



## A Journey Into Digital Literacy

We remember the first time our daughter, barely able to read, swiped a smart phone with pudgy fingers to pick a video of 'Peppa Pig'. We were amazed, and a little scared, too.

Each day, screens — phones, tablets, laptops — seem to weave themselves further into our children's worlds. They're both wondrous and worrying, aren't they? Magical doors to learning, laughter, curiosity, and yet shadows creep in with stories of addiction, distraction, lost moments. How much is too much? If we say no, are we holding them

back from skills they'll need? If we say yes, are we letting them go too soon?

The truth is, we do not have all the answers. Digital gadgets really are 'magic pills'. Ask any of us who's marveled as our kids remember animal names from nature clips or dance routines from YouTube. Those screens, however, can also be 'forbidden fruit'. The whine for 'just one more episode'. The tantrum when it's time to turn off. The glazed look after too long spent swiping. These worry us, deeply.

### Our Experiments

Navigating digital parenting requires more than instinct; it calls



for strategies grounded in child development, communication, and conscious modeling. No rules fit every family, but here's what we have tried:

### 1. Active Co-Engagement:

Children benefit most when digital activities are shared, rather than solitary. Actively viewing content together, enables parents to guide interpretation, ask open-ended questions, and reinforce learning. For example, after viewing a documentary clip on penguins, asking "Why do you think penguins cannot fly?" encourages critical thinking and emotional connection. Joint participation turns screen time

from passive consumption to meaningful dialogue.

### 2. Structured, Flexible Boundaries:

Establish consistent routines regarding device use but remain adaptable to real-life needs. Professional guidelines suggest age-appropriate limits (such as an occasional hour of high-quality content for early childhood), yet flexibility is key for family harmony. Also, we may prioritise platforms designed for children, such as YouTube Kids or educational apps. This proactive approach shields children from inappropriate material and promotes healthy development.

### 3. Empathy-Centered Discipline:



Screen time disputes often prompt emotional outbursts. Employ empathetic communication rather than punitive measures. To transition from online to offline, acknowledge the disappointment ( "I know you love that show" ) and offer alternatives, such as drawing a favourite scene. We may discuss digital challenges and opportunities openly, inviting children to share their experiences and preferences.

#### 4. Role Modeling:

Children mirror adult behaviour. Model healthy digital habits such as device-free meals and honest apologies for distractions—so our

children can internalise boundaries. Admitting lapses ( "I' m sorry for checking my phone at dinner; let' s talk instead" ) demonstrates accountability and reinforces family norms. We may also schedule regular 'tech breaks' like nature walks, cooking, or creative play which nourish holistic development.

#### Growing up —Together

Parenting in the digital age is an everyday learning process.

There' s no perfect system, just a journey of love, patience, and plenty of do-overs. When we stay curious, set loving limits, and, most importantly, share these



experiences as a family, digital tools become bridges, not barriers. Our children, together with us, grow a little wiser each day.

The world is racing forward and digital skills are a part of growing up now, like learning to read and tying shoelaces. What matters more than any app or digital gadget is company and honesty. Our children do not need perfect parents or strict wardens, they need us —warm, curious, tired, loving, and willing to learn alongside them. On hard days, we remind ourselves that nothing replaces a parent' s presence. No screen sings a child to sleep,

wipes away their tears, or listens to the questions that tumble out right before bed.

Here is to all of us, muddling through, loving deeply, making mistakes and trying again. Maybe we will never strike the perfect balance between magic and temptation, but when we walk this path with empathy, side by side and heart to heart, we will be just fine.

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