

Hi Parents,

CRuSH Explorer, is a cyber wellness programme designed for pre-school children 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.

Besides the classroom programme, parents can help their children cultivate good habits by managing their use of gadgets and being a role model for them.

We have some tips and FAQs on managing young children's use of mobile gadgets on the following page.

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

1. Encourage and engage the child in other activities such as playing outdoors, exercising, reading , drawing, colouring, etc.
2. Fix and adhere to a fixed amount of play time on e-gadgets (e.g. X minutes a day or Y minutes a week and only on weekends)
3. Remind your child of the story they heard about Bobby and his family to remind them not to spend too much time on mobile gadgets
4. If your child is mature enough to understand rules, set a list of 'Family rules for use mobile gadgets' as a family together with your children, and be a role model for them by adhering to the rules as well.
5. Remind your child of the story they heard and lessons they learnt in school to ask for permission before using their gadgets and to tell you if what they see make them feel scared or uncomfortable.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. We have given a simple template (downloadable from our website) to help you introduce a 'Family Agreement on mobile gadget use'. You can review and build upon it as your child grows older. When they are mature enough, involve them in the discussion on items to be included as well. This could give them more ownership to adhere to the agreement as well.

FAQs

1. What can I do if my child insists on using the electronic device?

- Remind child of rules you and your child agreed on.
- Bring other alternatives that keep your child engaged or entertained, such as other toys, some crayons and paper, cards or puzzle books, etc.
- Be firm and explain why they should not be using the gadget.
- Discipline if need. If you give in because they cry or whine, they may learn that crying, whining or demanding for an item will get them what they want.

2. It is alright if I allow my child to play or watch with 'educational' games and videos?

We would recommend that the child should not use them excessively. Introduce learning through other means such as placards, toys and story-telling, etc.

Researchers have proven that excessive usage of electronic devices does contribute to sleep loss. The "glow" from electronic devices would send signals to the brain, resulting in a delay of release of sleep inducing hormones, which could affect the child's quality and quantity of rest.

We also recommend that you go through the games and watch the videos together with them if you must use the gadgets. See it as a parent-child bonding time where you might come across teachable moments.

Try not to use the mobile gadgets as 'babysitting' tools.

3. Should I let my child watch videos on the gadgets?

- If you allow them to watch videos, make sure to be with them to know and screen what they are watching. Turn on 'child-safe' mode or install filtering software to prevent inappropriate content from being loaded as much as possible.
- Try other alternatives that keep your child engaged or entertained, such as other toys, some crayons and paper, cards or puzzle books, etc.
- Be sure to limit their screen time and remind them not to spend too much time on gadgets.

4. 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.