

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

Know more. Stress less.

Tech Contract

cricket®

bark 

Create a Technology Contract With Your Family

As more and more kids have access to connected devices, the pressure for parents to provide kids with their own smartphones and tablets is heating up. But technology is a privilege, not a right. In most cases, parents are the owners of their kids' devices, not the kids themselves. It's okay to remind your kids that you're loaning them the device in good faith and you require them to sign a technology contract in exchange.

A technology contract is a great way for your family to collaborate on rules for using devices and accessing the internet. It can help make sure the whole family is on the same page about how to get the most out of technology, and—most importantly—how to stay safer online.

Set the Ground Rules

While the internet offers amazing possibilities, there are also many dangers that exist online. Here are a few points to consider.

- For younger kids, we recommend setting their password for any and all accounts they access and not allowing your child to change them. If your child is older, you may want to consider letting them set their own passwords. With either approach, including a monitoring tool like Bark will provide an extra layer of safety to their online activity.

- It's your right as the parent to look through the device at any point to see which sites they visit and who they're communicating with online.
- Make sure your child knows to never video chat with strangers and that they're not allowed to provide any personal information on any forum or website without your permission. This includes their name, address, school, birthday, or any other information a stranger could use to find them.
- For teens with a driver's license, make sure you have a strict no-texting-while-driving rule in place. This is not only the law in many states, but it can also be deadly.
- Make it clear that there are consequences for breaking the terms of the technology contract. Consequences can include the loss of privileges associated with their device, losing access to the device for a set time period, or anything else that makes sense for your family.
- Remind your child that you're a team and you're in this together. Mistakes will happen, but you're there to discuss it with them so you can learn and grow together.

Discuss Online Etiquette

In addition to setting safety rules for your child, it's also critical to help them understand that there is basic etiquette for navigating the online world. For example, you could set rules about turning the device off in certain public places, like restaurants or at the movies.

Or consider a rule where the whole family puts their devices away during dinner or leaves their devices in the kitchen to charge overnight while sleeping.

Your child may know how to be a good person in real life, but the anonymity of the internet can sometimes blur the lines. It's a good idea to clearly spell out that they should never lie to people online. Remind your child to be a good friend who never promotes or shares hurtful messaging either. If your child is old enough to access social media sites, teach them the basics of privacy. And if you're using Bark, explain that you're monitoring their activity to ensure their safety, not to snoop.

Model the Behavior You Want Your Child to Emulate

Children watch what the adults in their lives are doing, so be mindful of how you use technology around them. For example, a "no smartphone at the dinner table" rule should include adults, too. Set a good example and interact with technology in the same manner you expect from your child.

The internet opens doors to amazing things for your child, and the conversation around responsibility, respect, and safety should be ongoing as technology continues to evolve. With a technology contract in place, everyone in the family can refer to it for clear expectations and actions.

Monitor Your Kid's Activities

In addition to setting up a technology contract as a family and having regular conversations about internet safety, you can use Bark to monitor your child's online activities. Even after talking about your family's rules about the internet, your child might not always follow them. That's why having an additional safeguard in place can be helpful.

Our award-winning monitoring service alerts parents and guardians when there's a potential issue they need to know about—including cyberbullying, sexting, online predators, depression, suicidal thoughts, threats of violence, and more.

Child and Parent Tech Contract

I will:

- Immediately answer a call or text from my mom, dad or other family member.
- Ask my parents before I download any apps on my phone.
- Ask my parents before sharing any photos online.
- Tell an adult if anything online makes me nervous or afraid.
- Leave my phone in the kitchen to charge at night.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

I will not:

- Share my address, phone number or other personal information online.
- Add, text or interact with anyone online that I do not know.
- Be mean, spread rumors or make fun of people online.
- Make fake profiles or pretend to be someone else on the internet.
- Use my phone during school unless there is an emergency.
- Use my phone (calls, text or social) while I am driving.
- _____
- _____
- _____

I understand that:

- My parents can take my phone away from me at any time.
- Having a phone is a responsibility that I will take seriously.
- _____
- _____

Child Signature

Parent Signature