

ISG Parent Workshop

Technology and Screen time for Children



Wednesday 14 January 2026



THE INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF GENOA
SINCE 1966



Why a Workshop on Technology & Screen Time?



Technology is part of our children's everyday lives: it shapes how they learn, play, communicate, and relax.

At the same time, research shows that how much, how early, and how often children use screens has a real impact on:

- **Learning and attention**
- **Emotional well-being and self-regulation**
- **Sleep and physical health**
- **Relationships and social development**

This workshop is about:

- **Understanding what current research tells us**
- **Using technology intentionally and age-appropriately**
- **Creating healthy habits at home**
- **Supporting children in developing emotional regulation without relying on screens**
- **Strengthening the partnership between home and school**

Recommendations:

- **Prioritize Relationships and Face-to-Face Interaction**

Protect daily time for conversations, shared meals, and play.

Adults should avoid phone use during these key relational moments.

- **Create Screen-Free Routines and Spaces**

Keep bedrooms, meals, family time, playdates, outings, and short car rides free from devices.

Turn off screens 30–60 minutes before bedtime.

- **Set Age-Appropriate Screen Limits**

Follow daily screen-time guidelines:

Guidelines:

Up to 24 months: Avoid screens except short video chats with an adult.

2–5 years: Less than 1 hour/day, of cartoon watching on TV, monitored and with parents.

6–10 years: Less than 90 minutes/day, age-appropriate, monitored content.

11-13 years: Less than 2 hours/day, age-appropriate, monitored content.

14–16 years: It would be better no more than 2 hours/day recreational screen time, excluding schoolwork.

All ages: At least one day a week with no screen time.

Social media: Not before age 13, limited and supervised.

EU calling for minimum age of 16 for social media, with ban on most harmful practices.

Recommendations:

- **Model Healthy Technology Use**

Children learn from adult behavior—follow the same rules, put devices away during meals, conversations, and family time.

- **Delay Personal Device Ownership**

Consider maturity and habits before giving devices like smartphones or gaming consoles. Start with limited or no-internet options when appropriate, and ensure children can follow rules.

- **Set Clear Rules and Teach Digital Responsibility**

Co-create visible technology rules at home, agree on consistent consequences, and teach online safety, privacy, media impact, and responsible screen use:

NO TVs or personal devices in child's bedroom

NO independent technology or social media use before 16

Recommendations:

- **Use Video Games and Apps Sparingly**

Avoid video games for very young children. For elementary-age children, limit games to weekends, choose non-violent and age-appropriate games, and avoid over-reliance on “educational” apps.

- **Encourage Reading and Hands-On Learning and Play**

Favor physical books over screens for reading. Prioritize real-world learning, outdoor play, and unstructured time to foster creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving.

- **Support Focused Homework and Offline Work**

Reduce distractions by limiting device access and notifications during homework. Encourage offline tasks whenever possible.

Recommendations:

- **Avoid Screens for Emotional Regulation**

Do not use screens to soothe boredom, tantrums, or emotional distress.

Support children in managing emotions through connection, guidance, and coping strategies instead.

Why to Avoid Screens for Emotional Regulation

Screens provide instant distraction or relief and, over time, the child may rely on the device instead of developing internal strategies for dealing with emotions.

Emotional regulation is a skill that needs to be taught

- Emotional regulation is a child's ability to notice, understand, and manage their own feelings.
- If a parent consistently uses a device to calm, the child may not learn to self-soothe or cope with frustration. Without practice, emotional regulation often develops more slowly.

Boundaries + Emotional Validation = Emotional Regulation

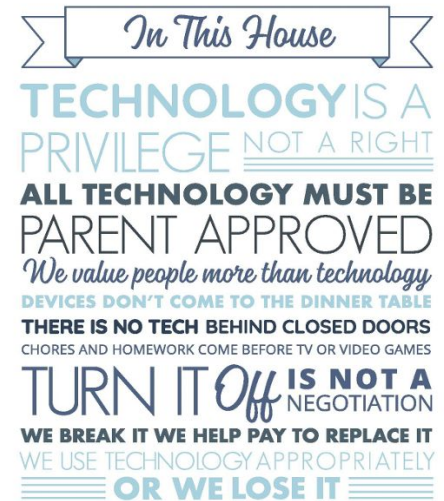
- **When you set boundaries** for children, they are probably **going to get angry**. That is OK, it is normal that children feel their feelings.
- **We should not punish children for their anger**, or any other emotion, otherwise children will **learn that to be loved, they need to repress their emotions**. Over time, this can lead to **emotional dysregulation** and increase the risk of mental health conditions, such as **depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms** in their future.
- When children feel strong emotions, such as anger, it is important to sit down with them, listen and **validate their feelings (Co-Regulation)**.
- Parents should not be permissive but **hold the boundaries** and **do not tolerate aggressive behaviour**.

This is how we teach Emotional Regulation.

Set and write technology use rules together with your children

1. Children have to ask for permission before turning on devices.
2. Less than 90 minutes a day and at least one day a week without technology. Video games are allowed just during the weekend.
3. Turn off devices during meals and at least 1 hour before bed.
4. Turn off TVs and other devices when not in use.
5. No technology use during play time with friends or family, before school, and during short car rides.

It is important that you model expected behaviour.

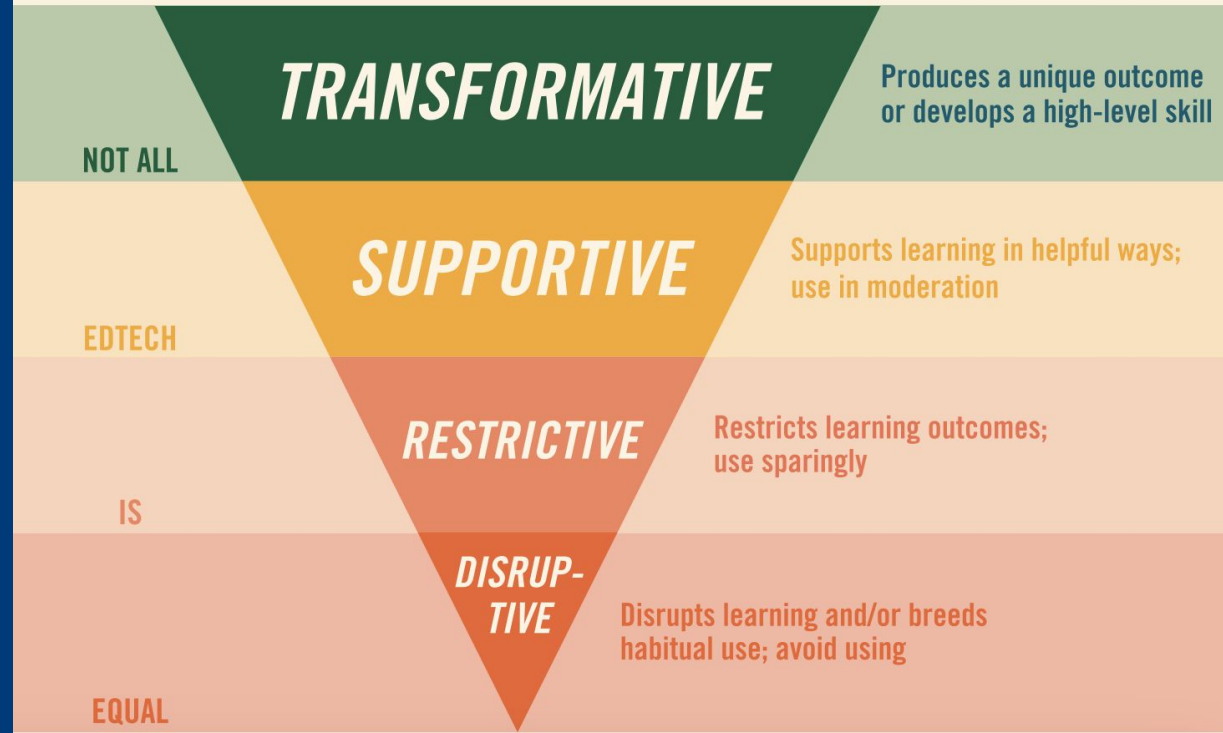


We're Partners In This

As a school, we are working to ensure that our technology use is transformative.

THE EDTECH TRIANGLE

This framework is a research-based synthesis of the EdTech practices, tools, and skills that optimize learning, support well-being, and protect against some of tech's negative outcomes. EdTech can be powerful in the classroom, and it should be used in line with current research.



Moving Forward and Learning More: Resources for Families



Websites:

- [Smartphone Free Childhood](#)
- [Screen Strong](#)
- [Ok to Delay](#)
- [Protect Young Eyes](#)
- [Better Screen Time](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)

Podcast:

- [Podcast interview with the author of The Anxious Generation](#)

Books:

- [The Anxious Generation book](#)
- [The Amazing Generation book for kids](#)

Questions?



Childhood is precious and fleeting. All children should have the opportunity to learn, develop and grow free from addictive technology and age-inappropriate social media.

The Choices You Make Today Shape Your Child's Tomorrow

Technology has immense benefits, and children should be able to enjoy the opportunities it creates – **when they're ready and when it's safe to do so.**

Focus on connection, presence, and guidance by prioritizing play, meaningful conversation, and outdoor time.

Your intentional choices today shape how your children thrive tomorrow.