

# P.A.R.E.N.T

## How to thrive as a family in this technological time.

The current climate of the world has led us to a place where many of us are dependent on technology. Through practicing the 6 points of P.A.R.E.N.T, you can relax back into yourself and navigate this time with greater confidence and ease, while helping your child develop a healthy relationship with technology.



### P - PRESENCE

This refers to physical presence, as well as mental and emotional presence. When we practice mindfulness with ourselves, we have more space to be present to our reactions without judging or lashing out.

The opportunities for distraction by our devices are endless, and it can make maintaining a focused connection with our children challenging. However, **taking space for ourselves and practicing presence in our own body**, allows us to have more complete presence with our children and show up for them in a way that is supportive.

**Exercise:** With your children, decide on a set time this week to completely “unplug” from technology. This could be an entire day, or a number of hours within the day. When you set healthy boundaries for technology as a family, you demonstrate the importance of connection and presence. **BONUS:** Incorporate mindfulness practise, such as guided meditation or deep breathing during your “unplugged” time.



### A - ATTUNEMENT

This looks like tuning into the emotional needs of our children. *Are they hungry, needing quiet time, needing outdoor time, needing our full attention?*

In this new and unknown time, we may notice our children's needs change. They are navigating the newness, just as you are, and holding space for their needs and emotions provides them with a feeling of safety and security.

Remember that our children don't want to have tantrums or misbehave, they are simply responding to their emotions in the way they know how. Through witnessing them in their feelings and behaviours, we give them the space to move through what's coming up.

**Exercise:** The next time your child is upset, reflect back what feelings they are experiencing - "You are so mad that your brother broke something so important to you!" Name their feeling and mirror their body and language so that they know you understand them. You will be surprised how quickly they will de-escalate once they feel you understanding their internal world.

# P.A.R.E.N.T

## How to thrive as a family in this technological time.



### R - RESPECT

Most of us are not in a place of respecting and honouring the child's natural way of being, because most of us, as children were not respected in this way. Now as adults, we try to control, because it's most convenient to us.

But what would it look like if we showed our children respect in their needs, desires, and wants instead of seeing it as misbehaving? When there is a problem behaviour, we can brainstorm WITH them ways to navigate the situation without just imposing a consequence UPON them.

When we do so, we show our children what it looks like to have their needs and wants respected, and provide them with a secure self identity.

**Exercise:** While you're at home all day with your kids, notice when they want to spend time with you and what your reaction is. If you're doing work or busy, share with them what you're doing, and either offer them space to join you, or set them up for success by creating a way for their needs to be met. If a problem behaviour comes up, brainstorm with your child how to navigate the situation together.



### E - ENGAGE

As parents and educators, our job isn't to steer or force kids into a specific direction. Instead, the greatest gift we can give our child is self discovery. We must help children discover their unique genius, their passions, and how they instinctively operate.

Ray Kurzweil predicts that the technological singularity will happen in 2038. That's the point at which AI and technology advancement is so rapid that we cannot predict what's next or what life will be like. Any advice about "successful careers" that worked in the last 100 years is obsolete.

Instead of telling our children what to do, engage them in the process. Explore their passions and what makes them come alive, as these are the things that will develop into their life purpose.

Use your children's daily experience to nurture their curiosity, foster a love of nature and respect for the planet, deepen connection and value interconnectedness. By doing so, we will have a world of kids who grow up to be social entrepreneurs, impact investors and stewards of the planet.

**Exercise:** Ask your child to list 10 things they're curious about. Once they've made the list, explore one specific way you can support their curiosities through. Help them research and come up with ways they can learn more in the coming week! **BONUS:** Next time your child watches TV, watch it with them, and ask them to answer questions that call on their awareness or critical thinking. This helps engage their brains while they use technology, using it as an educational tool rather than a digital distraction. They will also feel connected to you as you meet them where they are.

# P.A.R.E.N.T

## How to thrive as a family in this technological time.



### N - NATURE

In our advancing technological world, we are seeing a greater disconnection from nature. This has been labelled as Nature Deficit Disorder, which research suggests contributes to a diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, conditions of obesity, and higher rates of emotional and physical illnesses.

When children spend time in nature, it enhances their attention spans, fosters creativity, deepens connection and encourages them to become stewards of the natural world.

While we can't avoid the technological world that is emerging, we can supplement usage with plenty of outdoor time and space for free play.

**Exercise:** Take at least two 45 minute outdoor breaks each day. This can look like playing in your backyard, or going on a walk around the neighborhood. For at least one of the 30 minute breaks, allow your child to free play. If your children resist going outside, set up a scavenger hunt or a game that will entice them!



### T - TRUST

Parents have a significant role in how their children develop trust. We have the opportunity to really start our children off with a full trust tank, which will support them throughout their entire lives.

How trust develops as a child grows is based on a concept called core beliefs. These are a set of phrases we tell ourselves based on how we interpret other people's actions and how the world works, which are influenced the most by our early years. As parents, we can foster the development of positive core beliefs.

One of the most powerful things we can do is practise how we listen. Listening is different than hearing, and making that distinction sets us up for a much deeper relationship. To listen to a child means to recognize their words, but more importantly to seek to really understand their underlying message, without trying to "fix" or give advice.

**Exercise:** Notice times in the day when your child is asking for something or reacting in a certain way, and resist responding with an agenda or solution. Use words like "I hear that you are feeling \_\_\_" or simply, "I'm here for you" and hold space for what comes up for them. By doing this, you are sending your child the message that you see them, and they can trust you to share how they truly feel.