

Strategies for Moderating Device Use in Children



1. Establish Clear Boundaries

Set time limits for daily device use, ideally aligned with age-appropriate guidelines (e.g., no more than 1-2 hours per day for primary-aged children). Use tools like parental controls or screen time apps to help enforce limits.

2. Create Tech-Free Zones and Times

Designate areas like bedrooms and dining tables as device-free zones. Implement tech-free times, such as during meals, before school, and at least one hour before bedtime.

3. Encourage Alternative Activities

- Promote activities that support regulation and attention, such as:
 - Outdoor play
 - Reading
 - Creative arts (drawing, music, building)
 - Board games and puzzles
- These help children develop patience, focus, and emotional resilience.

4. Co-View and Co-Play

- Engage with your child during screen time to help them process content and build social connections.
- Ask questions, discuss what they're watching or playing, and model critical thinking.

6. Model Healthy Tech Habits

- Children learn by example. Show balanced tech use in your own routines.
- Prioritise face-to-face interactions and unplugged family time.

5. Teach Self-Regulation Skills

- Use moments of dysregulation as opportunities to teach calming strategies like:
 - Deep breathing
 - Mindfulness
 - Naming emotions
- Help children recognise when they need a break from screens.

7. Use Content Wisely

- Choose apps and games that are educational, slow-paced, and non-addictive.
- Avoid platforms with autoplay, endless scrolling, or aggressive advertising.

8. Regularly Review and Adjust

- Monitor how your child responds to screen time—emotionally, behaviourally, and socially.
- Adjust limits and strategies as needed, especially during school holidays or transitions.