

Dr Kristy
GOODWIN

SEMINAR SUMMARY

*Raising Your Child
in a Digital World*

what parents really need to know





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Raising Your Child in a Digital World

by Dr Kristy Goodwin



For children to thrive in the digital world they need parents to be the pilot, not the passenger of the digital plane. As the pilot of the digital plane, you only need to get 3 Bs right:

1. Boundaries
 2. Basic Needs
 3. Boredom
- Let's explore each of these.

1. BOUNDARIES

| | |
|--|---|
|  // How much? |  // Where? |
|  // What? |  // How? |
|  // When? |  // With whom? |





1. Boundries

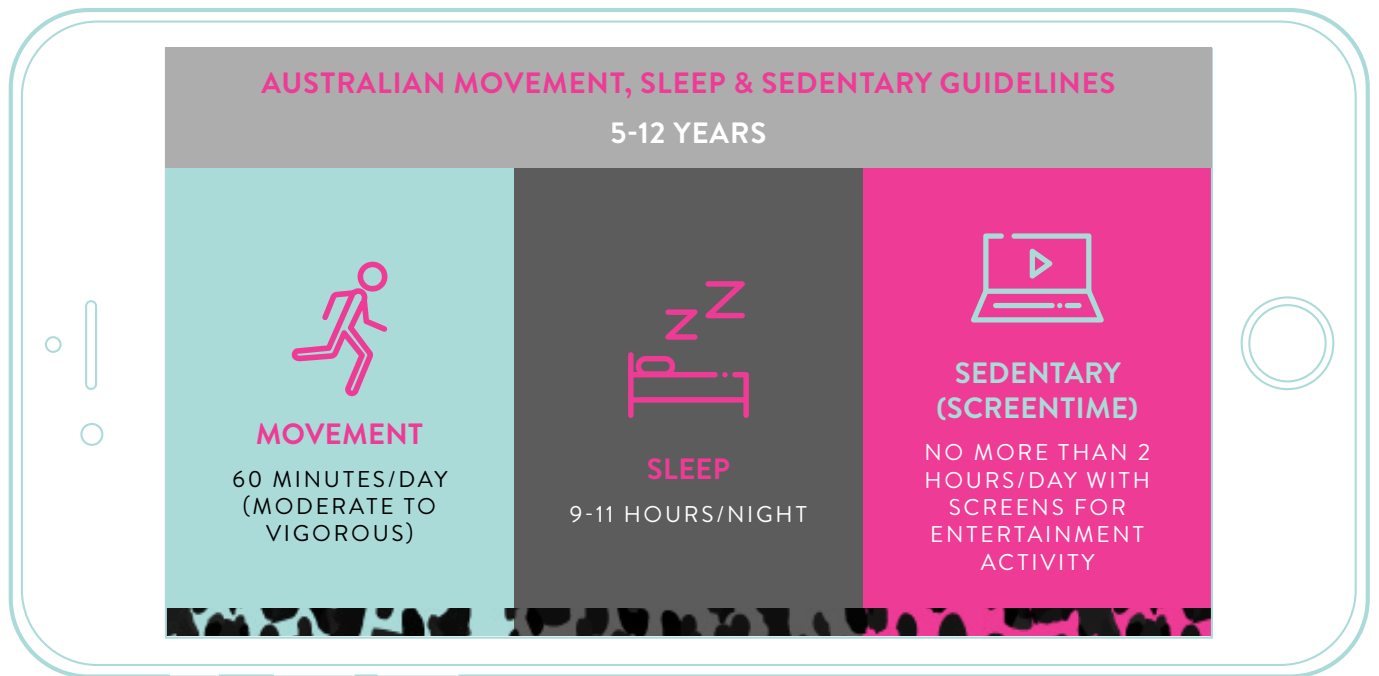


Today’s kids need boundaries around not only HOW MUCH screen time they consume each day, but also limits in terms of WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WITH WHOM and HOW they use screens.

HOW MUCH?

Kids need help managing how much time they spend with screens, but it’s difficult to prescribe specific screen-time limits simply based on their chronological age. All children have different tipping points. If we focus exclusively on ‘how much’ time children are spending with screens, we can sometimes overlook some of the other questions that we must consider such as what are they watching/playing/ creating? When and how are they using screens?

The following infographic outlines the current Australian government recommendations regarding screen time. Remember, this is a ballpark figure and not an amount you strictly need to adhere to.



Source: www.health.gov.au

“parents need to be the pilot of the digital plane”



My simple formula for calculating healthy screen-time limits



Want a simple scree-time limit formula? This is the formula I suggest parents apply, as it gives you peace of mind that your child's time online isn't eroding or harming their basic developmental needs.

Research consistently tells us that kids have seven, basic developmental priorities that will ensure their optimal development. It's critical that screen-time doesn't displace opportunities for these basic needs to be met.



1. RELATIONSHIPS



2. LANGUAGE



3. SLEEP



4. PLAY



5. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



6. NUTRITION



7. EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS (IMPULSE CONTROL)



Screens can either help or hamper your child's basic needs. Screen-time isn't necessarily 'toxic' or 'bad' for your child.

For example, screens can be used to bolster relationships via video-chat technologies and playing games online, but if screens are used excessively then they be detrimental to your child's relationships and social skills.

My simple formula for calculating healthy amounts of screen-time:

24 hours – sleep* – physical activity* – time for 5 other basic developmental needs= time available for screen-time.

*There are scientifically-based guidelines when it comes to specific amounts of sleep and physical activity that children need. These are guidelines that I strongly support! You can also use this [online tool](#) developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics to calculate screen time limits.

Understanding techno-tantrums



1. Dopamine

When kids use a screen, whether it's watching a TV program, or playing on the iPad, it's usually a pleasurable experience. So their brains release the neurotransmitter 'dopamine'. This means, when they switch off the device off, their dopamine (pleasure) response is being terminated. These feelings can be quite intense for them to manage and the techno-tantrum can unfold.

Tips: give your little one ample warning before their screen time is about to end. Priming helps them to better cope when devices are switched off. For example, you could say, "This is the last episode on Netflix and then you're going to turn it off." Also, have an appealing transition activity after the screen is turned off can help to tame the techno-tantrum. "When you turn off the iPad, would you like to jump on the trampoline or wake the dog for a walk?" Physical activity can also be a great way to boost the positive, happy neurotransmitters too. Finally, allowing them to switch off the device sounds very trivial but it's powerful for your child, as they feel like they're in control of the situation and they're much more likely to co-operate.

2. State of insufficiency

The online world has no precise finish point. It is a bottomless bowl and there are no stopping cues. There's always another TV episode kids can watch, a new game to play or level to reach, or another YouTube clip to view. This means that kids often don't get that sense of being 'done' or 'complete' when they're using technology. This is unlike the sense of completion they might experience when they've finished reading a book, or completing a jigsaw puzzle. A techno-tantrum can sometimes result due to the feelings of frustration or anger because toddlers lack a sense of completion.

Tips: give your child quantities not an amount of time. Most kids under 8 years don't have a conceptual understanding of time so telling your child they can watch TV or use the iPad for 'half an hour' is a redundant activity. Instead, give them quantities. For example, say to them, "You can watch two episodes of Bluey" is a much more tangible expectation.

3. Our brains are wired for novelty

Neuroscientists know that human brains are wired for novelty. This is why kids love anything new and exciting and resist boredom. The online world caters for this need perfectly. It's like a sensory smorgasbord that appeals



to our toddlers and there's always something new, exciting and interesting to access. The real (offline) world doesn't always offer novelty and is boring at times.

Tips: allow your child to regularly experience boredom. It's essential that kids experience boredom so they learn to self-regulate and have opportunities for creative ideas and play.

4. State of flow

When kids use technology they often enter a 'digital zombie' state, or a trance state. They'll look at you with their puppy-dog eyes and plead for "Just ten more minutes" when you ask them to switch off. Repetitive, hypnotic background music often gets kids into this state.

Tips: Give them clear cut-off points and transitions. Make sure you get eye contact and physically touch them so you know that they've heard you.

5. Overloaded nervous systems

When a toddler uses technology, their sensory and nervous systems can become overloaded. There's so much sensory information for their brain to process. This can cause their brain to become hyper-aroused, which often results in the meltdown when they stop using it (especially our boys who appear to be more prone to intense techno-tantrums than girls).

Tips: If your child watches TV or use a screen before dinner time, ensure that they empty their sensory cup before they eat (as eating requires intense sensory input). Encourage kids to do something physically active after using technology, such as riding their bike, jumping on the trampoline, engaging in rough and tumble play. This helps to boost their dopamine and serotonin levels and helps to calm down their sensory and nervous systems. Touch your child (firm strokes on the arm, or a cuddle) when they're throwing a techno-tantrum can help to calm them down as physical touch releases oxytocin (love hormone) so it can quickly diffuse a tantrum.

What?

























In addition to calculating healthy amounts of screen-time, we must also carefully consider what kids are doing when they're using screens. Is their screen-time for leisure or learning? Are they active or passive? Ideally, we want kids spending more of their screen-time creating and communicating (as this keeps them cognitively involved and prevents the 'digital zombie' effect) and less time consuming information (e.g. watching YouTube clips, TV, movies).





List of Apps Recommended



| APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE | APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| <p>My Story Book Creator</p>  | 6-8 years | <p>Hogworld: Gnart's Adventure</p>  | 5-10 years |
| <p>Green Screen by Do Ink</p>  | 8-12 years | <p>Jack and the Beanstalk by Nosy Crow</p>  | 3-8 years |
| <p>Letter school</p>  | 3-8 years | <p>IMAG-N-O-TRON</p>  | 5-12 years |
| <p>Motion Math: Hungry Guppy</p>  | 3-6 years | <p>The Human Body by Tinybop</p>  | 5-8 years |
| <p>Mathletics Student</p>  | 5-12 years | <p>Eggy 100 HD</p>  | 4-8 years |

| APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE | APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| Metamorphabet  | 4-8 years | Book Creator  | 3-12 years |
| The Wrong Book  | Not specified | Chatterpix Kids  | 3-8 years |
| KidsVideo: Kids YouTube Playlist  | 0-12 years | Tellagami  | 5-12 years |
| Kids iView  | 0-5 years | Glogster  | 8-12 years |
| Shape Lab  | 9-11 years | Skype  | 0-12 years |
| AR Flashcards-Animal Alphabet  | 3-6 years | Kindoma  | 2- 12 years |

| APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE | APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| Drawtime by Kindoma  | 4- 12 years | Up to 100  | 4-8 years |
| YouTube Kids  | 5 and under | Telestory  | 6-9 years |
| GarageBand  | 8-12 years | Play School Art Maker  | 2-5 years |
| Quick Maths  | 6-8 years | Quick Clocks - Telling Time  | 6-8 years |
| Explain Everything  | 5-12 years | Math Doodles  | 8-12 years |
| Pic Collage  | 5-12 years | Tangram for Osmo  | 5-10 years |

| APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE | APP NAME & LINK | SUGGESTED AGE RANGE |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| Felt Board  | 3-8 Years | Monster Physics  | 5-12 years |
| Toca Hair Salon Me  | 3-8 years | iMovie  | 3-12 years |
| Motion Math Fractions  | 9-11 years | Little Digits  | 3-6 years |
| Tiggly Story Maker  | 3-6 years | Aussie Kids Count Coins  | 5-12 years |
| Lego Movie Maker  | 5-12 years | | |

Finding appropriate content



To find age-appropriate content I highly recommend these tools:

// [Common Sense Media](#) - reviews apps, websites, video games, TV shows, movies.

// [Australian Council on Children and the Media](#) - Australian child development experts provide app and movie reviews.

// [eSafety Commissioner Parents & Carers](#) - a source of reliable parenting information about cyberbullying and cybersafety.

Cyber-safety



We must protect our kids from accessing violent, pornographic or inappropriate content. They cannot 'unsee' things. Some simple strategies to keep kids safe online include using devices in publicly-accessible places in the house (i.e. tech-free bedrooms), having ongoing and incidental conversations with your child about what they're doing online so that the lines of communication are open and doing random tech-audits so you know exactly what they're doing online. It's critical that screens aren't considered taboo as this will drive your child's behaviour underground.

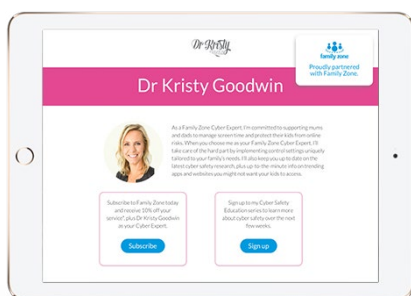


Pornography



You can watch a FREE webinar recording of the 'Pornography Problem Plaguering Parents'.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



I personally use and recommend the [Family Zone](#) to keep my kids safe online AND set screen-time limits (that won't end in tears and tantrums).

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

When?



- // Minimise screen-use in the 90 minutes before sleep or nap time (even 60 minutes will make a difference).
- // Avoid rapid-fire screen activity before nap, sleep or school time as it may cause hyperarousal, making it difficult for children to focus.
- // Allow children to empty their sensory cups after using a screen. Time in nature is an ideal way to re-calibrate the brain after screen-time.

// Balance kids' screen-time and green-time. Kids need outdoor, unstructured play each and every single day. Unplugged time is essential for their visual development, helps to regulate their circadian rhythms required for sleep and allows them to enter the mind-wandering mode of thinking (which will enable them to come up with creative ideas and solve problems).

Where?



- // Establish tech-free zones in your house. I recommend bedrooms, meal areas, cars (unless you're on a long-distance trip) and play spaces as essential tech-free spaces.

How?



- // Implement 20-20-20-20 rule for healthy visual development (i.e. every 20 minutes a child uses a screen, take at least a 20 second break, encourage your child to look at something 20 feet (6m) away and blink their eyes at least 20 times). Ensure your child has 10-15 hours in natural sunlight each week (wearing skin and eye protection).
- // No apps in laps- keep devices out of laps to reduce possible electromagnetic radiation risks.
- // Teach kids to use devices in ergonomically-correct ways (i.e. use tablet devices on tummies and laptops and computers just below eye-line).
- // Use ear-muff, noise-cancelling headphones, limit headphones to no more than 1 hour/day and set maximum levels for healthy hearing.

With whom?



- // Where possible, encourage your child to use technology with someone (ideally a parent, but siblings and peers also work well). This keeps your child actively involved and reduces chances of them accessing inappropriate content and entering the 'digital zombie' state.

2. Basic needs



Neuroscience and developmental science tells us that kids have seven basic needs. We must ensure that their screen time doesn't displace these needs.

Kids need:

// Relationships

// Language

// Sleep

// Play

// Movement

// Executive function skills

// Nutrition

Screen time can either help or harm each of these basic needs. As the pilot of the digital plane, you MUST ensure that your child's basic needs are met every day. Then you don't need to fret about how much time they're spending online.

3. Boredom



Kids' prefrontal cortexes need a break. They were never designed to be constantly switched on. They need opportunities to enter 'mind-wandering' state. So they must have opportunities to be bored.



Do you want ongoing advice about the digital

dilemmas you're facing as a parent? Want Dr Kristy to provide solutions to your digital issues?



Join the Switched on Parents' Portal to gain access to Dr Kristy's full library of online parent seminars, mini-masterclasses and PDF summary sheets so you can put an end to the guilt and guesswork raising kids in a digital world.

SWITCHED ON
Parents'
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About Dr Kristy



Dr Kristy Goodwin is one of Australia's leading digital health, wellbeing and productivity experts (and mum who also deals with her kids' techno-tantrums!) She's the author of *Raising Your Child in a Digital World*, a speaker, media commentator and digital wellbeing researcher, who doesn't suggest that we ban the iPhone (digital abstinence isn't the solution). Kristy worked as an educator for fourteen years before becoming an academic and speaker. She has worked with clients including Apple, Westfield, Bank of Queensland, Nickelodeon Channel, the National Broadband Network, McDonalds, NSW Department of Education and Optus, she's spoken at national and international conferences, at schools, workplaces and medical conferences throughout Australia.

Kristy is regularly called upon by the media to translate the latest research about kids, teens, adults and screens into practical and relevant information for parents and professionals. She provides evidence-based information and realistic solutions about how technology is impacting the health, learning, wellbeing and development of kids and teens and also how our digital infatuation is shaping adults' health and productivity. Kristy's on a mission to empower people to tame their technology habits and not be a slave to the screen!

Want to learn more?



Dr Kristy travels throughout Australia and Asia to deliver engaging keynotes and seminars to parents, educators and employees.

Get Social with Dr Kristy



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