

PARENTING ARTICLE

Methodist Welfare Services Parenting Newsletter Issue 01

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Dear Parents,

A Straits Times article on the 8th Feb 2021 reported that a vast majority of parents in Singapore worry about their children's use of social media. A survey cited in the article showed that almost half of the parents with teenaged children worry about imposing screen-time restrictions fearing that such actions may be seen to be over-controlling and may affect their relationship with their children. Parents are in a dilemma because they understand the need for social media and online activities and they do not want their children to be left out and yet, they do not want them to be overly dependent.

Parents, have you done the following actions:

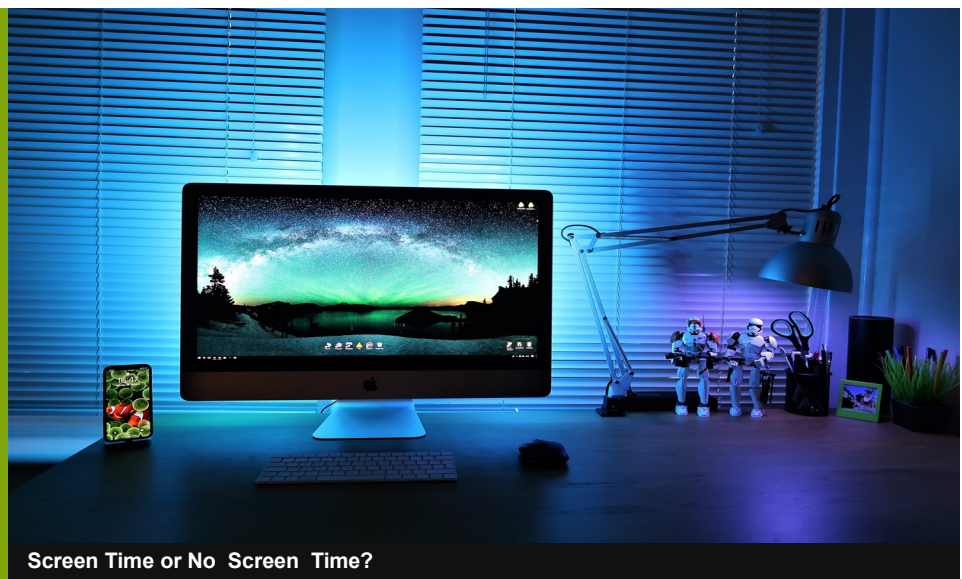
- ◆ Set time limits
- ◆ Controlling access to equipment
- ◆ Controlling content by using parental control apps like [Familylink](#) and [Qustodio](#)

Have these actions worked for you? Unfortunately, for most parents, setting screen-time restrictions was unsuccessful. Why is this so?

This is because the imposition of rules which are necessary must come with a complementary relationship. Without a positive and nurturing relationship with your children, rule imposition would only be met with rebelliousness.

To build such a nurturing relationship with our children, we must ask ourselves the following questions:

- Why are they glued to their screens?
- What are they getting from these online activities that we parents are not able to provide or match?
- For example, games provide many affirmations and rewards.
- Can parents provide similar affirmations and rewards to reduce their children's dependency?



“...almost half of the parents with teenaged children worry about imposing screen-time restrictions fearing that such actions may be seen to be over-controlling and may affect their relationship with their children.”

Help your family create healthy digital habits

Family control apps:

[Family Link](#)

[Qustodio](#)



How Connected are you in your child's life?

How connected are you with your child? Do you actively listen to your child and try to tune in to his/her real feelings? Or have you, perhaps unknowingly, been brushing these feelings aside?

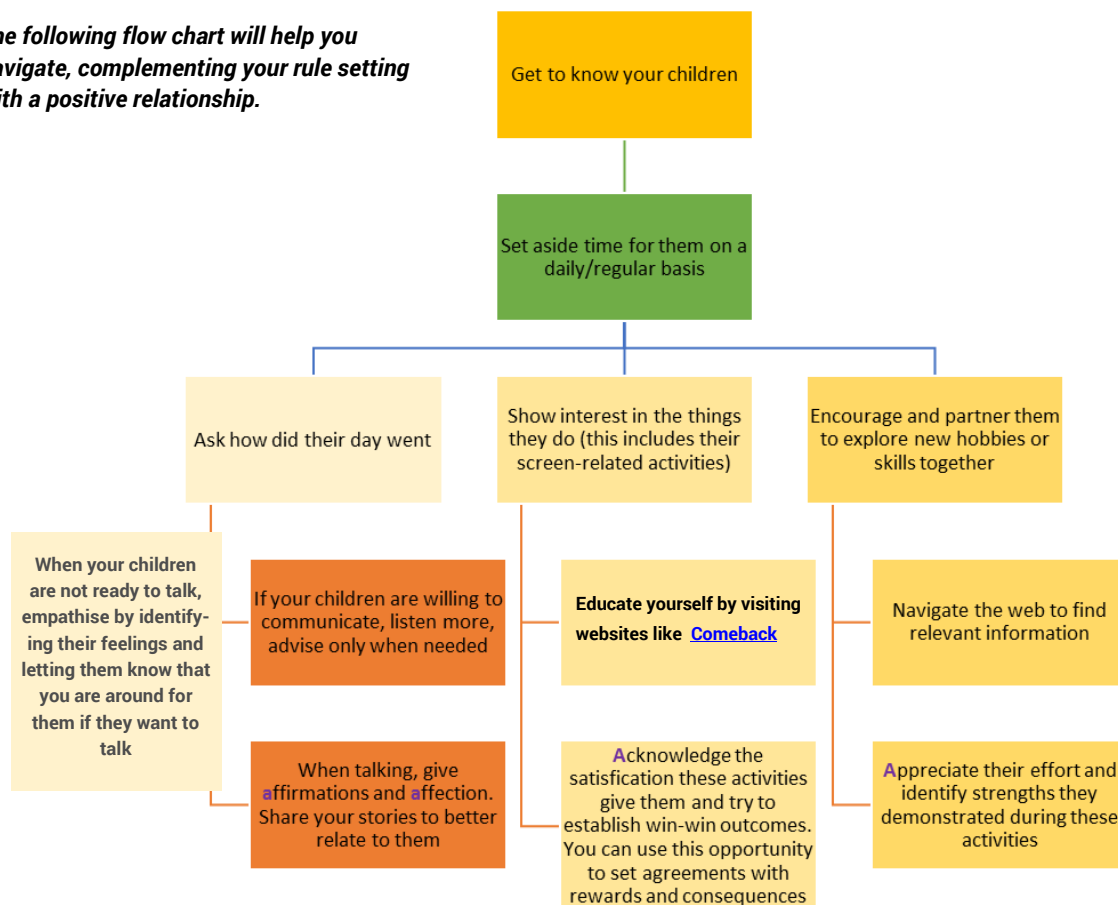
Sometimes your child may be behaving in a certain way. Do you ponder why he/she is behaving as such? What are these behaviours indicating to you the needs of your child? For example, if your child is hanging around in the kitchen while you are cooking but is not talking much, what do you think he/she wants? He/She might just want to be close to you. Do you usually ignore his/her presence or use this opportunity to bond by getting him/her involved in the cooking? Conversations can then flow easily and even hugs can be exchanged. In making use of all opportunities given, you can attend to your child's emotional needs and spend quality time together.

When you consider the above questions, you build the relationship needed to make your rule imposition more successful. We also invite you to observe your children, actively listen to them with curiosity and seek to understand your children's needs.

SELF-CHECK

Parents, do you model healthy screen time yourself?

The following flow chart will help you navigate, complementing your rule setting with a positive relationship.



When you follow this flowchart, you can improve your relationship with your children and thus making agreements set between you and them easier to fulfil.

To further promote healthy screen-related behaviours, the following links will also be useful:

- If you suspect your children are addicted to gaming, click [here](#) to check for symptoms.
- To identify your children’s motivation for gaming, click [The Four Types of Gamers](#) so that you can create conversations with them to discover offline activities providing similar motivation.

- This [link](#) will provide you a template for contract writing which you can adapt to your goals. Also, to help your children build some essential skills, click this [link](#) to download the e-book “7 Life Skills Students Need To Succeed”.

The following 3 sites are useful references from online to offline activities you can create for your children:

- [Family5 App](#)
- <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/hundreds-of-printables/>
- Click [here](#) to download the Children & Adolescents 24-hour Singaporean-Integrated Activity Guidelines. This link is lengthy but we would like you to zoom in to pages 10 & 11 where you will find a list of outdoor activities.

We hope you will find the above links useful but if you need further assistance, do not hesitate to either email us at mwsfspeast@mws.sg or through [FormSg](#). To conclude, please watch this [video clip](#) where Dr Justin Coulson emphasizes that applying force creates resistance but great relationships build autonomy. We sincerely hope that you will build a better relationship with your children!

From the MWS FSP Team
[Live a Positive Mark on Lives](#)