

## BEYOND PIXELS: PARENTING TIPS FOR MEANINGFUL DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

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As a kid in the late 90s and early 2000s, I remember how special it was to call my grandparents (on a landline!) in another state each week. I would tell them about my schoolwork, friends, and extracurricular activities. We visited them several times a year, but it was special to share life with them regularly. Today we have more opportunities than ever to stay connected. With technological advancements like smartphones, apps like WhatsApp and MarcoPolo, and options for video calls like FaceTime, it's easy for us to continue building connections daily.



Connections and relationships are so important to have because they are a foundation of our faith. John 3:16 tells us, "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die." Jesus valued relationship-building, stopping constantly to help the sick, injured, and hurt. Jesus also reminded us of the critical commandment to love one another ([John 13:34](#)) and share God's Word with others ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)). How can we encourage our children to follow Jesus' example of making and building connections while using technology in healthy ways?

**Connect:** Explore technology together to help your kids understand how to use technology for relationship building. Show your kids the apps you use, like iMessage, FaceTime, or Facebook Messenger. Use video calls to call family members or friends who live far away. Have regular discussions as a family about everyone's online activities. Monitor what apps your kids are using and who they are talking to—you can ensure they can only text or call approved numbers. Don't scare your kids, but remind them about the importance of [internet safety](#).

**Encourage Connections:** God calls us to follow Jesus' example by opening our hearts to *everyone*. Encourage your kids to make connections in your church, school, and neighborhood to meet many different people. A benefit of technology is connecting with all our friends in one place. Start regular conversations about everyone's social media use. If you're comfortable, you can help your kids set up a message group with several friends so everyone can connect, or use a platform like Facebook to invite many different friends to an event like a birthday party.

**Set a Schedule:** In Jesus' day, people had to wait for him to show up in their town—there was no internet announcing his arrival or a phone to ask when he was coming. Today we don't have to wait to make connections. Set a schedule with your kids to video call your cousins who live far away or a time each week to write an email to your grandparents.

**Don't forget about in-person connections:** While technology helps keep us connected, don't discount the importance of in-person connections! The nuance of body language or voice inflection is often lost in text-based conversations. If in-person connections aren't possible due to distance or other reasons, try using phone or video messages to capture all aspects of the conversation. In-person connections also allow us to take a break from technology. [Common Sense Media](#) states that "preteens and teens receive an average of 237 notifications on their phone every day." Being together in person is a healthy respite from social media and all that it entails.

Using technology well can help us and our children follow Christ's example of becoming relationship-builders and ambassadors for God's kingdom.

**Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's articles [On the Parent Playground: Community or Comfort Zone](#) and [Balancing Technology in the Family](#).**

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*written by Rachel Syens*

<https://kidscorner.net/parent-blog/beyond-pixels-parenting-tips-for-meaningful-digital-connections>  
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