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The single most requested topic I speak and coach families on is creating a screen-balanced home. I use the phrase "screen-balanced" because I don't believe technology is harmful. I do believe technology without limits is.

Talking about screens with your kids is not unlike the sex talk. You can't just sit down one time with your kids, explain the birds and bees, and expect them to know everything they need to know about sex. Healthy sexuality is not a talk; it's a conversation.

Though setting limits on screens is important, a one-time conversation where you lay down a few rules is likely to distance your child from you. Instead, collaborating with our kids in ongoing conversation is the best way to teach them how to live a self-disciplined, screen-balanced life. With that in mind, here are 5 simple steps to begin regulating your kids' screen time:

1. Contact your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to set up parental controls
Though there are software programs available to monitor your kids' screen activity, one of the best places to begin is getting the most out of your ISP. They can help you set the necessary parental controls to block mature content and even specific websites—at no extra cost. A low cost, easy-to-use, software beyond your ISP filter is Circle with Disney. We use it–and love it.

2. Keep screens out of the bedroom
One pediatrician commented, "I guarantee you that if you have a 14-year-old boy and he has an Internet connection in his bedroom, he is looking at pornography."[i]

My experience with families is no different. Many of the teenagers I meet with who struggle with pornography addiction say it started in the privacy of their bedrooms. I also work with young men whose addiction began watching late night TV infomercials with scantily clad actors. In addition to unfiltered images, one of the single biggest culprits of poor school performance is lack of sleep. Not only are teenagers spending the night texting one another, the light on the screen inhibits the brain's ability to prepare the body for sleep.

To help regulate your kids' screen time, set a time where all screens must be turned off and handed in away from the bedroom.

3. Make your kids earn the Wi-Fi password

One of the best ways to establish a screen-balanced home is to require your kids to finish their list of chores or other responsibilities before they're allowed the Wi-Fi password for the day. Not only will this regulate their use of technology, it will also help them learn the value of getting difficult tasks finished first—a necessary leadership trait to develop.

4. Have a family 24-hour fast

Simply put, anything you cannot fast from owns you. If you cannot put your device down for 24 hours, it may own you. My wife, Christi, and I maintain a 24-hour fast from Saturday sundown to Sunday sundown from social media and online connections. We do this not to be legalistic, but because it reenergizes us.

Besides, our kids are watching how we manage our devices. If we can't set limits on it, we can't expect our kids will either.

5. Play with them

When I speak at father/son events I ask dads and sons to describe the one wish they have in their relationship with one another. Overwhelmingly, the biggest wish of the dads in the room: that their sons stop playing video games.

You know what the sons' biggest wish is? That their dads play video games with them. Research shows that 20-minutes of command-free time a day—that is, time where we enter our kids' world in play and do what they want to do with them—changes the brain, and subsequently, the behavior of a child.

It may seem strange that I recommend playing (yes, even video games) with your kids to help them regulate their screen time. But play is our kids' work. Play with them, and you win their heart. Win their heart, and you can influence their behavior.