

Judge Baker Children's Center Speaker Series

Limit Setting in the Age of Technology: Effective Strategies for Kindergarten Through 8th Grade

Countryside Elementary School

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HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
AFFILIATE



JUDGE BAKER
CHILDREN'S CENTER

Welcome

Robert P. Franks, Ph.D.
President and CEO
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Panel:

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Clinical Director, The Manville School

Instructor in Psychology, Harvard Medical School

Licensed Psychologist in Massachusetts and New York

Sarah A. Tannenbaum, Psy.D.

Associate Director, Camp Baker

Staff Psychologist, Center for Effective Child Therapy

Instructor in Psychology, Harvard Medical School



American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

Children under 2 years:

- Avoid screen media other than video-chatting (ex. FaceTime with family)

Children 18 to 24 months:

- Choose high-quality programming
- Watch with your child to help them understand what they are seeing

Children ages 2 to 5 years:

- Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs
- Co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing

Children ages 6 and older:

- Place consistent limits on screen time (time, types of media, content)
- Make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep or physical activity
- Designate media-free times together as well as media-free locations at home
- Have ongoing communication about screen time use and safety

Scope of the Problem

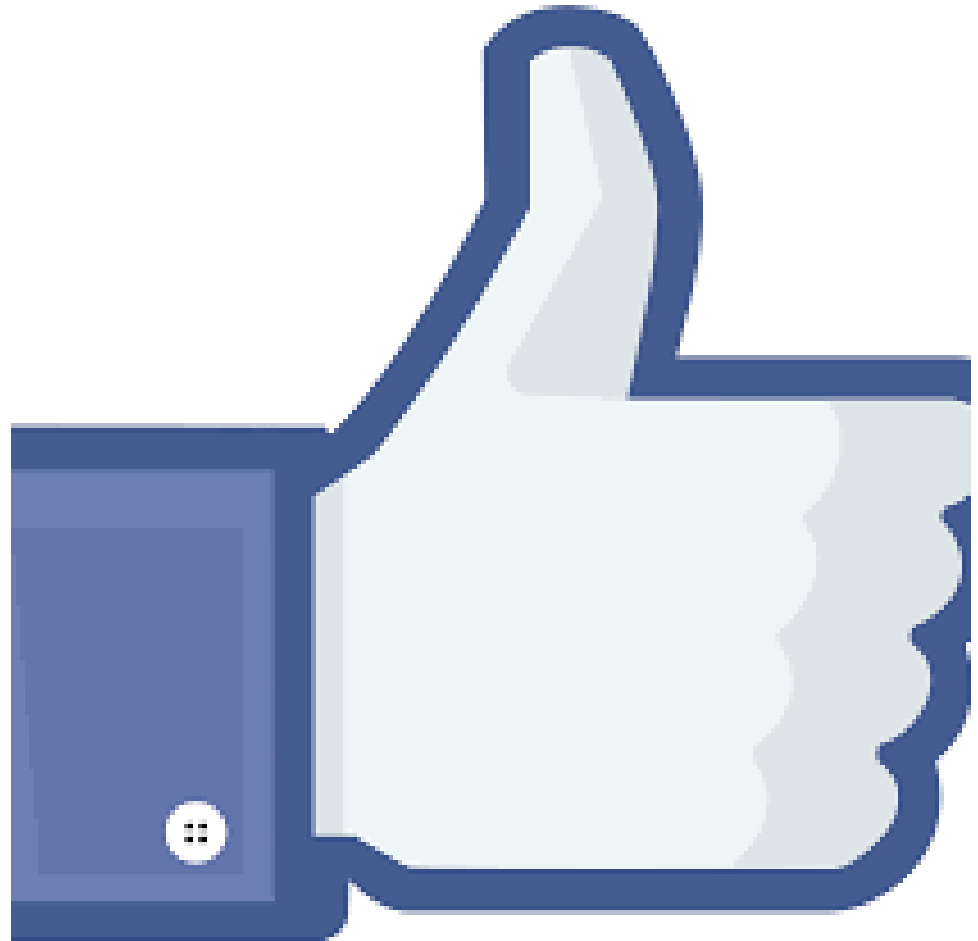
- 2017: Average weekly screen time was over 50 hrs.
 - Equates to 7.5 hours/day
- 1980: Average weekly TV consumption was 15 hr., 44 mins.
- 40% of 4-6 year-olds have a TV in their bedroom
- 71% of 8+ year-olds have a TV in their bedroom
- Multitasking with media begins between the ages of 5 and 8 years old

Basis of Concern

- Poor sleep quality
- Impeded motor development
- Increased anxiety, depression
- Lower self-esteem
- Poorer school performance
- Addiction
- Brain changes

Brain and Behavior Changes

- Area in brain associated with pleasure/reward lights up
- Risk-depicting images did not light up control areas of the brain
- Behavior is influenced by popularity



Addiction

Video Game Play

- Online/offline can lead to addiction
- Pleasure/reward part of the brain is implicated in addictions
- Internet Gaming Disorder is being considered

Internet

- Social media
- Pleasure/reward part of the brain is implicated in addictions
- Multiple media multitasking

Impact of Excessive Use

- Internet addiction
 - General illness
 - Physical symptoms (e.g., headache, stomach ache)
 - Anxiety/sad mood
 - Suicidal thoughts accompanying depression
 - Social problems
 - Sleep disturbance
 - ADHD-like symptoms
 - Academic problems
- Gaming addiction includes:
 - Eroding relationships with parents
 - Aggressive tendencies

Know Thy Child

Your child...	Monitor	Monitor Closely
Makes friends easily in real life	X	
Is socially isolated		X
Has a strong sense of responsibility	X	
Is a risk-taker/impulsive		X
Does well in school	X	
Struggles in school		X
Is connected to an activity	X	
Has personal goals	X	
Seems adrift, uncertain		X
Has a solid/prosocial peer group	X	
Often has peer conflict/loses friends		X
Is the target of bullying		X
Has been reported to be a bully		X
Is excessively focused on popularity		X
Is focused on anti-societal themes		X
Is emotionally invested in social media		X

Start and Maintain the Conversation

Conversations

Calm and positive setting

Age-appropriate language and concepts

Children go first

Brainstorm (no right/wrong answers or ideas)

Ideas, Limits, Problem-Solving Solutions

Narrow Down the List and Experiment

Weekly meetings

Tech Talk Tuesdays (Dr. Ruston of *Screenagers*)

Get it in Writing

Common Sense Media Family Media Agreements

Different Agreements for K-5th, 6th-8th, 9th-12th

This handout is included in your packet

Screenagers Family Contract Template

<https://www.screenagersmovie.com/family-contract>

Picture It!

I've Created a Screen Time Monster...



Grandma's Law (Premack Principle)

- If you do...(homework, chores, etc.), then you get X minutes of screen time

Avoid negotiation, make expectations clear

- Caregivers must be on the same page and model appropriate use
- Have specific "good behaviors" that result in earned screen time

DON'T say, "if you behave well, you get screen time"

DO say, "if you spend 30 minutes doing focused schoolwork, you earn 15 minutes on your phone"

Setting Limits and Structure Around Screen Time

- Create a chore and reward menu
- Discuss with your spouse and other caregivers what you agree to
- How much screen time is too much in your family?
- Set a limit and **stick to it**



Examples:

No more than 1 hour per day used by 8pm

Specific sites or modalities with a value that they trade in for

Case Example: Joel



- Meet Joel
- 14 year old boy with anxiety and social skills deficits
- Spends ~8 hours on screen per day
- Only socializes with friends through online communities
- Parents say, “he’s addicted to screens” and feel like they have no control
- When they try to shut screens down, he gets aggressive (e.g., verbal threats, throwing property, refusing to comply with instructions to stop)

What would you do?

Joel's Responsibilities

Responsibility Chart

Chore or Job	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Weekly Total
Bringing your dishes to the kitchen after dinner (2)								
Brush your teeth 1 time per day (2)								
Walk the dog within 15 minutes of being asked (2)								
Walk the dog without anyone asking (5)								
Brush your teeth 2 times per day (5)								
Ride the exercise bike for 30 minutes (5)								
Complete laundry checklist (15)								
Do something social (15)								
Complete trash checklist (15)								
Points Redeemed								
Points Remaining								
Total Points for the week:								

*Parents can earn give additional bonus points for good behavior and flexibility

Using Screen Time To Your Advantage

Rewards Menu!

Privilege	Cost
1 hour of screen time (must be used by 10pm)	1
Order Chinese take out for dinner	15
Trip to Orange Leaf	15
Trip to Game Stop	20
Trip to a comedy show	20
Getting an electric guitar	100

Don't Struggle Alone! Seek Help

If your child is like Joel, please reach out for help sooner rather than later.

- Recommended treatment = Behavioral Parent Training

These problems can start small but get big very quickly.

You and your child will thank you if you set and hold reasonable limits and expectations around screen time.

Q & A

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