



## A Digital Protection Plan for Parents

### A seven-step plan

These steps come from the book “The Digital Invasion,” by Dr. Archibald Hart and Dr. Sylvia Hart Frejd:

- STEP ONE, lay a foundation of trust
- STEP TWO, stay informed about the digital world
- STEP THREE, love enough to set limits on using digital devices
- STEP FOUR, protecting your children’s social skills
- STEP FIVE, set up a digital contract
- STEP SIX, keep the internet safe
- STEP SEVEN, stay involved in your children’s digital lives

### Ten Tough Technology Tips

These “Ten Tough Technology Tips” are mainly geared toward parent’s responsibilities to monitor and protect their children and are intended to diminish the risk of addiction. They come from Trace Embry, director of Shepherd’s Hill Academy of Martin, Ga.

**(1) Be alert!** Watch, listen, learn and engage with your kids. Come to grips with the fact that neither you nor your kids are immune to technology’s ability to entice. Don’t assume your kids will make the right choices when using technology.

**(2) Create a home environment** that makes it easy for your kids to share their hearts’ desires, concerns, fears, temptations, experiences and mistakes. They must know it’s safe to discuss these with you. Calmly administer the proper consequences, if appropriate and show unconditional love.

**(3) Establish good media habits.** Lead the way; be a model to your children. Media should be a privilege rather than a constant activity. Begin early to establish rules such as asking permission to use media.

**(4) Attach all media to a system of accountability.** Keep everything in a common area; never allow a computer or television in your child’s room. Have filters for media. Have all passwords and codes. Consider times of “family media fasting” and make media a family activity. And snoop often. Too many parents are afraid to “check up” on their children’s social media. This is not overstepping or an imposition; rather it is your parental responsibility.

**(5) Determine a media diet and stick to it.** Allow your kids a cell phone that is nothing more than a phone.

Limit leaving your kids alone; when you have to do so, have a system that locks everything but their phone (for emergencies). At home, determine a texting limit and no cell phones in the bedroom.

**(6) Recognize warning signs.** Is your child tired in the morning? Has he/she lost the appetite for things he/she normally loves? Is he/she withdrawn from the family? Is he/she irritable, defensive and touchy when asked about media habits?

**(7) Encourage media literacy and accountability** in your church, social club and with your friends. This fosters the authoritative community that encourages accountability and standards that transcend your home, making your community a more trustworthy environment.

**(8) Be proactive** in encouraging good, wholesome media habits. Many websites can help families navigate the sea of entertainment alternatives. Instead of telling your kids what they can’t be exposed to, give them a number of healthy options for which they can be exposed.

**(9) Let them know that digital entertainment** isn’t the only option; give them alternatives. Sports, music, hobbies, board games, and books (among other things) are still viable non-techno activities that kids can rebuild and refresh their minds and bodies with. Steer them (and yourselves) toward balance in their lives. Show your kids how great life can be beyond the digital age.

**(10) Turn it off!** This is not necessarily a permanent solution, but there are times when it may be the best option. And we need to realize that it is an option. Remember, your child will not die without computer, phone or tablet!