

# FAMILY TOOLKIT

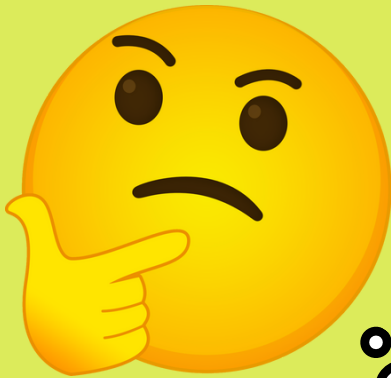
SET YOUR TWEEN UP TO BE SAFE, RESPONSIBLE, AND  
EVENTUALLY INDEPENDENT ONLINE.

Don't just follow your kids online. *Lead them.*

THUMBS  
DOWN.  
SPEAK  
UP.

This is  
problematic.  
I should ***Pause***  
Before Posting.

This is  
complicated.  
I should  
***Move It*** Offline.



This is  
bigger than me.  
I should  
***Reach Out***  
to an adult.

- Support your child
- Set examples
- Think out loud
- Learn from mistakes



Our fun and engaging activities are designed to bring you and your tween together in partnership as you navigate their burgeoning independence and support them as they figure out the role online interactions will play in their lives.

The activities capitalize on the developmental strengths of tweens and on the fact that deep learning happens through engagement with novel and intellectually stimulating experiences.

**Q: How do I use this toolkit?**

**A:** Anyway that works best for you and your family! You can do the activities in any order you want, and they can be enjoyed over and over again.

Each activity is designed to get the conversation started, work on screen/life balance, or highlight a particular *Thumbs Down\** skill. They all utilize a particular *Speak Up\** teaching technique. Throughout the Toolkit we've included developmental insights, ways to modify activities, and various tips and reminders. We hope you and your tween enjoy the *TDSU* activities!

**Don't just follow your kids online. *Lead them.***

\*Curious to know more? Check out the charts at the end of this toolkit!



# Tone Deaf



🕒 5 minutes

*Activity: Help your tween learn different ways to convey emotions online when they can't rely on tone.*

## Print ads

are a great example of how emotions can be conveyed through images, colors, fonts, emojis, and words.

See if you and your tween can identify the emotion(s) being conveyed in an ad.

Don't worry if you and your child come up with different answers. This can be a great illustration of why emotion is so hard to convey in the absence of tone.



# Building the Mindfulness Muscle

🕒 Ongoing

*Activity: When spending time with your tween, take a moment to connect with one another and your surroundings.*

**Being mindful when we are interacting online can potentially help prevent miscommunication and foster more enriching exchanges. Here are some ways to build your child's mindfulness muscle and get both of you off your devices!**

When we are present in the moment we can acknowledge and accept our feelings.

This allows us to be more intentional.

Intentional interactions have the potential to be more satisfying.

They may also help us avoid misunderstandings.





# Building...

*Continued*

Did you know that it is possible to smell when a storm is coming? Take a walk with your tween and share your observations about the sights, smells, and sounds around you. Ask them what they notice.

Did you know that you can tell when a cake is done just by the smell? The next time you bake with your tween take some time together to notice how the smell of the kitchen changes.

Did you know you can learn to visualize yourself making a throw and actually feel it in your body? If you play catch with your tween, explore with each other what you noticed about how your body felt.



# Text Together For Tone

🕒 10 Minutes

*Activity: Think of some words that describe tone of voice. For example, you might come up with happy, sarcastic, excited, frustrated, sad. Don't tell each other!*

Now you are going to text each other and see if you can guess the tone.

Using the tools available, like fonts, emojis, or message effects, try to communicate the tone.



Need some ideas? We came up with "I wish I had that shirt," or "I'm eating broccoli."



**When tone can't be communicated via text, it's time to Pause Before Posting, Move It Offline, or ask the Trusted Team for their advice.**



# Demystify Your Digital Life

🕒 Ongoing

*Reminder: When you pick up your device in front of your tween, do your writing and editing out loud. Set the expectation that digital communication requires thoughtfulness.*

*Speak Up*  
and share your thoughts  
about how you communicate  
online.

Talk about the  
*Thumbs Down*  
skills you are using.

Let your tween be  
the expert! Ask  
their opinion.





# Demystify...

*Continued*

For example, as you draft an email or text, comment out loud on why you picked one word over another.

Contemplate if what you are writing would be better communicated offline.



You can also consider out loud if you should wait to post or send something.







# Go Team!



Ongoing

*Activity: Ask your tween to be on your Trusted Team.*

**If you have a social media account, ask your tween to follow you. Invite them to talk to you about your posts. Let them be the expert and help you! Model for your child how to welcome feedback in order to learn and grow.**



By making the *TDSU* approach a family affair, you are letting your child know that responsible social media use is a priority.



# Move It Offline

🕒 5-10 minutes

*Activity: Create a script with your tween for moving Complicated Communication offline.*

**How will your child move a conversation that feels complex or deals with sensitive subject matter or emotional content offline? Help them come up with some concrete ways to deal with Complicated Communication.**

Scripting helps our kids learn problem solving skills for scenarios that could be uncomfortable, anxiety-producing, or just new to them.





# Move It...

*Continued*

Some scripted responses you could try out with your tween are:

Can we discuss this in person?

HEY, THIS FEELS LIKE SOMETHING WE SHOULD CHAT ABOUT.

CAN I CALL YOU?

I'm getting confused.

Can we FaceTime?



# Fire Drill



🕒 10-15 minutes

*Activity: Work with your tween to come up with concrete ways to handle a group text that becomes problematic.*

## Decoding Development:

Tweens are learning to exercise their voice, but it doesn't always come easily. Sometimes they need to practice in order to feel confident.

**How will your child remember what to do when a text chain becomes mean-spirited?**

**Help them come up with a concrete plan.**





# Fire Drill...

*Continued*

Make it fun- see if you can create an acronym together! For example, teach your tween

## **CHAT:**

**C**hange the topic

**H**old up, guys! (point out that things have become mean-spirited)

**A**sk the Trusted Team if they aren't sure what to do

**T**ake it offline



*Activity: Help your tween build their emotional vocabulary.*

## Decoding Development:

A rich emotional vocabulary helps your child label what they are experiencing.

Labeling reduces uncertainty about emotions, which can have a calming effect.

When your child is less activated, they are better able to regulate their emotions and do things like Pause Before Posting.





# TDSU-Libs...

*Continued*

How many different feeling words for each sentence can you come up with?

I was \_\_\_\_\_.

My friends threw  
a party for me.

TODAY IS MY FIRST  
DAY OF SCHOOL.

I'M SO \_\_\_\_\_.

My teacher called  
on me today.

I felt so \_\_\_\_\_.



# Let Your Tween Be Your Tour Guide!

🕒 10 minutes

*Activity: Ask your child to help you explore some of the social media platforms that they either use or are curious about themselves.*

**Download one of the platforms and take a tour of it with your tween.**

**Even if they don't have their own social media accounts, you might be surprised at how much they know! Let them be the expert.**

Consider viewing the social media platform through the *Thumbs Down* lens.





# Build Your Trusted Team



🕒 10 Minutes

*Activity: Decide with your tween who to invite to be part of the Trusted Team. Ask the Team to participate in a group chat or follow your child on a social media platform.*

**The people on your child's Trusted Team understand that learning is a process during which mistakes happen. Encourage them to reach out if they see that your child has not yet mastered when and how to disengage from social media. This is a great opportunity for you to reinforce the skills that your child is working to learn.**

Decoding Development:

Children learn best  
when they feel  
supported by adults  
and friends that they trust!



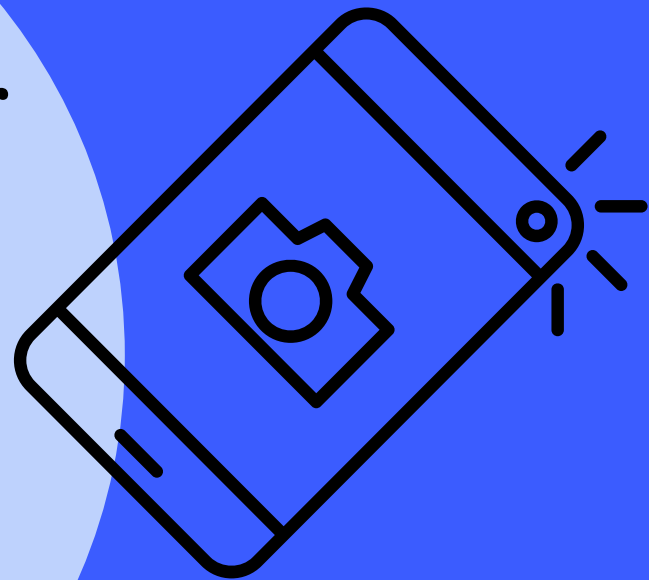
# Get Permission Before Posting

🕒 Every so often

*Reminder: Children are influenced by what you do.*

**Before sharing or posting a photo, ask your tween if they mind.**

**However your child answers, respect their decision (for real!).**



*A Thumbs Down skill is knowing how to avoid Problematic Posts, which includes posting photos without approval.*



# Digital Detox



 Up to you!

*Activity: Pick a day that you and your tween pledge to do a digital detox- meaning no devices for a full day (or if that is unrealistic, pick an amount of time that feels achievable)!*

**At the end of the detox,  
reflect with your tween:**

**What did you do with your  
time instead of being  
online? Did you have  
FOMO? Did you feel  
disconnected? Did you  
feel relieved?**

You and your tween might  
come away with a new  
sense of the role that  
social media plays  
in your lives.





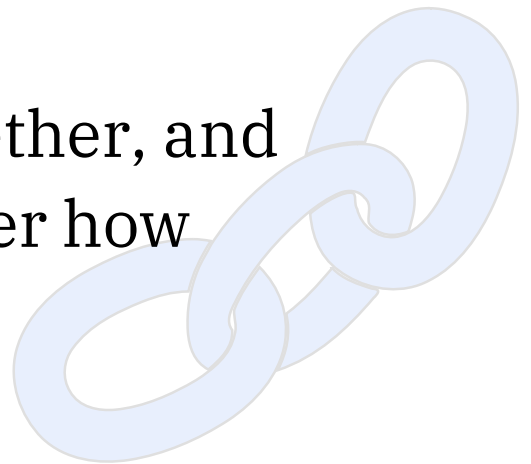
# Digital...

*Continued*

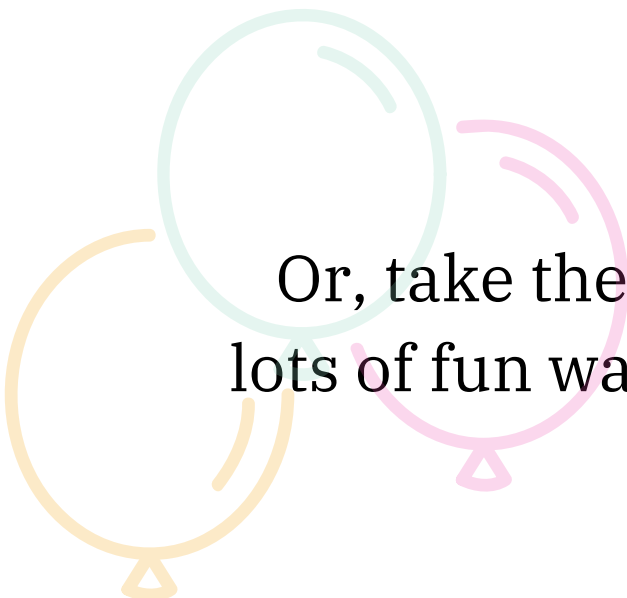


Make it a competition!  
Kids vs. adults- and the winners get to  
pick what's for dinner that night.

Or maybe you are in it together, and  
it's a chance to bond over how  
tough it is.



Or, take the opportunity to think of  
lots of fun ways to distract each other.





# Scavenger Hunt



🕒 5 Minutes

*Activity: Scroll through an online review platform with your tween.*

**Search for a post  
that is coming across as  
mean-spirited.**

**Perhaps it was written in the  
heat of the moment.  
That's ok, everyone  
makes mistakes.**

Take advantage  
of  
Teachable Moments!





# Scavenger...

*Continued*

**Let's focus on what we can learn:**

- How could this post have been written differently?
- Pausing before posting gives us time to reflect on tone, intention, and possible consequences.



# Sit Back and Scroll

🕒 10 minutes

*Reminder: Demystify your digital life.*

**While hanging out with your family and scrolling through your favorite social media platform, why not comment out loud on any posts that you think could be misinterpreted.**

**Ask your tween what they think.**

Let your child be the expert! See how well they are integrating the *Thumbs Down* skills.



# Be the School Principal

🕒 5 minutes

***Activity: Have fun role-playing with your tween! Take turns pretending to be a school administrator reading the posts below. Has the school's digital use policy or code of conduct been violated?***

***My teacher is so dumb.***

Can you believe what Alex did today?

We can't be friends with them anymore.

I'M SO SICK OF SCHOOL.

I WISH I COULD BURN IT DOWN, LOL.

## **Decoding Development:**

**Tweens are developing the ability to see things from a different point of view. Take advantage of this emerging strength to help them avoid**

**Problematic Posts!**





# Text With Your Tween

🕒 Every so often

*Reminder: Let your child know that they are a part of a community that will help them learn.*

**Starting a text conversation with your child is a great way to show them how to be a part of a Trusted Team.**

It gives you an opportunity to model that it's easy to ask for clarification when you are confused about tone, context, or intent.

You can also set an example by showing your child how to handle sensitive subject matter, emotional content, or anything that feels complex by moving the conversation off-line.


**A  
Thumbs Down skill  
is knowing how  
to handle  
Problematic Posts  
and Complicated  
Communication.**



# What Would YOU Like?

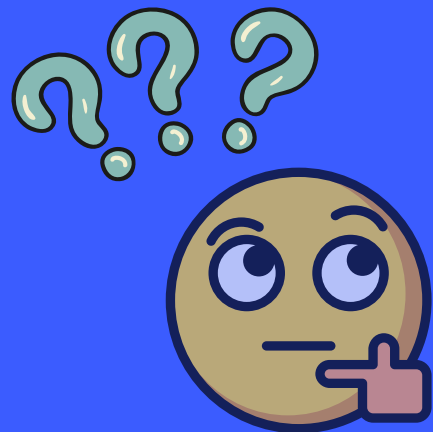
🕒 5 minutes

*Activity: Scroll through a social media feed with your tween.*



Have your child point out the posts that they would "like." Ask what they like about them. Be curious!

**Do you have a quiet child?  
Try saying something like:  
"Tell me more about that."**



**Remaining silent is also powerful- it can give your child the time they need to figure out what they want to say!**



# Mental Health Day



🕒 Every so often

*Reminder: Social media can impact mental health. Normalize talking about it.*

**If you find yourself scrolling through your feed while hanging out with your tween, take the opportunity to narrate how posts are making you feel.**

**You might feel inspired or amused, but some might make you feel badly about yourself.**





# Mental Health...

*Continued*

Share your thoughts out loud.

Let your tween know what you plan to do about any feeds that leave you feeling depleted, anxious, or judged.

Help your tween see that this can easily happen to anybody and feeds can always be unfollowed.



# Create a Reach Out Plan

🕒 10-15 minutes

*Activity: It isn't enough to just teach your child what the 3Ds are-they also have to know what to do when they encounter one!*

Who are the trusted adults your child will reach out to if they come across a 3D? Talk with your child about how they will reach out. Will they text a screenshot of what they encountered? Will they have a conversation in real life? Will they make a phone call? This isn't about establishing a rigid rule, but rather to brainstorm the possibilities.

**Having a plan can reduce stress and make it easier to take action! In addition, by taking the time to work with your child on a plan, you are showing them that you take the 3Ds seriously and that they are not alone in this.**



# Thumbs Down

*Knowing when and how to disengage from social media.*

▼▲  
**THUMBS  
DOWN.  
SPEAK  
UP.**

**What this  
means**

**How to  
handle this**

**Problematic  
Posts**  
(p 1, 4, 10, 16, 19, 22)

- Mean-spirited
- Use photos without consent
- Require context or tone to make sense
- Violate school policy

***Pause*** Before  
Posting or  
Texting

**Complicated  
Communication**  
(p. 2, 8, 12, 21, 23)

- Sensitive subject matter
- Emotional content
- Anything that feels complex

***Move It*** Offline

**3Ds - It's Bigger  
Than Me**  
(p. 15, 23, 27)

- Disparaging
- Disturbing
- Dangerous

***Reach Out*** to a  
Trusted Adult



# Speak Up

*Using developmentally appropriate, time-tested teaching techniques to teach the Thumbs Down skills.*



## What this means

## How to do this

**Support Your Tween**  
(p. 7, 10, 15, 23, 24)

Let your tween know they are part of a community that will help them learn.

Build a *Trusted Team*

**Set Examples**  
(p. 2, 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 23)

Children are influenced by what you do.

*Model*

**Think Out Loud**  
(p. 5, 14, 21, 25)

Demystify your digital life.

*Narrate*

**Learn From Mistakes**  
(p. 19, 23, 25)

Integrating new skills takes time and practice.

Make use of *Teachable Moments*