

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Family discussion questions for the ride home and beyond!

- **How much time** do you think kids in the US spend looking at a screen on average? (Kids spend an average of 6.5 hours a day on screens, not including classroom or homework screen time, according to a 2015 Common Sense Media report.)
 - How much time do adults spend on their phones? How about teens?
 - How much time do you think you spend every week on screen-related activities? (Turn this into a nonjudgmental **tech use inventory** family game and guess what each person wrote.)

- How often do you **multitask**? Do you think it affects you in any way?

(A study by Common Sense Media reports that nearly ¾ of teens do not think watching television, texting or using social media while doing homework has an impact on them. Meanwhile research has shown that when people “task shift”— tackle multiple tasks simultaneously— they are less effective than when they do one task at a time. The brain is not capable of focusing on two mental activities at once, and thus the idea that multitasking boosts performance is a myth.)

- What activities do you like that don’t involve screens? (Think of **offline activities** that are valuable and fun like playing outside, sports, music, reading, hobbies, community service, family time and even chores.)

- Why do so many **video games** involve violence? (First person shooter games were first developed by the military to decrease sensitivity to shooting people. What are some popular games that don’t involve violence?)

- Have you seen **social media** affect our behavior? (Have you experienced people using screens to avoid face to face interactions or make comments they would not make in person?)

- Research has shown that extended exposure to screen images and games can over-stimulate our **brain’s reward system** creating changes in the dopamine sensitivity that impacts our ability to get motivated, stay focused, and feel happy. What things can we do to make sure that screen time is not the primary source of enjoyment and pleasure in our life?

- What are **commitments** we can make as a family? Is it reasonable to ask the we have no devices at the dinner table? Can we keep them in our pockets as we drive to and from school? Can we agree to turn them off at a certain time? What are the differences in screen rules for adults and kids in our family?