



Discussion Guide: **Screen Kids**

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Introduction

Is technology bringing your family closer together or is it driving it further apart?

What do you hope to learn from reading this book?

What concerns regarding screen time do you have for your child?

When your child has free time, what is his or her default activity?

Notes

Chapter 1: Screen Time and the Brain

This chapter contains a list of warning signs of too much screen time. Do you observe any of these signs on a regular basis?

- My child is irritable, tearful, depressed, or angry.
- My child has a hard time focusing.
- My child is forgetful and disorganized.
- My child is defiant and impulsive.
- My child is not empathetic and has poor social skills.

How is screen time similar to a drug?

Are you concerned your child may become addicted to screens in the future? Why or why not?

If your child plays video games, which category do you think he or she falls under: casual gamer, at risk gamer, or addicted gamer?

How does increased screen time weaken the development of skills like reading, writing, and sustained concentration?

What is one positive thing you can do to develop your child's brain?

Notes

Chapter 2: Screen Time and Relationships

Does your child ever choose an online activity over meeting in real life with friends or family?

If your child is playing a video game and you come home from work, does he/she pause to greet you?

What has your child done recently to show empathy for another person?

Are phones put away and out of sight during family mealtimes?

How have you helped your child overcome any anxieties about meeting new people?

When do you think it would be healthy for your child to begin using social media?

Notes

Chapter 3: Screen Time and Safety

Have you ever been surprised by what cued up to play next on YouTube or a streaming service?

Talk about your plan to address pornography with your child at the appropriate age. What do you think is important to say? How can you best monitor your child's devices?

Have you taught your child the value of privacy and not to disclose personal facts online? How can you communicate the importance of this in a way your child understands?

Is your child a healthy weight? What's one thing you can do to promote proper nutrition and exercise in your home?

When do you think is a good age for your child to get a phone? Describe your reasoning. Will you start with a basic phone with no internet?

Notes

Chapter 4: Screen Time and Emotional Health

Have you had any experiences with cyberbullying online or know someone who has?

Has your child experienced rejection or bullying? If so, how did you talk about it afterwards?

Have you noticed your children withdrawing or saying/writing negative things about themselves?

How do you think social media and increased time on the phone contributes to a rise in anxiety and depression in kids and teens?

What words of encouragement can you give to your child today?

Describe a recent conversation when you emotionally connected to your child.

Is your child growing more mature as he or she gets older? Give some examples.

Notes

Chapter 5: Screen Time and the Single Parent

What are some of the unique challenges you face as a single parent?

What time does your child go to bed? Is this an early enough bedtime to make room for some quiet time for yourself at the end of the day?

Do you co-parent with an ex-spouse? Are there different screen time rules when your child is with you and when your child is with his/her other parent? If so, how can you work together to provide more consistent guidelines?

When you think of filling your child's love tank each day, what are some barriers that get in the way?

Do you have a caring community of people who support you as a parent?

What are some constructive ways you can seek support from others if you don't have that right now?

Notes

Chapter 6: The A+ Skill of Affection

Does your phone or computer compete with your child for your affection?
How so?

Share a success story of when you were able to put aside your electronics and be “all there” for your child (or vice versa, when your child set aside his/her device to be with you).

How does your child rate when it comes to eye contact? Does he or she look other adults or friends in the eye?

What is one thing you can do to better show your child affection?

Here are some ideas to communicate affection from The 5 Love Languages®:

- **Physical Touch:** Do you make physical contact each day with your child through hugs, high fives, sitting next to each other, wrestling, etc.?
- **Words of Affirmation:** When was the last time you praised your child for something specifically? What did you say?
- **Quality Time:** How can you make time in your day for quality time for your child and still get your work done?
- **Gifts:** What is a non-screen gift you can present to your child? It doesn't have to be expensive; it just has to communicate “I was thinking about you today.”
- **Acts of Service:** What are a few caring acts of service that you do regularly for your child?

Notes

Chapter 7: The A+ Skill of Appreciation

Do your child appreciate what you do for him or her as a parent?

Do you need to prompt your child to say “thank you” or does he or she express thanks on his/her own?

How is gratitude like a muscle? How can you help your child exercise the gratitude muscle more frequently?

How does it make you feel when your child receives a gift but seems ungrateful for it?

What is your response when your child says, “But everyone else has one!”?

What do you think is the value of making children wait for what they want instead of granting their wishes immediately?

How has showing gratitude helped you as an adult to get along better with others?

Notes

Chapter 8: The A+ Skill of Anger Management

When your child gets angry, do you try to distract him or her with something else?

If your child dealt with anger in the same way you do, would you be pleased? If not, what is one thing you can do to improve your own anger management with your kid(s)?

Brainstorm together on scenarios to role play with your children to help them practice anger management. Possible scenarios might be: What would you do if a child took away a toy you were playing with? What would you do if another kid insulted you by calling you names?

Does your child have a problem with frequent outbursts of anger? What do you think is the “why” behind your child’s anger?

Evaluate the video games your child is playing. Are there any games that promote aggressive behavior?

Notes

Chapter 9: The A+ Skill of Apology

Have you modeled how to apologize to your child (either by apologizing to your child or having your child present when you are apologizing to someone else)? What happened?

Does your child readily accept responsibility for wrongdoing or does he/she tend to blame someone or something else?

Have you ever watched one of your child's friendships weaken or break because someone wouldn't apologize? Have you ever had a similar experience?

In preparation for teaching your child the five languages of apology, practice role playing with each other. Say:

- "I am sorry."
- "I was wrong."
- "What can I do to make it right?"
- "I'll try not to do it again."
- "Will you please forgive me?"

Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "I don't want to apologize to my children because they will lose respect for me." Explain your opinion.

Notes

Chapter 10: The A+ Skill of Attention

The authors write, “When your son isn’t playing a video game, he’s thinking about the next time he can play.” Agree or disagree? Have you noticed your kids are often thinking about something screen related instead of enjoying the moment they are in?

Does your child have any difficulty paying attention in school, church, or other settings where listening is required?

Talk about your child’s reading habits. What’s something you can do to increase your child’s reading time, vocabulary or comprehension?

If your child struggles with ADHD, what are a few things you can do to help him/her navigate screen time constructively?

What are the dangers of multitasking for your child?

Do you have any homework tips to share?

How much daily play is your child getting that is not screen related?

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Chapter 11: Screen Time and You

Describe your digital use on a typical day. Would you be pleased if your child grew up to be just like you in terms of screen use?

What do you think about this statement: “I believe the most damaging effect of the digital world is the parent’s own dependence on digital media because it will become their child’s dependence.”

Does your child know that spending time with him/her is more important to you than catching up on social media, news, or emails?

Aside from your hours at work, are you comfortable disconnecting with technology and making yourself unavailable by phone or email during certain times?

When do you turn your phone off?

What are some positive things you have done to limit your personal screen time and enjoy more time with your family?

What kind of “digital Sabbath” experience would you like to create for your family?

How has your thinking about screen time changed since reading this book?

What screen time changes have you implemented or do you plan to implement?

Notes