**Technology and Family Time**

**On average, teenagers send and receive almost 4,000 text messages a month**

Kids these days have never known a life without technology. This means that it feels and seems totally normal to spend a large amount of time with technology. According to 2011 Nielsen statistics, teenagers send and receive around 3,700 texts a month - that's about 125 a day! I would argue that the number has increased since then. However, parents should use technology to keep in touch with their kids. Sending a text can open up lines of communication, especially with teenagers.

**More and more time is spent on phones and computers**

It is a good idea to limit screen time not only for kids but adults as well. Set a good example for responsible screen time. If you tell your kids they can’t be on the computer more than an hour, but you are spending several hours on your laptop and phone, they aren’t going to understand. When something comes up that you need to be on the computer for a big project at work or some special reason, explain that to kids and try and plan your time around family as much as possible.

It would also be a good idea to set up outside time. More and more kids and adults alike are spending most of their time inside. As a result, obesity rates are increasing at alarming rates. According to the Center for Disease Control in 2004, childhood obesity has tripled since 1980 in the United States. To help offset this, set up an outside schedule and stick to it. However, if adults send kids outside while they sit inside and text or answer emails, it sends the wrong message. Try and join the kids for an outside game, a walk or bike ride when you can.

**A recent study shows that if kids have a choice of watching TV or hanging out with their Dad, kids chose TV**

According to this study by A.C. Neilson, 54% of kids ages 4-6 would rather spend time with the TV instead of their dad. It is very sad that children see TV as more fun and preferred over spending time with a parent. There are things that parents can do to change this statistic. You should schedule one-on-one time with your children doing special activities, spend time reading together and take dinner time seriously.

# Bibliography

Williamson, K. (2012, March 6). *5 Ways Technology Has Negatively Affected Families.* Retrieved April 2014, from How Stuff Works: http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/family-tech/tech-effects-on-family/5-ways-technology-has-negatively-affected-families.htm#page=3