



Use the "Bridge" Method for Transitions

The hardest moment for most parents is the transition *off* the screen. This is often where the meltdowns happen because the child is being jerked from a high-stimulation world back to a slower-paced reality.

They aren't trying to be difficult; their brain is struggling to shift gears.

- **The "Why":** A sudden "Time's up!" feels jarring and disrespectful to a child deeply engrossed in a game or show. It triggers their threat response.
- **The Strategy:** Connect before you correct (or in this case, transition). Enter their world for a moment before asking them to leave it.
- **Action Steps:**
 1. **Enter the room quietly:** Don't shout from the kitchen. Walk up to them.
 2. **Observe and Comment:** Watch what they are doing for 30 seconds. Say, *"Wow, you built that house really high,"* or *"Is that the character you were telling me about?"*
 3. **The Physical Touch:** Put a gentle hand on their shoulder.
 4. **The Transition:** Once they look at you or acknowledge you, *then* set the boundary. *"It's time to turn it off now. I know it's hard to stop when you're having fun, but dinner is ready."*
- **Why it works:** By joining them in their interest for just a minute, you satisfy their need to be seen. You bridge the gap between the digital world and you, making the walk away from the screen feel like a walk *toward* a loving parent, not an ejection into a void.

Breaking the screen time cycle doesn't happen overnight. It's messy. But if you lead with empathy, stay calm when the feelings get big, and prioritize your bond over the battle, you'll find your way through. You've got this.

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