



Screen Time

Jonny Timms, Deputy Head (Pastoral)

I strongly believe that one of the most powerful ways of starting a discussion with boys about any topic is starting with something positive. Boys are used to hearing the negatives about tech time, that they start to tune out if the discussion is not balanced. If we really want to have an effective dialogue with our boys, we need to talk about the positives too.

I recently read an interesting article in ["American Psychologist"](#) about why video games may have some benefits. Improved reflexes and faster processing of their environment after playing shooter games were some of the study's findings. The authors write: "Compared to control participants, those in the shooter video game condition show faster and more accurate attention allocation, higher spatial resolution in visual processing, and enhanced mental rotation abilities." It's important to note that the authors add that further research is needed. Still, developmental gains from playing games is a great topic to discuss with boys. Ask them if they feel any cognitive benefits after they've played a game, and share this excerpt with them: "Gaming may be among the most efficient and effective means by which children and youth generate positive feelings. Several studies have shown a causal relation between playing preferred video games and improved mood or increases in positive emotion." After, you could talk with them about what kinds of feelings they experience right after they play a fun game. You could even ask if they ever have sad or hard feelings during the day and, if so, do they then have an urge to play the game that makes them feel better.

It is only through a collaborative effort between parents and teachers that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

Screen Dependency by Dr Aric Sigman

The recent talk by [Dr Aric Sigman](#), "Parenting the demanding generation" was very informative that I thought you may be interested in a new peer-reviewed medical paper written by him called "Screen Dependency Disorders: a new challenge for child neurology" published in the new issue of the Journal of the International Child Neurology Association. [You can read the paper here.](#)