DIGCIT FAMILY TIPS FROM COMMON SENSE EDUCATION

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Grades K-5
- **Establish clear family expectations**: Decide together what kind of media and tech is OK -- and when it's OK to use it. A family media plan can help get everyone on the same page.
- **Discuss personal vs. private info**: Talk about the difference between what's OK to share online (favorite color) and what's not (home address).
- **Use privacy settings**: Together, go through all the settings on new apps to make sure you both know what information your kids are sharing. Especially in the beginning, it's better to share very little.
- **Give them the right words**: Kids learn about appropriate verbal and physical communication from watching you. But online conversations can be invisible. Occasionally, narrate as you're writing texts or social media comments when your kids are in earshot.
- **Check in about online life**: Just like you'd ask your kid about their sleep, exercise, and eating, stay on top of their online life. Who are they chatting with? How do people treat each other in the games and on the sites they're using?
- **Discuss fact vs. opinion**: Play around with ideas and decide which are facts and which are opinions. Ask: How tall are you? What's the best food in the world? Do rocks sink or float? Do you like dogs? Point out that both facts and opinions show up in the news, but opinion is usually labeled.

Grades 6-12
- **Create screen-free times and zones**: Help tweens and teens take breaks from tech by limiting screen time in bedrooms, during study time, or at the dinner table. Consider carving out regular family time when screens are either put away or enjoyed together.
- **Use privacy settings**: Sit down with tweens and teens to show the privacy settings you use on your apps and devices. Talk about why you keep certain information private or limited to a small group. Ask them what information they feel comfortable sharing and why.
- **Search yourself**: Take turns looking up your name and your kid's name on a search engine and a social platform. Discuss the results. Are you both comfortable with what information and images are available to strangers? Is there anyone whom you wouldn't want to see those results?
- **Learn about their worlds**: Tweens and teens have unique communication styles -- especially online. As much as possible, keep an eye on what they're saying and doing online to understand the norm in their worlds. Don't police everything they say, but keep an ear out for aggressive trash-talking, hate speech, rude images, or anything hurtful. If you see stuff that crosses the line, speak up. Kids need to understand that their words have consequences.
- **Check in about online life**: Just like you'd ask your kid about their sleep, exercise, and eating, stay on top of their online life. Who are they chatting with? How do people treat each other in the games and on the sites they're using?
- **Choose a variety of sources**: Show tweens and teens how you get news and information from different places, and explain how you make your choices. Ask them where they get their information and what tools they use to decide if something is credible, trustworthy, and fair. Explore a few partisan outlets together and talk about what you both notice. Discuss bias, satire, and clickbait.