5 Tips to Encourage Healthy Wearable Technology Use for Kids

Wearable technology is a rapidly growing product category, including smartwatches, fitness trackers, and health monitoring devices. Many models are designed specifically for young users. If you're considering providing your child or teen with a wearable device, these tips can help you navigate this decision.

1 **Get clear on the purpose**
Determine why you are considering a wearable device for your child. Are you looking to encourage physical activity, enable communication, share locations with GPS, or something else? Have a family conversation to make sure you're on the same page.

2 **Name the pros and cons**
Wearable technology may help your child set and reach wellness goals, but it can also create a distraction at school or get damaged. Studies also show devices that track calories, weight, or BMI can have harmful effects, so be sure to seek out products specifically designed for kids. Make a plan with your child or teen to discuss disadvantages and explore technology that reduces potential harms.

3 **Set boundaries and guidelines**
To avoid overuse and disruptions, set boundaries and guidelines around wearable technology use, such as putting away devices at bedtime. Many products have settings to minimize distractions, such as a "school mode" and timers that significantly limit functionality during specific hours. Check to see if your school has policies on activity trackers and smartwatches as well.

4 **Learn new devices**
Before handing a device to your child, preview the functionality and content, and customize privacy settings to manage age-appropriate apps, data, text, Bluetooth pairing, and voice conversations so that only approved people have access.

5 **Discover ways to play together**
Wearable technology can be fun for the whole family! Whether you're taking a walk with your child, having a dance-off, or learning new activities, using wearables can provide health benefits for all.

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