



# PARENTS' NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

**DON'T PANIC!**

**YOU'RE AMAZING AND YOUR CHILD NEEDS YOU.**

It's no surprise that many parents feel overwhelmed by the constant stream of fear-inducing media headlines about children and digital technology. From warnings about social media's impact on mental health to online risks, it's easy to feel anxious. The digital world is evolving rapidly, bringing both concerns and opportunities. But here's the good news, you don't need to be a tech expert to support your child. A proactive, engaged approach builds trust, fosters communication, and empowers both you and your child.

Digital technology is neither inherently good nor bad, it's a tool. Its impact depends on how it is used and the guidance surrounding its use. While risks exist, so do opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection. The goal of digital parenting isn't eliminating risks, that's impossible, but equipping your child with the skills and knowledge to navigate them wisely. When parents approach digital parenting with confidence rather than fear, they can create structure and boundaries where children can thrive online and offline.

A strong parent-child relationship is the foundation of digital wellbeing. Open, non-judgmental conversations help children feel comfortable discussing challenges. Instead of focusing solely on rules and restrictions, take an interest in their digital world. Ask about the games they love, the content

they watch, and the friends they interact with. Engaging in their digital lives builds trust, making it more likely they'll turn to you when they need guidance.

Setting clear and consistent boundaries is another key element of digital parenting. Children thrive when they understand expectations, and digital technology should be no exception. Age-appropriate rules around screen time, device use, and online interactions provide structure without stifling independence. This is outlined further on page 4 where we explore our DRIVER digital parenting model.

Digital parenting isn't about perfection; it's a journey. No parent has all the answers, and uncertainty is part of the process. The key is to stay informed, involved, and adaptable. Digital technology will continue to evolve, but your role as a guide and mentor remains constant.

Ultimately, children need guidance, not fear. They need parents who believe in their ability to make good choices when given the right tools and support. By fostering curiosity, encouraging critical thinking, and maintaining open dialogue, you can help your child build a healthy relationship with technology, one that allows them to explore its benefits while staying alert to its risks.

| EDITION OVERVIEW                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Balancing Screen Time with Physical Activity: Helping Your Child Stay Active</u></a> |
| <a href="#"><u>Free Live Mini-Webinar / Q&amp;A Tweens, Digital Devices &amp; Sleep</u></a>         |
| <a href="#"><u>Help I'm a Digital Parent!</u></a>                                                   |
| <a href="#"><u>Top Tips Tricky Issues and Fantastic Resources</u></a>                               |
| <a href="#"><u>"Tweens" by Michelle Mitchell</u></a>                                                |
| <a href="#"><u>Be the DRIVER of your Child's Digital Journey</u></a>                                |

So, take a deep breath. You are not alone in this journey, and you are more capable than you think. Your involvement, interest, and guidance are the most powerful tools your child has. With patience, connection, and courage, you can raise a digitally capable child who thrives both online and off.

*Mark Yeowell*

## BALANCING SCREEN TIME WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: HELPING YOUR TWEEN STAY ACTIVE

In today's digital world, screens are an integral part of our children's lives - used for entertainment, learning, and socialising. However, as tweens spend more time gaming, watching videos, and engaging in digital activities, they are often moving less. Striking a balance between screen use and physical activity is essential for their overall wellbeing.

Physical activity plays a crucial role in a tween's health and development. Experts recommend at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity daily to support cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and bone development. Beyond physical benefits, movement also reduces stress, improves mood, enhances concentration, and fosters better sleep patterns. Importantly, it provides real-world opportunities to build social skills, resilience, and confidence.



Excessive sedentary screen use can negatively impact children in several ways. Prolonged inactivity can lead to reduced fitness levels, poor posture, disrupted sleep, and increased emotional dysregulation. Additionally, when digital interactions replace face-to-face play, tweens may miss out on essential experiences that help them develop cooperation, leadership, and conflict resolution skills.

Instead of focusing solely on limiting screen time, parents can take proactive steps to encourage more physical activity:

- **Make movement part of daily routines** – Walk or cycle to school, have outdoor play after dinner, or schedule active family outings like bush walks or beach trips.
- **Support their interests** – Whether it's dancing, skateboarding, martial arts, or team sports, helping tweens find enjoyable physical activities makes them more likely to stay active.
- **Set screen-free zones and times** – Encourage breaks from screens, especially before school, during meals, and in the hour before bedtime.

- **Provide opportunities for outdoor play** – Simple access to a basketball, bike, trampoline, or skipping rope can make outdoor activities more appealing and easier to choose.
- **Lead by example** – Show your children that you value movement by being active yourself.

Technology is here to stay, and there's no need to eliminate screen time altogether. The goal is to create a balanced lifestyle where digital engagement coexists with active play. By setting positive routines and providing enjoyable physical opportunities, parents can help tweens develop healthy habits that support both their digital and physical worlds.



### FREE LIVE MINI-WEBINAR / Q&A TWEENS, DIGITAL DEVICES AND SLEEP

Concerned about the impact of digital devices on your child's sleep? You're not alone - this is an issue impacting lots of families and getting it right can make an amazing difference to so many aspects of your child's life.

Join Mark for a **FREE** mini-webinar (15 mins +Q&A) on this important topic and the opportunity to get your questions answered anonymously.

**30 April 2025  
7pm**

[REGISTER NOW](#)



**30 APRIL 2025 7PM**

# HELP I'M A DIGITAL PARENT!

## FANTASTIC RESOURCES

### Internet Matters

- UK-based resource with tools tailored to different age groups and digital challenges.
- Expert guides on parental controls and online safety.
- Practical advice to help families navigate the online environment.

[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

### Family Online Safety Institute

- Provides global insights into digital safety trends and best practices.
- Offers tools to help families navigate online risks and opportunities responsibly.
- Empowers parents with strategies to support children's smart and safe online choices.

[www.fosi.org](http://www.fosi.org)



### Co-Play, Co-Watch, Co-Engage

One of the best ways to understand your tween's digital world is to step into it with them- play their favourite game, watch their favourite YouTuber, or learn how their go-to social media app works.

Shared experiences open up natural conversations about digital challenges, from handling online drama to recognizing misleading content. Instead of lecturing about screen time, join in and model healthy tech habits they can adopt. Plus, playing or watching together builds connection - something tweens still crave, even if they won't always admit it!



## TRICKY ISSUES

### Setting Screen Time Limits Without a Daily Battle

Tweens push back on time limits, especially when 'just five more minutes' turns into an hour. Avoid power struggles by setting clear, consistent boundaries in advance and using tools like device timers or Apple Screen Time.

Encourage them to take ownership of their time by balancing online and offline activities and setting their own limits too

## THE DIGITAL TWEENS BLOG

The Digital Tweens Blog is FREE and is published every **Thursday**.

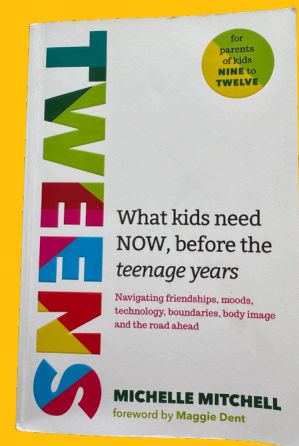
Each edition focuses on a different topic and is packed with information and practical ideas to support busy parents trying to help their child to thrive in the digital world. You can find the blog on our website

[www.digitaltweens.com.au](http://www.digitaltweens.com.au)  
OR

Sign up by clicking the link below and we'll send the blog straight to your email - too easy!



## WORTH A READ



Tweens is an insightful, research-backed guide to understanding and supporting children aged 9–12.

With warmth and clarity, Mitchell unpacks the unique challenges of this developmental stage, bridging childhood and adolescence, and offers practical strategies to nurture tweens' emotional, social, and digital wellbeing.

The book stands out for its accessible, real-world advice, grounded in Michelle's extensive experience working with young people and families. She addresses key issues such as friendships, resilience, independence, and the growing influence of technology, helping parents navigate these crucial years with confidence. What makes Tweens particularly valuable is its blend of relatable anecdotes, expert insights, and actionable steps.

Whether you're a parent, teacher, or anyone working with young people, Tweens is an essential read that sheds light on this often-overlooked stage of development.

Highly recommended!



*Buying from Amazon via this link will result in Digital Tweens earning a commission.*

# BE THE DRIVER OF YOUR CHILD'S DIGITAL JOURNEY

As parents, we play a crucial role in guiding our children through their digital experiences. Whether it's their first tablet, a gaming console, or a smartphone, the way we introduce and manage technology shapes their habits, values, and overall wellbeing. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the fast-changing digital world, but the key is to be the DRIVER – not a passenger – in your child's digital journey.

At Digital Tweens, we use the DRIVER framework to help parents take an active role in digital parenting. Each letter represents an essential principle:

**Delay:** There's no rush! Wait until you're confident your child is ready for a device. Consider if they truly need it and whether you can actively support and guide them. Giving children time before introducing new tech can help them build self-regulation and healthy offline habits first.

**Restrict:** Boundaries are essential. Set clear expectations around screen time, app usage, and online interactions. As your child shows responsibility, these boundaries can gradually evolve. Just like training wheels on a bike, restrictions help children build safe digital habits before gaining full independence.

**Involved:** Show curiosity about your child's digital

world. Instead of simply monitoring them, engage in what they enjoy -whether it's playing a game together, watching a favourite YouTuber, or discussing what they're learning online. Being involved fosters trust and opens the door for meaningful conversations.

**Visibility:** Keep devices in shared spaces rather than behind closed doors. A transparent approach -where online activity is open and observable - makes it easier to support, guide, and step in when necessary.

**Educate:** Digital skills are life skills. Teach your child about digital literacy, online safety, and how to manage screen time in a way that protects their wellbeing. Conversations about digital citizenship and responsible online behaviour should start early and evolve as they grow.

**Role Model:** Your behaviour matters more than your words. Children learn from watching you. If they see you prioritising screen-free family time, setting healthy boundaries, and engaging with technology mindfully, they're more likely to do the same.

By using the DRIVER approach, you're actively shaping your child's digital future, helping them navigate the online world with confidence, responsibility, and balance.

**D**ELAY - WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE CONFIDENT YOUR CHILD IS READY FOR A DEVICE, THEY ACTUALLY NEED IT, AND YOU CAN ACTIVELY SUPPORT AND GUIDE THEM.

**R**ESTRICT - SET AND MAINTAIN CLEAR BOUNDARIES. AS YOUR CHILD CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATES RESPONSIBILITY AND CAPABILITY, GRADUALLY RELAX THEM.

**I**NVOLVED - STAY ENGAGED AND SHOW GENUINE CURIOSITY ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DIGITAL WORLD. ASK QUESTIONS AND USE TECHNOLOGY TOGETHER TO REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE DOING ONLINE.

**V**ISIBILITY - KEEP DEVICES IN SHARED SPACES (NOT BEDROOMS) AND ENSURE ONLINE ACTIVITY IS OPEN AND TRANSPARENT, ALLOWING YOU TO MONITOR, GUIDE, AND SUPPORT THEM.

**E**DUcate - EXPLICITLY TEACH YOUR CHILD DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP SKILLS, ALONG WITH STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT ON THEIR WELLBEING.

**R**OLE MODEL - DEMONSTRATE THE DIGITAL BEHAVIOURS YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO ADOPT. THEY'RE WATCHING AND LEARNING MORE FROM WHAT YOU DO THAN WHAT YOU SAY!



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