

# MANAGING SCREEN TIME

Screens are a wonderful tool to use with children, however they are becoming increasingly difficult to monitor and manage.

**Here are a few great examples of questions you could ask yourself to see if the child's screen time under control?**

- ✔ Do you have a plan to **'manage'** screen time? Is it being followed?
- ✔ Does screen use **interfere** with what your family/classroom wants to do?
- ✔ Does screen use **interfere with sleep**?
- ✔ Does the child **easily transition** between screen time and non-screen time? (ie will they get 'off' when directed?)

If after asking these questions you are wanting to put in place some strategies to manage screen time, below are some tips to get you started.

## TIPS TO MANAGE SCREEN TIME

### EXIT PLAN



Many kids with ASD get very engrossed with their screens making it very difficult for them to transition to nothing afterwards. **Planning their next activity before starting screen time** allows them to immediately move onto another activity.

### A COLLABORATIVE MEDIA PLAN

Create a plan with the child which works for the adult and the child. Have agreed rules, routines, expectations (ie around swearing etc)

and consequences. I highly recommend writing down the agreement and putting it somewhere to refer back to.

### SCREEN FREE TIMES\*\*

Instilling allocated screen free times or activities such as meal-times or outings which everybody participates in.

### TURN OFF WIFI



Many routers can now turn off the wifi after a certain time e.g. for bedtime.

### LIMITING THE AMOUNT OF TIME

This could be done in a number of different ways

- ✔ A self-monitored visual timer
- ✔ Many apps can now be time limited
- ✔ Token systems (see page 13)

Be aware that with some children it is incredibly distressing to stop mid-game, so perhaps, **adjust limits accordingly**. Instead of a certain time period, allow them to play the game a set number of times.

### EXCHANGE SYSTEMS



Allow screen time in exchange for other activities

- ✔ Screen time allocated following tidying-up/school work etc.
- ✔ Amount of time allowed on screens is half the amount of time spent off the screens

\*\*If the device is being used for communication the child needs access to it at all times.

# 1 HOUR BEFORE BED NO SCREEN TIME

Research has shown the blue light produced by screens disrupts the body's sleep hormone. It is recommended that children should not use a screen in the hour before bedtime. Here are some great activities that you can do in the hour before bed.

## TIPS ON WHAT TO DO BEFORE BEDTIME

Interact with family members

Play a game

Read a book

Do a puzzle

ART  
Craft or colouring in

Prepare for next day

Shower, bath, brush teeth



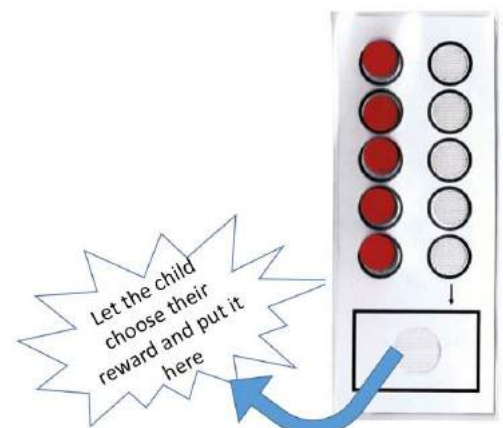
# TOKEN REWARDS

**Tokens are a fantastic technique for managing screen time and a range of other activities. Token systems are great as they are visual and can be used over and over for all ages and stages.**

- ✔ It is important to set the child up for success by making the required activity/behaviour/goal easily achieved when you first start using. Over time you can extend the expectations.
- ✔ Tokens should only be used for positive behaviour support. Be careful removing tokens for incorrect behaviour as this can result in anger, anxiety or frustration. In my experience, it is better to use as a positive reinforcement or reminder. i.e. when you get off the computer at the end of this game you will get a token towards more computer time.
- ✔ I have had extremely positive outcomes using tokens rewards earned at school used for screen time at home, particularly with older students. For example, one for my secondary students if he got to class on time with the required equipment he got a token for time on his playstation when he got home.

## **Have clear rules such as:**

- ✔ Who moves the tokens? The child or adult?
- ✔ What is the reward - decided amount of extra screen time or games
- ✔ Tokens can be awarded for a range of pre decided activities. chores eg: packing away, lining up, waiting quietly, tidying up getting to class on time, putting washing in basket etc
- ✔ Have set times they can use the reward time, as sometime: they want it immediately and that is not possible.



Small token systems (5 tokens) - \$5.00  
Large token systems (10 tokens) - \$10.00

