



TIP SHEET 1

Setting limits around family screen use as we get back on track in Term 2

1) Balance and Flexibility

- It is important to understand that screens are helping your child remain connected to the outside world, so set limits but be flexible.

2) Everyone is different

- Understand the needs and personality of your child and their siblings before setting limits. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. In a quiet moment, start a conversation about the following effects of apps and websites with each child, be honest about your own response to these points and discuss how to use their answers to help work out appropriate screen time limits.

Explore which apps or sites:

- help me/my child stay up to date in world affairs and other info that matters to me.
- help me/my child keep in touch with people who are important to me.
- help me/my child advance and showcase my gaming skills.
- distract me/my child and take me away from people I'm with at the time.
- tend to make me/my child compete with friends and bring out a side of me that is not my best self.
- make me/my child concerned that I am missing out or feel insecure.

3) A Team Effort

- Engage in collaborative discussions with your family to set new limits specific to a return to Term 2. Now is the time to embrace the idea of problem solving as a family rather than taking a militant approach. If you have a partner, take the time to check you are both onside to ensure a coordinated effort.

4) Setting a Limit

- If your child is engaged in remote learning, consider the number of waking hours your child has during the day (this may be 15 hours) and work backwards, remove school time, time for meals, homework, exercise and time with family, also exclude screen time spent watching with parents (discussed in the Dip book). Negotiate an outer personal limit of screen use per day. **Whatever limit you decide on should be consistent with *your* family values and stress levels.**

A balanced routine incorporating family time, learning, leisure, activities to boost your mental health and socialisation is needed during COVID-19. **Schedule wellbeing breaks between any protracted use of devices.** Vlog 2 & Tip Sheet 2 will focus on this.

- After these conversations, let your child know that you are re-initiating your pre-COVID 19 screentime monitoring system and will look back every so often at their screen use. Invest some time now in setting this for the term.

5) Appropriate Use of Screens

- There is a right and a wrong way to use screens. There should be no videoing of a sibling or parent at all, especially during arguments. If this starts, then a logical consequence should be applied. For example, one appropriate consequence would involve removal of the screen immediately for the next 16 hours, or whatever is practical.

6) Not All Screen Time is the Same

- Limit access to gaming but be more flexible regarding education, social connections and personal interests. It is important to limit screen use at certain times of the day, such as for one hour immediately before bed and during meals.

7) Individual vs Community vs Family Screen Time

- Separate your child's *personal limit* on screen time from time that they spend with you or other family members, such as watching TV or speaking via video with family or those in need. This type of 'screen time' involves an element of giving when they communicate with elderly family members, cousins or members of their school community that they may be contributing to. If you include this in the negotiated personal screen time limit, you may find them less inclined to connect and give of themselves in this way.

8) Lead by Example

- Abide by limits that you set down. If you place a ban on screen use during meals, try not to reach for your phone during such times either. Remove temptation for yourself by switching off your notifications, having your phone and computer out of eyesight (for example, put away in another room).

9) Not Everything Goes to Plan

- Don't beat yourself up about aspects of your plan, reigning in screen use is hard. With all the stress and pressure on people now, it's important not to add this to yourself.

If you would like support from other parents who are making similar changes at home, join our support group. The forms and information can be found on our website www.thedip.com

In case of an emergency call "000" or go directly to the Emergency Department of your nearest hospital.

For after hours advice call the mental health line on 1800 011 511

You may also access assistance at:

<https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/phone-counselling>

Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636)

Lifeline Australia (13 11 14)

Mens Line (1300 78 99 78)

Suicide Call Back Service (1300 659 467)

<https://www.psychology.org.au/Find-a-Psychologist>

<https://acpa.org.au/find-a-clinical-psychologist/>

<https://parentworks.org.au/#/>

<https://covid19chilledandconsiderate.com>