My kids are always on devices and don’t follow my rules for screen time.

My child is on a device, again! Sometimes it feels like they are addicted! How do I make sure they don’t spend too much time on screens? And how do I make sure they are choosing positive content?

You can decide how to think about this moment and how to respond. You can choose to see this challenge as a chance for your child to learn and grow.

When children build healthy screen habits and stay within your rules, they can learn the important life skill of Focus & Self-Control.

Notice which screen time activities are the biggest issues. Is it hard to interrupt a favorite or fast-paced game? Are they watching ads or violent content? Are they using screen time to deal with boredom? Are they connecting with friends, following an interest, or doing schoolwork?

Take your child’s view and then give your child choices within those limits. You can say, “We are getting ready for dinner. You can have 10 minutes on the device now and then help out in the kitchen. Or you can help out now and have 20 minutes after dinner.”

Provide choices and then give your child choices within those limits. You can say, “We are getting ready for dinner. You can have 10 minutes on the device now and then help out in the kitchen. Or you can help out now and have 20 minutes after dinner.”

Problem-solve together by inviting your child to make plans for screen time and how to select good content. Offer your ideas, too. You can suggest using a timer or chart, or setting aside a special time for devices. Will they be allowed a certain number of minutes each day or hours each week? Are some times, like dinnertime, screen-free? Can you work together on a list of approved content? Invite your child to make a plan of what to do when screen time is over. Help them figure out how to be a creator, and not just a consumer of content. For example, if they enjoy cartoons or superheroes, can they create their own new character? Choose one of their ideas to try first. Make a list together of screen-free activities. Post the list for moments when they “can’t think of anything to do.”

An Opportunity Mindset means choosing to see a challenge as a chance to grow.

Focus and Self-Control

Technology will be an ongoing part of your child’s life. You can help your child build Self-Control by helping them learn to control (not be controlled by) screen time. Choosing games that require close attention or memory challenges can also help build Focus. Focus and Self-Control includes paying attention, remembering rules, thinking flexibly, and reaching for goals. Being constantly “plugged in” can affect schoolwork, relationships, and focus. Learn about signs of a problem and find resources at Common Sense Media.

For more information visit: www.mindinthemaking.org