Supporting Families with Screen Time

A Relational Approach

Determinants of Child Development Lab

1) Recognize what families already do well

- Simply sharing screen time limits often isn't enough to create lasting change.
- Start by recognizing what families already do well—talking, playing, reading, and connecting.
- Frame screen time as part of a broader daily rhythm that supports relationships.

2) Use open-ended questions to spark reflection

- What does your child's evening routine usually look like?
- When do screens tend to be most helpful—or most disruptive?

- hiking
- family time
- reading
- talking

3) Explore barriers with curiosity

- What gets in the way of doing more of the things you value?
- Emphasize that small changes—like turning off screens during meals or bedtime—can strengthen connection and support healthy development.

4) Acknowledge realities & avoid shame

- Families often rely on screens for practical reasons—childcare gaps, stress, or needing a break.
- Normalize this without judgment to build trust and openness.

Because it affects ...

5) Promote co-viewing & engagement

What did you notice?

- Encourage caregivers to watch together, ask questions, and talk about what the child is seeing.
- This turns screen time into relational time, not just passive viewing.

6) Explain the "why" behind limits

- Briefly sharing how excessive screen time can affect sleep, attention, or social skills—help caregivers understand why balance matters.

7) Focus on progress, not perfection

- Encourage small, manageable steps (e.g., screen-free dinners, 20 minutes of play after daycare).
- Emphasize flexibility and adaptation over strict rules.

It's ok.

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