



## Connected Kids: Break Screen Habits and Build Strong Families Our Family Screen Agreement

*"Despite the warnings and countdowns, I'm still having to pull screens away from my kids."*

Sound familiar?

**One mom told us:** *"I give 5-minute warnings, 1-minute warnings, countdown from 10... and I'm STILL prying devices from their hands."*



Parents often ask us for “Contracts” to guide their kids’ screen time behavior. Some things to keep in mind.

**Why countdowns can backfire:** They spike adrenaline. Your kid's brain is immersed in a digital world, and that countdown feels like a threat. By zero, they're in fight-or-flight.

**Try this instead:** Sit next to them for 30 seconds before transition time. Ask what they're building or watching. Join their world for a moment. It makes the bridge back to your world way easier.



You may want to introduce the idea of an agreement in a family conversation. Let your kids know you want to reduce conflict about screens and help bring more calm to your family. Ask your kids about their concerns about screens. Review the proposed agreement on the following page. See if anyone has suggestions that would make it work better for your family. Consider reviewing the agreement once a month for the first few months to see how it's going and make changes as needed.

**Family Screen Agreements aren't silver bullets, but this one might help reduce the conflict.**

See next page.





## **Our Family Screen Agreement**

**Our Goal:** *We love technology! It helps us learn and play. We also love our bodies, our sleep, and each other. We use screens in a way that keeps our brains feeling good and our family feeling close.*

### **1. The "Before" Check-In**

*Before we turn on a screen, we make sure our "human needs" are met:*

- *Is my body moving today?*
- *Have I connected with my family?*
- *Are my responsibilities (school/chores) handled?*

### **2. How We Say Goodbye to the Screen**

*Leaving a screen is the hardest part. To help our brains transition, we agree to:*

- **The "Pause & Look":** *When a parent gives a warning, I will pause for one second, look at them, and say "Okay" so they know I heard them.*
- **The Landing Strip:** *We don't just "shut it off." We take 30 seconds to talk about what just happened in the game or show, so the "real world" feels welcoming again.*

### **3. When it Gets Tough**

*If we have a "big feeling" moment when the screen goes away, we will:*

- *Take a break from screens the next day to let our brains reset.*
- *Reconnect and have a hug once we are calm.*

### **As your parent, I will be your Calm Center**

*I will give you a "heads up" so your brain can get ready to stop. If you are having a hard time letting go, I will be your "calm center." I will help you put the device away safely without getting angry, because I know transitions are hard.*

***I agree to make this work (signatures with date). Family members sign below:***

