

coffee with the counselor

screen time workshop

connected, not consumed:

healthy screen habits for families



giving caregivers
crucial information
about screen time
and providing them
tools to use at home

- **Spotting Challenges**

- Sleep
- Attention
- Mental Health

- **Setting Intentions + Boundaries**

- Finding Balance
- Limiting Types of Content
- Protecting Sleep
- Reducing Power Struggle

- **Personal Safety**

- AI
- Social Media

- **Practice Tips**

- Coaching script and modeling practice.

- **Fun Alternatives**

- Screen-free activities that are kid approved!

- **Q&A**

presentation outline

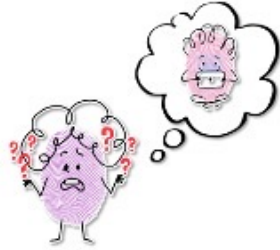
the struggle is real

As a caregiver, it is normal and OKAY to feel overwhelmed when trying to figure out how to navigate the digital world with your child.

You are not alone.

You are doing great!

You got this!



attention



Your child says "this is boring" during non-screen activities.

Constantly switching toys/activities.

Needs background TV or a device to stay occupied.

Difficulty sitting through a whole book or lesson.

finding balance

Maria started noticing that most of her son Jayden's free time was being spent on screens. Even when other options were available, screens were always his first choice. She asked herself, "What do I actually want my child's day to look like?" She realized she wanted more balance, not just defaulting to screens.

That led her to set a boundary that screen time would come after homework and thirty minutes with a screen-free activity.



artificial intelligence



Using AI to do schoolwork instead of thinking or trying first.

Talking to AI like a friend instead of going to a trusted adult.

Asking AI inappropriate or unsafe questions out of curiosity.

Sharing personal information like name, school, or location.

coaching script



child's reaction	caregiver's response
Child is bored, tired, or caregiver is busy.	"I know you want to keep using the screen, and I understand you are bored. I also need to make sure you get your sleep, playtime, and other activities in. We will stick to our screen rules today."
Child tries to secretly use a screen after limits are reached.	"I see you're trying to use the screen after your time is up. That's not allowed. Screens are off now."
"All of my friends are on (social media app). Why can't I have it?"	"I understand it feels like everyone else is doing it. We have rules to keep you healthy and safe. You can join when it fits our family plan."
Child has a meltdown when prompted to turn off the screen (crying, yelling, or refusing).	"I can see you're really upset. It's hard to stop when you're having fun. The screen time is still finished. You can be upset, and we're still turning it off."

co-viewing



- Sitting with your child while they watch a show and asking, "What's happening right now?" or "Who's your favorite character?"
- Sitting next to your child while they play an educational game and asking, "What are you learning about?"
- Joining your child for a few minutes during their screen time, even if you cannot stay the whole time.
- Watching the screen together and asking your child, "Is this real or make-believe?"

screen-free activities



outdoor play

Scavenger hunt, building a fort, sidewalk chalk, blowing bubbles, frisbee, sports games, playing at a local park, etc.

crafts/art making

Coloring book, bracelet making, finger knitting, origami, painting, making a card, sticker book, dolls/puppets, party decorations, etc.

What do I do if I notice my child is developing an unhealthy relationship with AI?

A screen time planning guide to align screen use and limits with family values and goals.

family screen time guidelines	
time limits	
What do I want the daily total screen time limit to be?	Do I want different limits set for weekdays vs. weekends?
	<input type="checkbox"/> same every day
	<input type="checkbox"/> weekdays: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> weekends: _____
app + content limits	
Are there apps/content I want to limit daily use of or block?	Do I want different rules for educational games vs. game apps, YouTube vs. streaming platforms, etc.?
<input type="checkbox"/> social media: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> websites: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> gaming apps: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

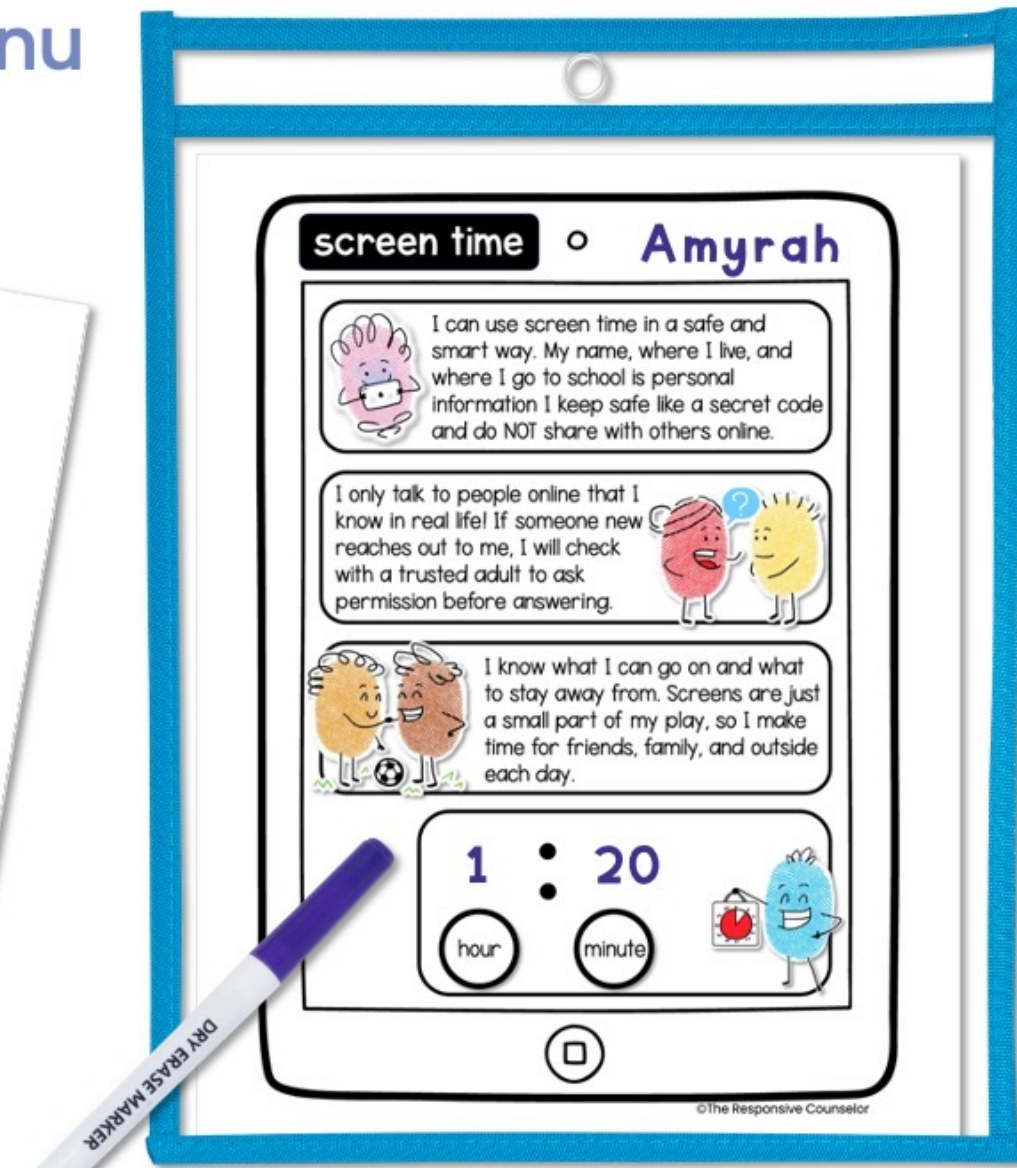
family screen time guidelines	
supervision + access	
Where can my child use screen devices?	Do I want my child to get permission before downloading something?
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, password protected
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, verbal permission
	<input type="checkbox"/> no restrictions right now
artificial intelligence + new technology	
Does your child have access to AI tools? (i.e., chatbots, homework helpers, etc.)	Do you want to allow use for learning purposes?
safety settings	
Do you want filters for explicit content, in-app purchases, etc.?	Do you want limits set on communication? (i.e., who your child contacts)

my family screen plan	
child #1	child #2
time limits	
app + content limits	
supervision + access	
artificial intelligence	
safety settings	

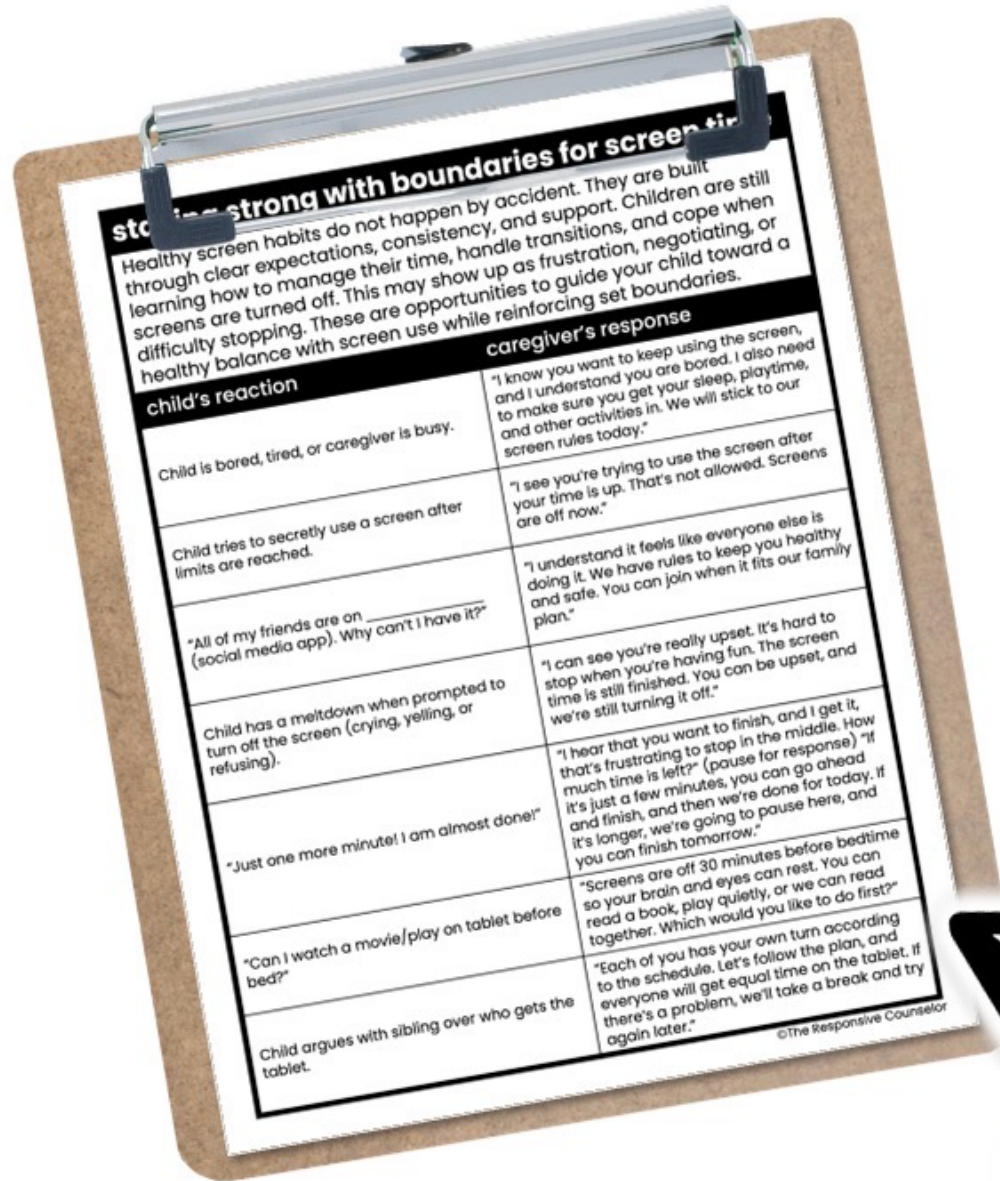
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make and take

A visual for kids and screen-free menu with fun choices to explore.



extra support



Strong with boundaries for screen time

Healthy screen habits do not happen by accident. They are built through clear expectations, consistency, and support. Children are still learning how to manage their time, handle transitions, and cope when screens are turned off. This may show up as frustration, negotiating, or difficulty stopping. These are opportunities to guide your child toward a healthy balance with screen use while reinforcing set boundaries.

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"Just one more minute! I am almost done!"	"I hear that you want to finish, and I get it, that's frustrating to stop in the middle. How much time is left?" (pause for response) "If it's just a few minutes, you can go ahead and finish, and then we're done for today. If it's longer, we're going to pause here, and you can finish tomorrow."
"Can I watch a movie/play on tablet before bed?"	"Screens are off 30 minutes before bedtime so your brain and eyes can rest. You can read a book, play quietly, or we can read together. Which would you like to do first?"
Child argues with sibling over who gets the tablet.	"Each of you has your own turn according to the schedule. Let's follow the plan, and everyone will get equal time on the tablet. If there's a problem, we'll take a break and try again later."

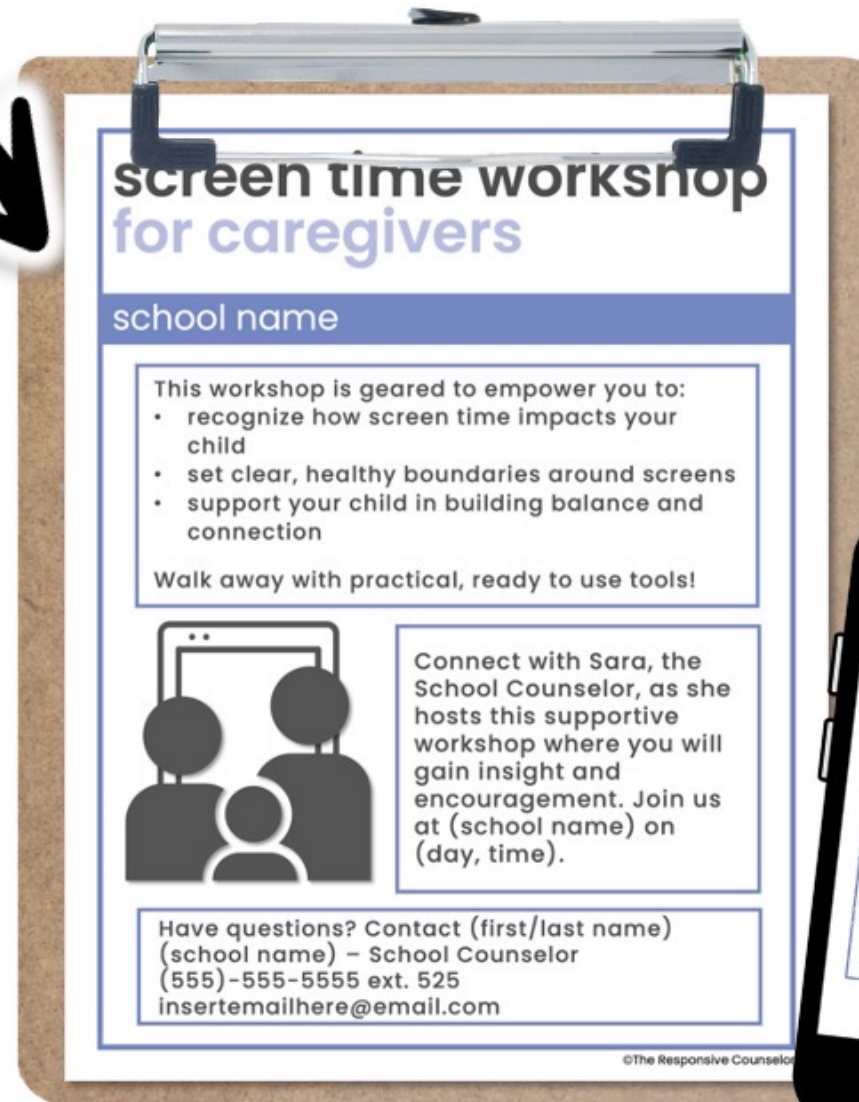
Includes an easy-to-use reference guide for caregivers to feel confident in their response to their child's behavior!



take home handout

Advertise your workshop with the included flyer!

- Print and send home with students
- Save as an image and post on the school's website/social media
- Attach as a PDF to email for newsletters



promotional flyer

What grade levels is this workshop designed for?

This workshop is designed with elementary-level families in mind. However, counselors can edit the scenarios and examples to make it geared towards middle school.

How do I use the Google Slides version?

The PowerPoint can be uploaded into your Google Drive and edited/used in Google Slides if needed.

How long was the workshop designed for?

- 30 minutes for the slideshow
- 5-15 minutes for the q&a
- 10-15 minutes for the make and take caregiver activity

Who can lead this workshop?

School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, and Child Mental Health Therapists.

Hi, I'm Sara! At The Responsive Counselor, we create resources for school counselors, child therapists, and teachers that improve social emotional learning and help students be their best selves. Our focus is creating resources that are effective (using research-based best practices) and engaging (through collaborative learning and relevant scenarios) for students.

B.A. from Michigan State University

Psychology and Anthropology

M.S. from Vanderbilt University

Community, Research, and Action

M.Ed. From Vanderbilt University

Human Development Counseling:
School Counseling & Mental Health

experience

I'm a former school counselor from a large southeastern school district with a wonderfully diverse group of students. I created and implemented a data-based comprehensive school counseling program while helping classroom teachers and administrators implement schoolwide SEL and restorative practices. Now, I share my ideas and resources to reach students and help educators across the world!



let's connect:

