Technology Usage in
Your Early Childhood Program
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Below are some questions to think about related to technology usage in your program. Are there additional questions that might apply to your setting? Use the blank bullets to add to the list.

CHILDREN'S TECHNOLOGY USAGE

- How have you ensured that technology is integrated into the curriculum and used in developmentally appropriate ways?

- How is technology used to support children's development and well-being?

- How does the technology encourage children's natural play and exploration?

- How is technology usage balanced with other approaches to teaching and learning?

- What research or evidence exists demonstrating the usage of the technology as an effective teaching strategy?

- What professional development do staff receive on using technology in developmentally appropriate ways that enhance learning?

- How do staff share effective teaching strategies that incorporate technology with staff and families? What time is allotted for reflection on their teaching strategies?

- What protections are in place to make sure that children can only access appropriate material from the program's technology?

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FAMILIES AND MEDIA

- How do the program's written policies and procedures regarding media (e.g., photos, video, audio, names) protect children, families, and the program?

- What type of media do you gather from children and families?

- Where and how will the media be used (e.g., brochures, websites, social media sites, program-issued videos, billboards)? Are faces shown? Are names credited?

- How and when do families grant written consent for media usage that includes their child? Can they opt out?

- Can the media be used indefinitely or only while the child is enrolled?

- Is the family informed whenever media that includes their child is posted?

- How are media releases/consent forms organized and stored?

- What guidelines do families receive related to posting about the program on their personal social networking sites?

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EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, AND DATA MANAGEMENT

- Do you receive training on administrative uses of technology?

- Who can order technology equipment within the program?

- How is the decision to order new equipment determined? How is it decided that the equipment falls within the program's goals and budget?

- What sort of cycle exists for replacing antiquated technology equipment and software?

- Who is responsible for ordering new technology? How are technology equipment orders tracked? How and how often is technology inventoried?

- Are staff required to "check out" technology equipment for use? If so, how is this process tracked?

- Who is responsible for installing or downloading new software? How does the program ensure that installs and downloads are safe?

- How is data backed up? Who is responsible for backing up data? How often is data backed up?

- How is technology equipment protected from viruses, malware, etc? How often is antivirus software run on computers? Who is responsible for installing, running, and updating such software?

- How does the program dispose of obsolete technology? How is it ensured that confidential information is not compromised during equipment disposal?

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STAFF AND TECHNOLOGY

- What type of media do you gather from staff?

- Where and how will the media be used (e.g., brochures, websites, social media sites, program-issued DVDs, billboards)?

- Are there written technology policies for staff to follow? If so, how are they shared with staff?

- What is considered confidential? Is there a written policy that forbids staff from disclosing confidential information?

- What is considered acceptable use of computers/tablets, email, and cell phones/mobile devices?

- Is information and data transmitted through the program's equipment monitored? If so, how, when, and how are staff informed?

- Are staff permitted to use the programs technology equipment for personal use? If so, under what circumstances (e.g., on brakes, during naptime, to study or do homework)?

- When is it appropriate for staff to access social media from the program's equipment?

- What content is appropriate to post to blogs, wiki sites, and social media? If the program is mentioned, employees should only post in ways that add value to the program.

- When is it appropriate to use the program's logos and trademarks? Is the program's consent required for their use?

- FTC Guidelines require an employee to disclose his/her employment with an organization if posting or blogging about program-related topics. The employee needs to include a clear disclaimer stating that he or she is a program employee and that the views and opinions expressed are the employee's alone and do not represent the official views of the program. How is this information communicated to staff members?

- What happens if a staff member violates policies that relate to technology usage? Is he/she subject to disciplinary procedures, including termination of employment?

- What conversations or professional development have staff participated in related to online ethics? Here are some things to consider:

  - Remind staff that they are personally responsible for their posts.

- Remind staff that where no policy or guidelines exist, they must use their professional judgment and avoid actions or posts that adversely impact the program, fellow staff members, children, and families.

- Remind staff that if they are unsure about a situation related to media usage they should consult with their supervisor.

- Remind staff that if they are become aware of a post that violates the program's policy, they should inform their supervisor.

- Remind staff that transmissions and communication on the program's equipment is considered property of the program.

- Remind staff that social networking, texting, and personal phone if permitted should not interfere with work commitments.

- Remind staff that they cannot engage in unlawful conduct while online.

- Remind staff that they need to follow all other program policies while online.

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