class, at the dinner table or especially, while driving, is always a bad idea—as is sending obscene or inappropriate photos. This is an increasingly serious problem known as "sexting."

When it comes to using technology, establish rules for use and consequences for breaking them. Set time and place boundaries, for example: Absolutely no phone use during class or no Internet time until homework or chores are done.

These parenting tips are courtesy of Franklin County Children Services, where we advocate for each child's safety, permanency and well-being.

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