

The Tech Exit Checklist

This is the Tech Exit: no smartphones, social media, tablets, or video games during childhood.

Your family's Tech Exit starts by trying out a **digital fast** for either seven, fourteen, or thirty days, as an initial reset and trial period. Here are the digital detox ground rules:

- no video games
- no iPads or other tablets
- no smartphones
- no social media
- no TV (except for family movies)
- school screens for homework only

In sum, a digital detox means total abstinence from addictive screen technologies (social media, smartphones, video games, tablets) and extremely minimal use of other screens (TVs and computers).

After detoxing, stay clean over the long term. Fasting from digital technology leads to **FEAST**ing on real life.

We can thus remember the five core commitments of the Tech Exit with the acronym **FEAST**:

Find Other Families

find other families to exit with you and create counter-communities

- Start with your neighbors.
- Find other parents through your child's school.
- Engage your faith community.
- Start young if you can—meet up with other parents; do an outdoor “forest school” with toddlers.
- Cast a wide net if needed.
- Just start the conversation. Talk to other parents you know.

Explain, Educate, and Exemplify

- Explain your reasons to your kids.
- Educate kids on the harms so they can understand and be prepared for the dangers themselves.
- Exemplify responsible tech use as an adult.

Adopt Alternatives

- Adopt forms of communication other than smartphones.
- Find work-arounds to app requirements.

Set Up Digital Accountability and Family Screen Rules

- Set up digital accountability for all your children's communication channels.
- Set family screen rules
 - 1) screens are used only publicly and purposefully and;
 - 2) screen entertainment is sparing and shared.

Trade Screens for Real-Life Responsibilities and Pursuits

- Invest in family relationships and give children responsibilities around the home like chores and increasingly adult-like tasks (learning to cook a meal, make a grocery list).
- Encourage real-life pursuits and forms of leisure



Collective Solutions

Smartphones and social media during childhood don't just affect the individual user. Even if a parent opts out, if all a child's peers in their school and community are on social media, that child can still be negatively affected because of how it changes social dynamics. Parents working together in their communities to create counterpressures can help, but we also need schools and lawmakers to back parents up and to help combat the group-level effects of these technologies.

Schools

Work with your school to go phone-free and low-tech.

- ✓ Ask for policies that remove phones from the entire school day, for a bell-to-bell phone ban.
- ✓ Ask for exemptions from mandatory school screens for your student.
- ✓ Encourage your school to move away from tablets and other screens for learning.
- ✓ Initiate conversations with school administration about other creative ideas like the school offering more extracurriculars, restricting social media as a policy, or working with phone providers to offer non-smart-phone alternatives to students at a discount.

Policy solutions

Advocate to your lawmakers for policy solutions, including:

- ✓ Raise the age of social media use to adulthood, like 18 years old or even 16 years old.
- ✓ Require parental consent for minor social media accounts.
- ✓ Require age verification for pornography websites.
- ✓ Require automatic filters for obscene material on minor devices.
- ✓ Require age verification and parental consent for app stores.
- ✓ Reform Section 230 to compel platforms to remove criminal content.
- ✓ Make tech companies legally liable for wrongdoing.

