

RELATIONSHIPS & TECHNOFERENCE



Trust, responsiveness, and communication form the foundation of human relationships. Researchers use the term “**technofence**” to describe how technology can get in the way of crucial interpersonal relations and engagement.

Evidence suggests that screen use presents serious challenges for adults as well as kids.

According to research⁸ from Zero to Three:

Parent technology use gets in the way of talking and connecting with kids.

Heavy technology use by parents is associated with lower-quality parent-child interactions.

Parent technology use means that kids act out more to try and get our attention.

Heavy technology use by parents is also associated with more reports of challenging child behavior

Parent technology use interrupts our time with children.

Half of surveyed parents say that technology interrupts parent-child interactions at least three times a day. 50% of surveyed children agreed that their parents check their phones too much, and 36% say their parents get distracted by their phones during conversations.

Technology use can make it harder to parent as a team.

More technology use by parents is associated with less cooperation between them on child-rearing issues.

Screen awareness supports adult-child connections!

Scan or [click](#) for full Screen Aware Kit!



Scan or [click](#) for research references and recommended reading!



Technofence disrupts important interactions between adults and children and can cause children to feel confused, frustrated, sad, and resentful. It can also interrupt important bonding and attachment experiences, leading children to feel a lack of safety and security.^{3,5,6,7}



Check out the back of this page for tips on reducing technofence and enhancing adult-child relationships!

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Key practices for reducing technoference and strengthening connections

1. **Make screen-free parent/child time every day.** Small doses of attention make big impacts!
2. **Put devices away when not actively using them.** Reduce unnecessary distractions/interruptions.
3. **Be a media role model.** Children learn best from watching adults balance screen time.

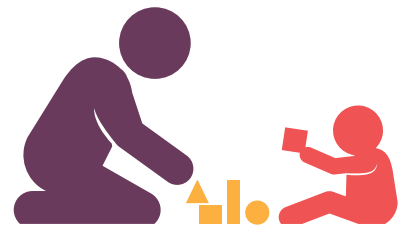
Relationship-boosting activities

Reading a book, playing games (peek-a-boo, chase, etc) or doing puzzles with your child.

Tip: Use this opportunity to mix up positions: on your lap, cuddled up next to you, or on bellies face-to-face.

Singing together and using hand motions.

Tip: Fun song choices include “Twinkle, Twinkle”, “Itsy Bitsy Spider”, “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”, and “Wheels on the Bus”



Taking a walk.

Tip: Make it a treasure hunt and ask them to look for beautiful things. Or count things – like red cars, birds, different kinds of flowers, etc.

Sitting together when eating meals.

Tip: Letting your child feed you and feeding your child can make meals more interactive and fun!

Teaming up on chores.

Tip: Doing chores together (cleaning, cooking, petcare, raking leaves, etc.) creates bonding opportunities, gives children a sense of accomplishment, and gets them in the habit of helping.

Relationship-boosting habits

Getting down to their level. Kneel down or raise them up so you are face-to-face.

Picking them up when you can. Young children are held far less than they used to be because of the strollers, bouncers, car seats/carriers, etc. Children learn to self-soothe with support from adults. They need a loving parent/caregiver to develop this ability.

Keeping routines. Let them know ahead of time if there will be any changes. This helps young children know what to expect and rely on you.

Narrating what you're doing on your screen and sharing when you'll be done. This helps children learn that technology is a tool used for specific purposes and that they are not being ignored. For example, “I have to respond to this text and then we'll get a snack.”

Putting down your screens when children are present. Screen-based distractions can cause you to miss your child's cues and bids for interaction. For children to feel connected and safe, they need to see your face and recognize that you are responding to them.

