

HECTOR'S WORLD™

Parent Conversation Guide

Episode 2: A Balancing Act



netsafe

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Theme

Balance and wellbeing

Purpose

Show the importance of balancing time online to maintain wellbeing (hauora).

Episode overview

Mr Ling teaches the class why it's important to 'watch what you watch' online and Felix learns a valuable lesson about balancing his online time when he's too tired to have fun with his friends after staying up late to play online games.

Background Information

With so many ways to connect and be entertained, many parents worry about how much time their children spend online.

How much time is too much screentime?

There's no simple answer to this question because not all screen time is created equal. Spending two hours on the internet watching cartoons isn't the same as spending two hours on the internet doing homework or practicing maths puzzles for example. Parents need to think about the age and stage of the child, and understand how they use the internet, to be able to decide how much time they'd like their tamariki to be spending online.

Here are five tips for managing your child's screen time:

- **Engage and understand:** Talk to your children about their online activities to understand the quality of their screen time.
- **Encourage self-management:** Encourage older tamariki to reflect on and manage their own screen time, including recognising the signs that it might be time to take a break.
- **Set boundaries:** Establish clear rules for internet use and screen time – and lead by example.
- **Use tech solutions:** For example, use screen time settings on devices to help manage access and time spent online, or routinely change Wi-Fi passwords and provide access once offline activities are completed.
- **Look out for warning signs:** Watch for signs that online time is impacting sleep, schoolwork, mood or behaviour and maintain open and attentive conversations about online activities and screen time.

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Conversation starters

- What do you think the internet is? How long do you think it's been around for?
- What do you like doing when you are on the internet? Who do you do those things with?
- What apps/ games/ platforms do you like to use? Why?
- How do you think you can stay safe? What are some of the things you don't like about being online?
- What makes an online friend different to an offline friend?
- Do you think that everything on the internet is okay for kids to see, or is some of it only meant for adults?
- Have you seen anything online that made you feel uncomfortable? What did you do?
- How do you know that what you are watching or playing is good for children to watch?

Further reading

Eighty percent of children in New Zealand aged 8-17 have played games online. They are drawn to their challenge and entertainment. Games can have many benefits: entertainment, social opportunities, coordination development, problem-solving and multi-tasking skills. But, most of all, gaming is popular because it's fun.

As demonstrated in this episode of Hector's World, some tamariki may find it difficult to turn off and walk away from their online games. The [Netsafe Online Gaming Whānau Toolkit](#) has been developed to support parents when their tamariki are finding it difficult to put down the controller.

Read through Netsafe's advice for [managing screen time](#) and [tips for cutting down on screen time](#).