

Hi Parents,

Your child has just attended a cyber wellness programme, CRuSH Explorer, by TOUCH Cyber Wellness and supported by the ICSC (Inter-ministry Cyber Wellness Steering Committee).

At TOUCH, we recognise that children are exposed to digital media and technology at a younger age. With early exposure to digital gadgets, cyber wellness programmes should start early too. Cyber wellness education has to be extended to pre-schools to equip and prepare these young, developing minds for the digital world.

Early cyber wellness values education will provide the foundation for good cyber habits and nurture positive attitudes in the digital age.

We hope that through CRuSH Explorers, young children will learn good online habits and positive cyber wellness values from a series of story-telling sessions and activities, specially designed to engage young children through fun and games.

Programme Brief

During the programme, the children were told a story about a family of four – Papa, Mama, Bobby (their six year old son) and Annie (their 4 year old daughter).

In the story, Annie had been looking forward to family time which was a day out with the family for picnic. However, she dreamt that everyone in the family was more engrossed using their technology gadgets than preparing for the picnic. She woke up to find her family using their gadgets and thought that they had really forgotten about the family outing and were ignoring her.

It turned out that they were preparing for a screen-free family outing and were finishing their work or leisure related uses on the gadgets so that they will not have to use them during family time.

After the story-telling session, the children are reminded to ask for permission before using gadgets and that there are times to set aside use of gadgets on more important matters such as family time.

During activity time, they were given a list of items related to the dining table, bed and family outing. Some commonly used gadgets were also included in the list. The children had to group the items to the correct groups and gadgets should be left out. This is to show that none of the gadgets is essential in any of the groups and should not be used unless parental permission is given.

To end off, we gave them a ‘Family Agreement’ template for the use of technology in the family. We believe that the families should start early in introducing some boundaries for gadget use. The template agreement will help parents like you kick start a cyber well culture in the family. Do take some time to complete it with your child. We have also included some tips and FAQs on family screen-free time.

Some Tips on Managing your Child's Time on Mobile Gadgets

1. Children learn by observing their parents. It is important to be a good role model to help your child cultivate good habits on mobile gadgets usage by practising them yourselves.
3. Plan screen-free family activities to encourage and engage the child in other activities such as family outings, drawing, playing board games, going outdoors to the playground, etc.
4. We have given a simple template copy to help you introduce a 'Family Agreement on mobile gadget use'. The first statement is to reiterate what is taught in class today about putting away gadgets during screen-free time (a period of time when the family puts away the mobile gadgets and not use them) such as during meal time and family time.

Here are some examples other statements you could include in the agreement for your preschooler:

- i) I will use mobile gadgets only when Papa/ Mama gives me permission to.
- ii) I will keep to the time that Papa/ Mama allows me to use the mobile gadget.
- iii) Our family will set aside time to plan and enjoy screen-free family time together.

You can review and build upon it as your child grows older. When they are mature enough, you could also involve them in the discussion to draw up new agreements. This could give them more ownership to adhere to the agreement.

Where can I find more help?

We have a free mobile app for parents called, **notAnoobie**. You could download it on iTunes or GooglePlay to read articles and find tips on the go.

There are also some tips and resources for alternative activities you could download at <http://touchcyberwellness.org/resources/>.

You could also email the questions you may have to cyberwellness@touch.org.sg.