

Balance and Boundaries

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A Typical Conversation

“Mom, you can play on your phone. Why can’t we play with our cell phones?”

Mom answers, “I use the phone for business.”

The kid responds, “I need the phone to help me do homework.”

Every parent has had this type of conversation with their child. Children always want to use their phones. And parents are constantly setting boundaries. And we have to keep those boundaries because, while technology can be helpful, it also has bad *effects* on children.

How is Technology Helpful?

When I do not understand my kids’ homework, I use technology to help me find the answer and explain it to my kids. Also, some technology games can help kids learn vocabulary. My son improves his math skills by playing on a math website. Moreover, when my kids are stressed, they can use technology to connect with their friends and reduce the stress.

What Are the Bad Effects of Technology?

One of the biggest problems is that children lose their independence. For example, when my kids play with phone games for a long time, they struggle to do anything without phones. They lose their ability to concentrate on other things.

Likewise, some kids don’t do homework because they spend so much time online. Technology makes the children less familiar with social contact. They get social anxiety. They don’t feel comfortable talking to friends and parents. They play for a long time on technology, and they don’t get enough sleep. Then they get even more anxious. Technology *affects* kids’ ability to interact with people. When they have less time with friends, they have an unhealthy life.



Find Balance and Set Boundaries

In conclusion, technology can have positive and negative *effects* on children. It is parents’ responsibility to help children find the right balance in how they use technology. Parents need to set clear boundaries for using technology. I usually set my children’s social media time to one hour or thirty minutes per day and build a good example for them by scheduling screen breaks because it helps avoid eye strain and encourages physical activity. I like to invite my children to play board games, cook together, or work out.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What does the author mean by “balance” and “boundaries”?
2. *Effect* is usually a noun. *Affect* is usually a verb. Notice how the author uses them in her article, and try using them yourself in various sentences.

Weijuan Huang is a mother of three young children. She appreciates the Alameda Reads Adult Literacy Program at the Alameda Free Library in Alameda, California, and the ESOL classes at Laney College in Oakland, California. Even though learning English is hard, she always tells herself to keep going, no matter what.