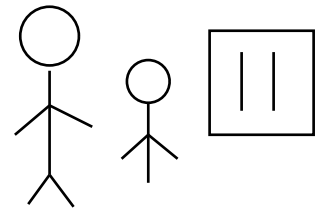


MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

5 Cs for better screen decisions

Quick card: what happened matters alongside how long.



LOOK AT THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE

1 CHILD

What does this particular child like, need or get from the screen?

2 CONTENT

What did they make, watch, play, practise or discuss?

3 CALM

Was this one way to relax - or the only option?

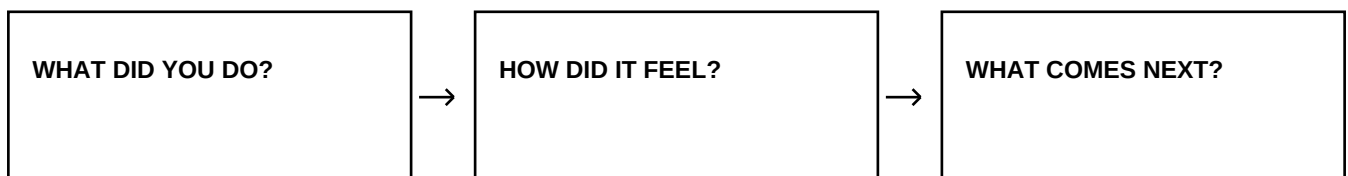
4 CROWDING OUT

Did it push aside sleep, movement or family connection?

5 COMMUNICATION

What can we ask about the experience, without judging?

THE NEXT THREE MOVES



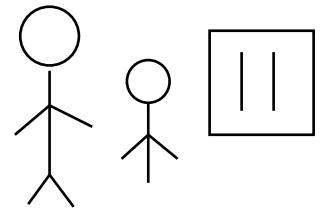
WHY THIS HELPS

Adapted from the AAP's 5 Cs media guidance. These questions are for a calm family check-in, not a child score.

MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

A 15-minute screen audit

Try it together instead of turning it into secret monitoring.



THREE REAL ACTIONS, ONE OBSERVATION

1 BEFORE

Ask: 'What do you want to do, and what would be a natural stopping point?'

2 DURING

Join or sit nearby briefly. Notice creativity, conversation, ads, autoplay and what keeps the session going.

3 AFTER

Ask: 'Which part was worth it? How do you feel? Would you choose it again?'

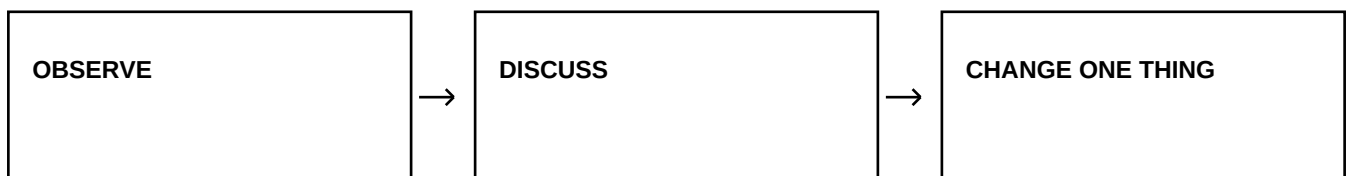
4 WRITE ONE OBSERVATION

Example: 'Another video autoplayed right when we planned to stop.'

5 CHOOSE ONE CHANGE

Turn autoplay off for a week. Notice whether ending feels different.

THE NEXT THREE MOVES



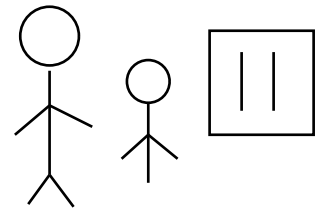
WHY THIS HELPS

One observation is a clue, not a verdict. Look for a pattern over several days.

MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

Same 40 minutes, different use

Fictional examples reveal what the timer alone misses.



COMPARE THE EXPERIENCES

1

MAKING A GAME WITH A FRIEND

What did the child create or practise? Was it fun, collaborative or stressful?

2

WATCHING AN AUTOPLAY FEED

Did the child choose what to watch? Was it helpful or difficult to stop?

3

CHALLENGE THE ASSUMPTION

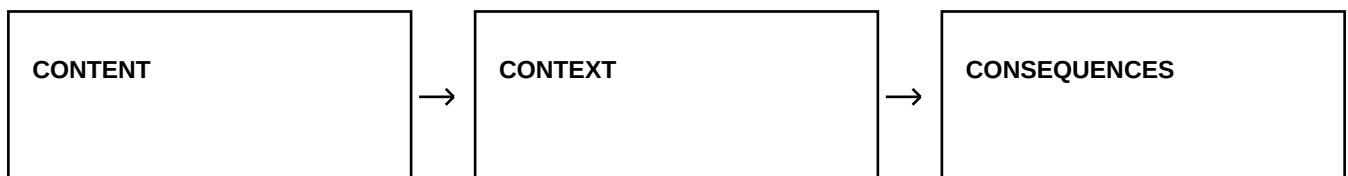
Not every game is useful; not every video is passive. Ask about the actual experience.

4

NOTICE WHAT WAS DISPLACED

Did either session crowd out bedtime, dinner or something else important?

THE NEXT THREE MOVES



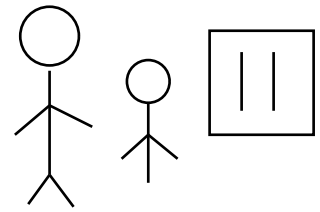
WHY THIS HELPS

The same number of minutes can produce different experiences. Duration still matters when it displaces other needs.

MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

A one-change, seven-day reset

A small family experiment beats ten rules nobody remembers.



HOW TO RUN THE EXPERIMENT

1 CHOOSE A RECURRING FRICTION

Example: autoplay after dinner or difficult transitions out of a game.

2 CHOOSE ONE ADJUSTMENT

Try disabling autoplay, choosing the last round before play, or having a family screen-free dinner.

3 AGREE ON A REPLACEMENT

Offer something your child wants to do next: drawing, a walk, a board game or a shared story.

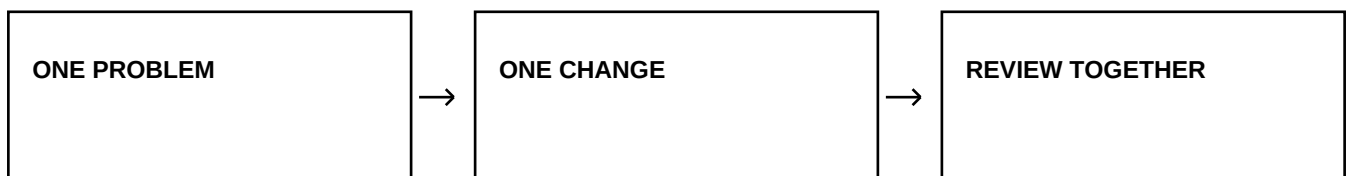
4 TRY IT FOR SEVEN DAYS

Make small notes about the experience and the transition, not a minute-by-minute log.

5 REVIEW WITH THE CHILD

What helped? What did not? Keep, adjust or stop the experiment. Include adult device habits.

THE NEXT THREE MOVES



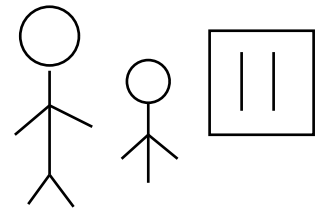
WHY THIS HELPS

Family plans work better when they match real routines and change with your child's needs.

MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

Scripts when screens are hard to stop

Try these during calm moments, not only in the argument.



THINGS YOU CAN ACTUALLY SAY

1

'FIVE MORE MINUTES!'

'Next time, let's choose the last round before starting. Which round makes sense?'

2

A NEW VIDEO AUTOPLAYED

'The app picked that one. Do you want to choose deliberately or stop now?'

3

MY CHILD FEELS UPSET

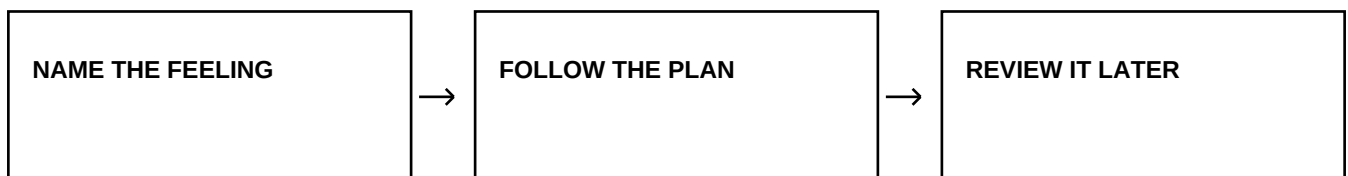
'I know it feels hard to stop. I'll help with the transition; we'll improve the plan afterward.'

4

SCREENS ARE THEIR ONLY CALM-DOWN TOOL

'Let's find two other things we can try together. Which might feel good tonight?'

THE NEXT THREE MOVES



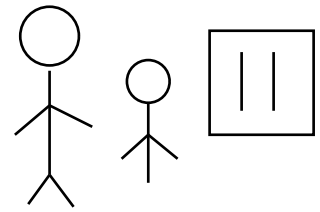
WHY THIS HELPS

If media use persistently disrupts sleep, school or wellbeing, consider asking your child's pediatrician for help.

MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

Your seven-day family tracker

Just one line per day. Observe, don't grade.



START WITH A SIMPLE AGREEMENT

The one screen moment we want to improve:

The ONE change we will try:

DAY 1 - What happened?

DAY 2 - What happened?

DAY 3 - What happened?

DAY 4 - What happened?

DAY 5 - What happened?

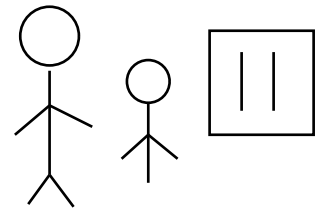
DAY 6 - What happened?

DAY 7 - What worked? What will we change?

MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME

Review and decide what to keep

Convert observations into a repeatable family habit.



ASK TOGETHER

1

WHAT WORKED?

Look for easier transitions, more deliberate choices or a calmer routine.

2

WHAT STILL FELT DIFFICULT?

Was the ending unclear, or was the replacement activity unappealing?

3

WHAT RULE IS WORTH KEEPING?

Choose a small promise that everyone can remember and follow.

4

HOW WILL ADULTS TAKE PART?

Agree on one adult device habit to change as well.

WHY THIS HELPS

These are reflection prompts, not clinical advice or an official AAP worksheet.

SOURCES - CLICK TO OPEN

[AAP: The 5 Cs of Media Guidance](#)

[AAP: How to Make a Family Media Plan](#)