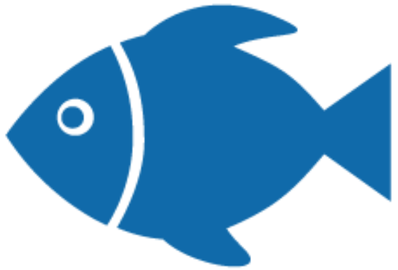
THE SCREENTIME CONSULTANT



BECOMING TECH-INTENTIONAL™

Creating a Tech-Intentional™ Home

UNITED PARENTS hold the PHONE FOR UNPLUGGING + RECONNECTING YOUTH

EQUITY ENGAGEMENT EMPOWERMENT 102

PRESENTED BY

Emily Cherkin, M.Ed.
The Screentime Consultant

IN COLLABORATION WITH

District 102
Hold the Phone

DATE

Wednesday, January 28, 2026
7:00 PM, Park Auditorium

These are my kids



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About me

- Mom
- Author
- Teacher
- Speaker
- Advocate
- Consultant
- Tech-Intentional™ Expert



Replace judgment with

Curiosity

Being **tech-intentional** means using screen-based technologies that enhance, nurture, and support yourself, your child, or family in a way that aligns with your values, and resisting, delaying, or limiting any type of screen use that interferes with healthy mental, physical, cognitive, and emotional development

Emily Cherkin, M.Ed.
The Screentime Consultant



Tech-Intentional™ TL;DR

- Less is more.
- Later is better.
- Relationships and skills before screens



Agenda

01 | The Big Picture

02 | Why This Is So Hard to Fix

03 | The Antidote

04 | 3 Habits of Tech-Intentional Parents

05 | A Few Final Thoughts

05 | Q & A

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01

The Big Picture

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A Week in the Life of an American School-Age Child



10 hours: Computer

13 hours: Video Games

31 hours: Television

14 hours: Other

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Source: Dr. Douglas Gentile, Iowa State

The tween years in the ‘90s

differentiation from parents

new school schedules

awkward

FOMO

“Everyone else has a _____”

forming identity

bullying

“You’re the worst parent!”

cliques

puberty

baggy denim

challenging friend groups

more time with peers

adolescence

Dating/ crushes

The tween years in 2026

differentiation from parents

new school schedules

awkward

FOMO

“Everyone else has a _____”

forming identity

bullying

“You’re the worst parent!”

cliques

puberty

baggy denim

challenging friend groups

more time with peers

adolescence

Dating/ crushes

One big difference...

Smartphones, smartwatches, social media

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Very brief timeline



2012

- “Selfie” enters our vocabulary
- Teen mental health starts to decline



2016

- 77% of U.S. households have a smartphone.
- Enter: “machine learning” algorithms



2020

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Remote learning for 93% of K-12 students



2021

- Facebook whistleblower (profits > people)
- Tweens: 5+ hours/day, teens: 8+ hours/day online



2023

- 1 in 5 teens on YouTube/ TikTok “almost constantly”
- U.S. Surgeon General: “13 is too young for social media”

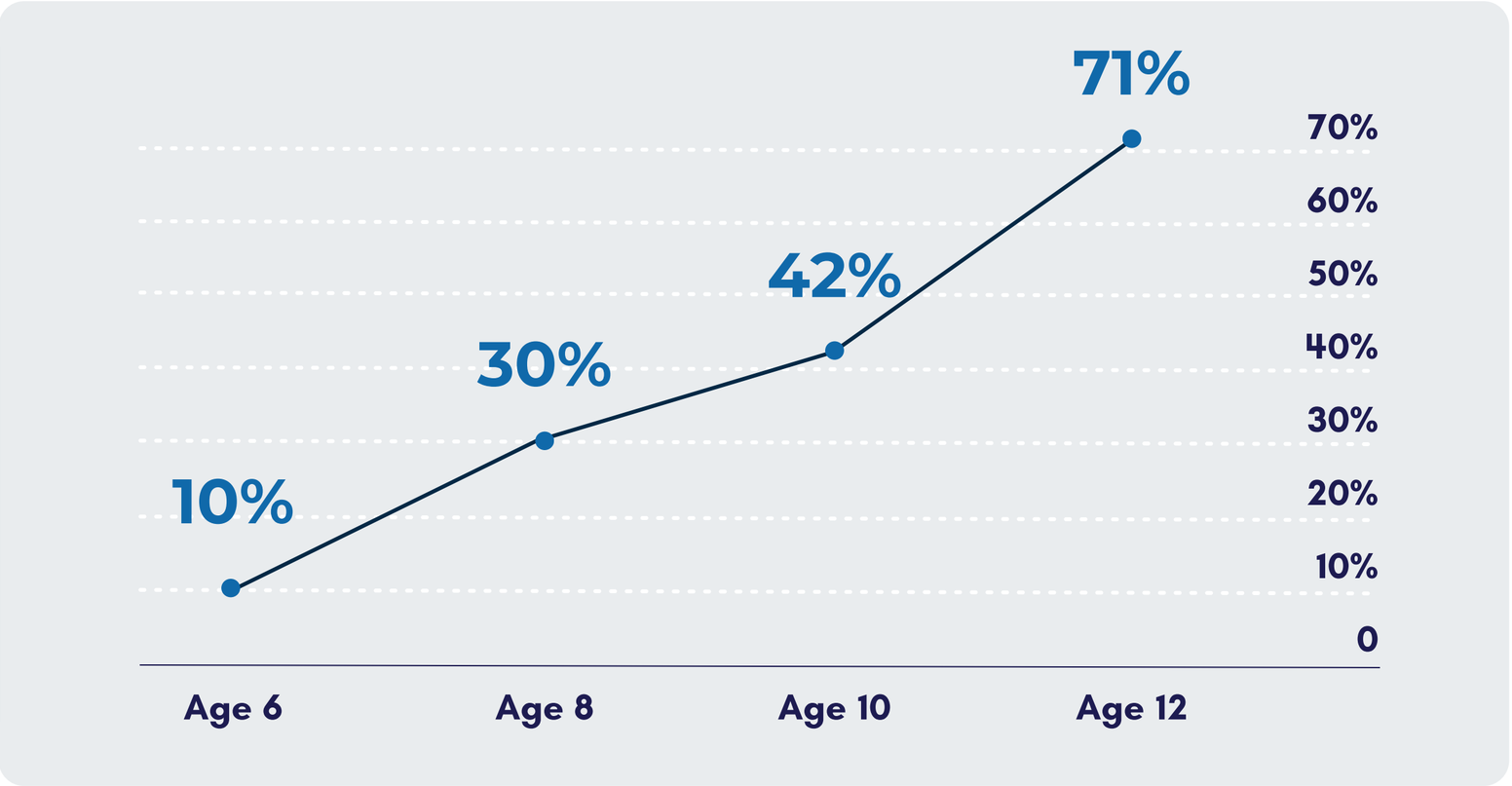
Children have smart devices

30%

of 8-year-olds have a smartphone

71% of 12-year-olds have one

For teens, it's over **90%**



Source: Common Sense Media, 2025

“Time on device” is immense



7.5 hours

average daily screen use for 8- to 18-year-olds*

Tweens average 5.3 hours per day;
Teens average 8.4 hours per day

*For personal use of personal devices. This does **not** include time spent on screens for/at school.

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Source: Center for Disease Control, 2024

Children are on social media

40%
of 8-12 year olds
are on social media

70%
of kids visit
YouTube daily

95%
of teenagers are
on social media

The share of teens who say they are online “almost constantly” today (46%) has **doubled** since 2014-15 (24%).

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Source: Center for Disease Control, 2024; Common Sense Media, 2023; U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory, 2023

Children are gaming

- Roblox has over 39 million daily active users **under the age of 13**

- **Not all children** are impacted the same by gaming

- School computers are frequently used for gaming **at school**



Source: Roblox, Parent Community Survey (2024)

Children are experiencing harm...

- **50% of U.S. teens**
  have experienced online bullying

- **3 hours a day on social media**
  doubles the risk of poor mental health

- **Anxiety has increased 134%**
  and depression 106% in since 2010

- **Screen use before age 2**
  linked to accelerated anxiety by age 13.

In addition, kids are having noticeable issues with

- *focus and attention*
- *sleep and health*
- *social skills*
- *learning and academics*
- *mental health*
- *and more...*

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Source: Pew Research; U.S. Surgeon General (2023); Haidt (2024); The Lancet (2025)

...especially girls

- **Almost 2 in 3 girls**
  feel persistent “sadness or hopelessness”

- **1 in 3 teen girls**
  has contemplated suicide

- **1 in 3 girls 13-17 years old**
  say they feel “addicted” to platforms

> *I worry about the impact [this] has on my daughter in regard to how she looks, dresses, what she values about herself, and what she believes is important.*
>
> **Concerned Parent**

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Source: Parent survey (2024); U.S. Surgeon General (2023)

Children use personal screens at school

- **97%** of children use their phones during school hours.

- **More than 50%** of kids get 237 notifications per day — while some receive as many as 4,500. About 23% of these notifications occur during schools.

- Students without phones in class write down 62% more information and score **1.5 letter grades higher** on tests.



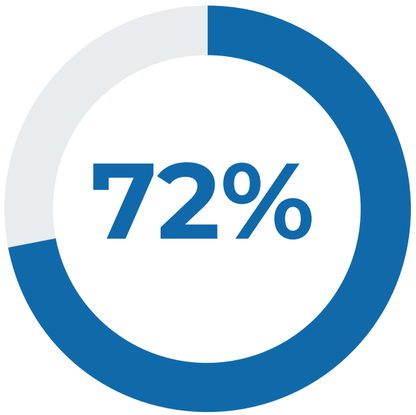
80% of voters

support a “bell-to-bell” smartphone ban in school

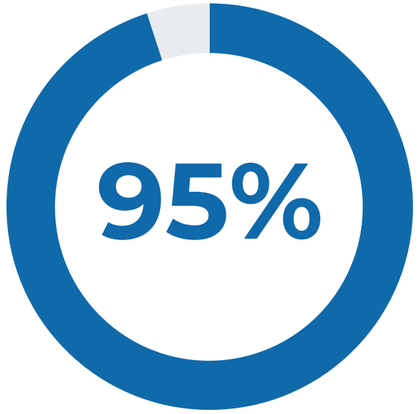
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Source: Center for Disease Control, 2024; Common Sense Media, 2023; Institute for Family Studies, 2025

Teachers see the impact



say student phones are a “frequent distraction” at school



say youth mental health is a serious concern in K-12

> *Students’ online social interactions outside of school impacts their face-to-face relationships at school.*
>
> **Teacher**

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Source: Social Psychology (2014), NEA (2024)

Teachers want parents to know...

It is hard for a teacher to compete with the amount of stimulus a screen provides. Prolonged time on screens at home causes more students to disengage from the material at school if the learning is not 'stimulating' enough. This prevents students from persevering through challenges.

02

Why This Is So Hard to Fix

HINT: BECAUSE IT'S NOT A FAIR FIGHT

Does this sound familiar?

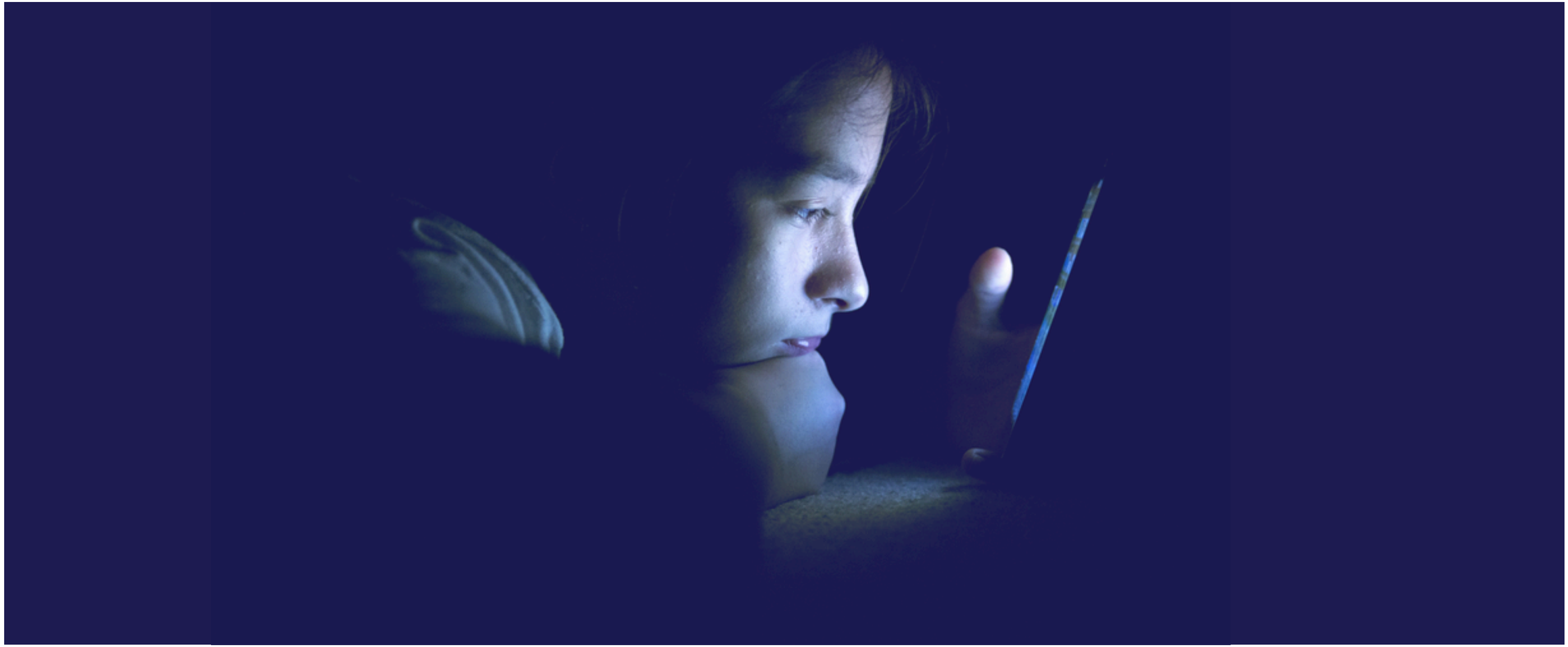
Our biggest stressor is getting our kids to turn off screens when asked.

I'm tired of the battles...I'm very nervous about the path ahead. It's unfair that this all rests on parents.

"Even with all we are doing, we will struggle with the addictive nature of screens, our child's belief that her peers get more access than she does, and it's like a part-time job for us to stay on top of it all. It's exhausting.

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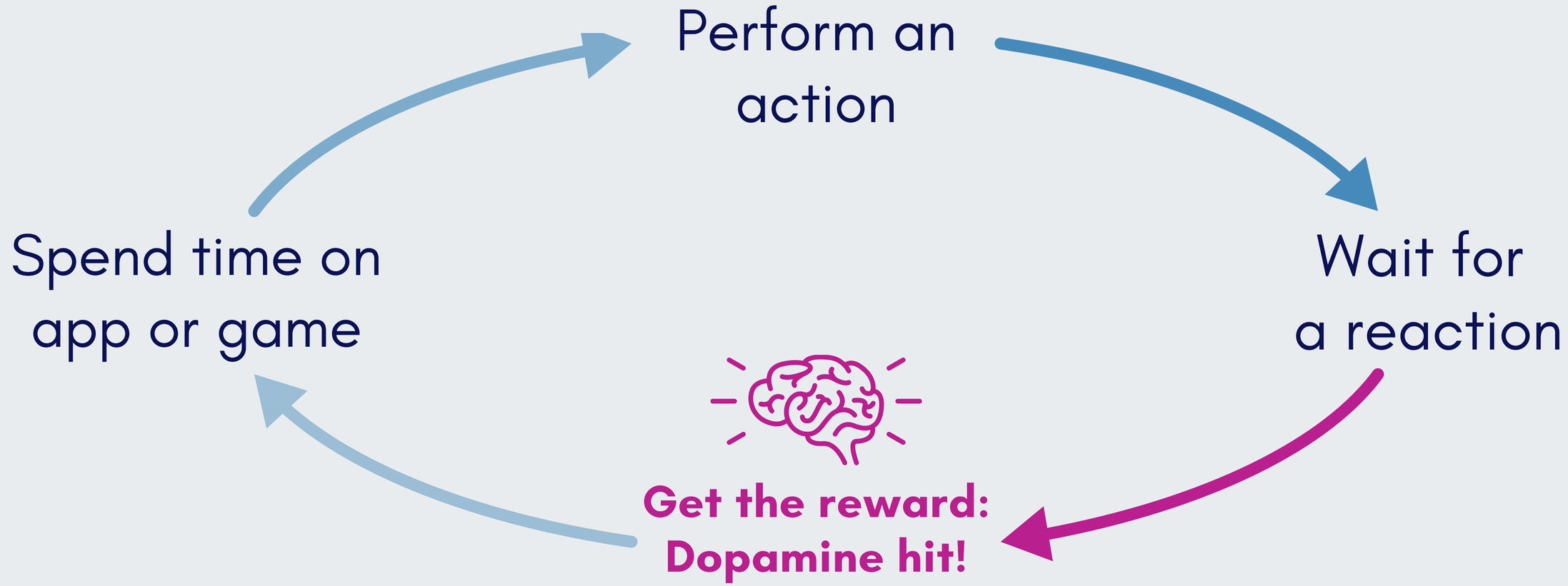
Persuasive Design



Executive Function



The Dopamine Feedback Loop





“

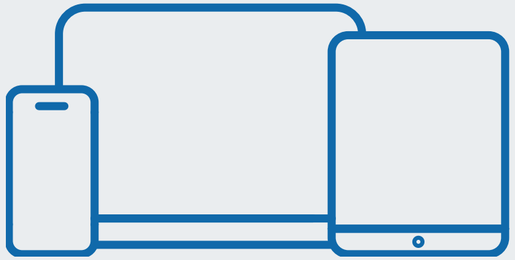
There are only two industries that refer to their customers as 'users': illegal drugs and software.

Edward Tufte
Computer Scientist, Yale University

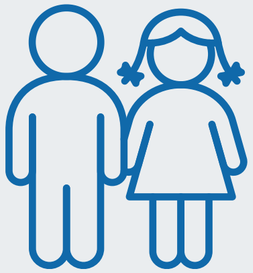


This is not a fair fight





Brains haven’t changed; technology has.



Children are the same; childhood is different.

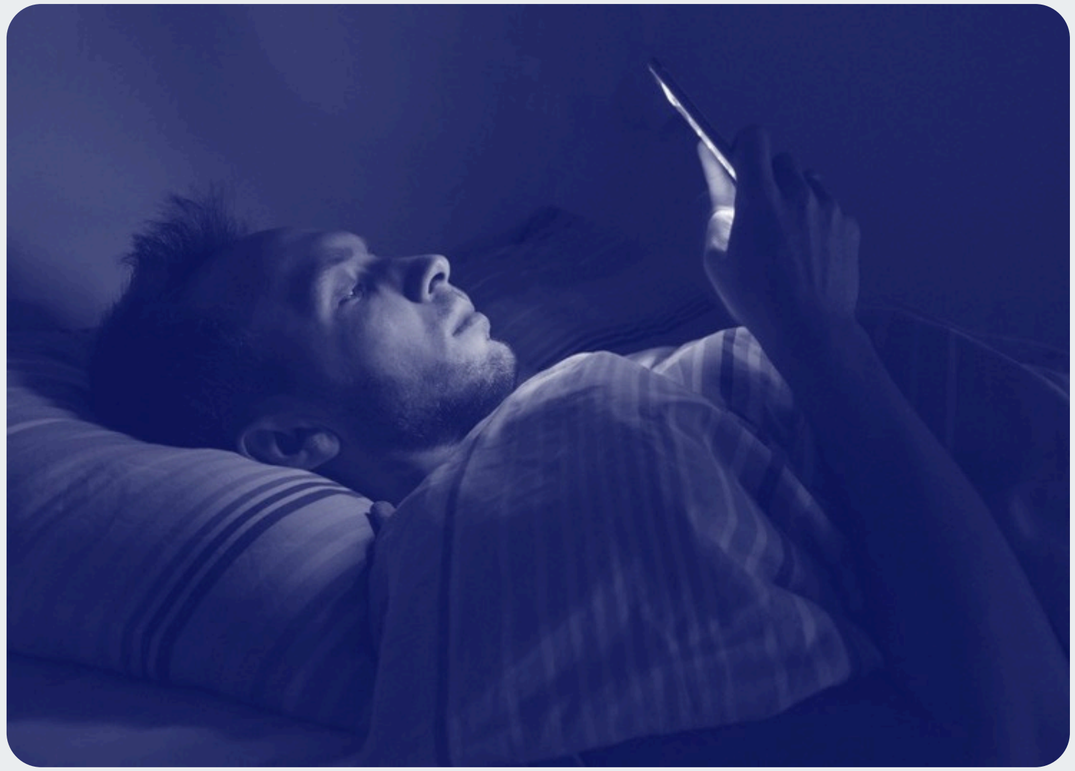
03

The Antidote

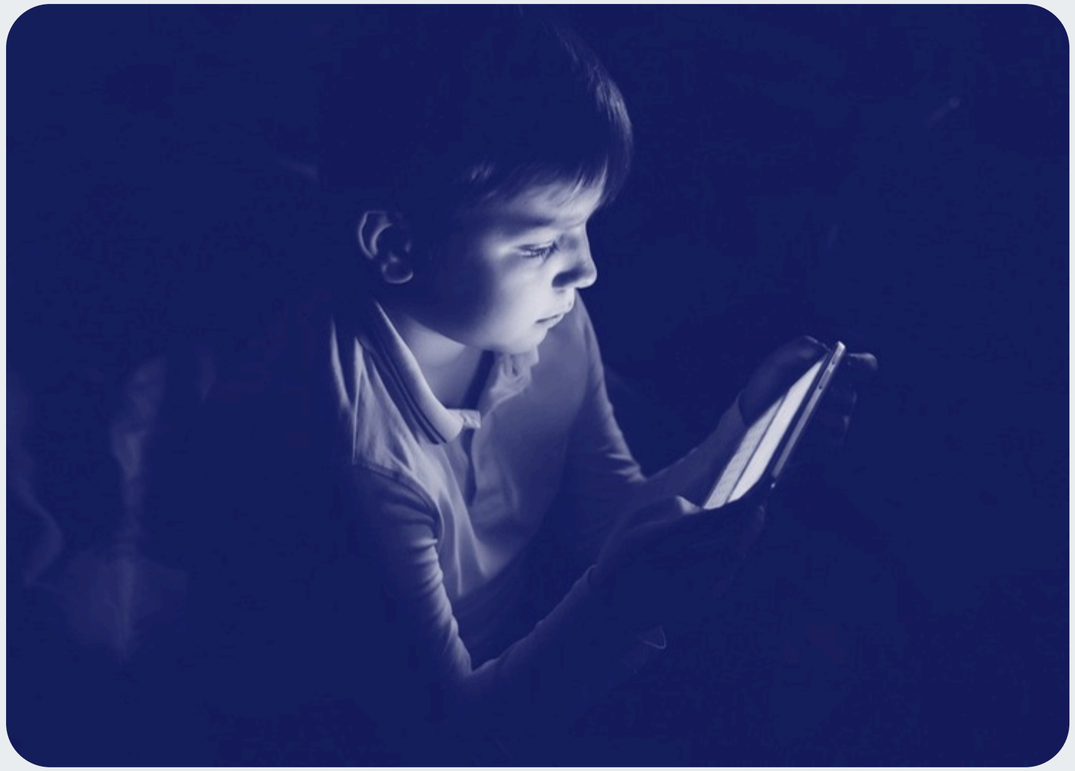
HINT: HI, PARENTS. WE HAVE SOME WORK TO DO.





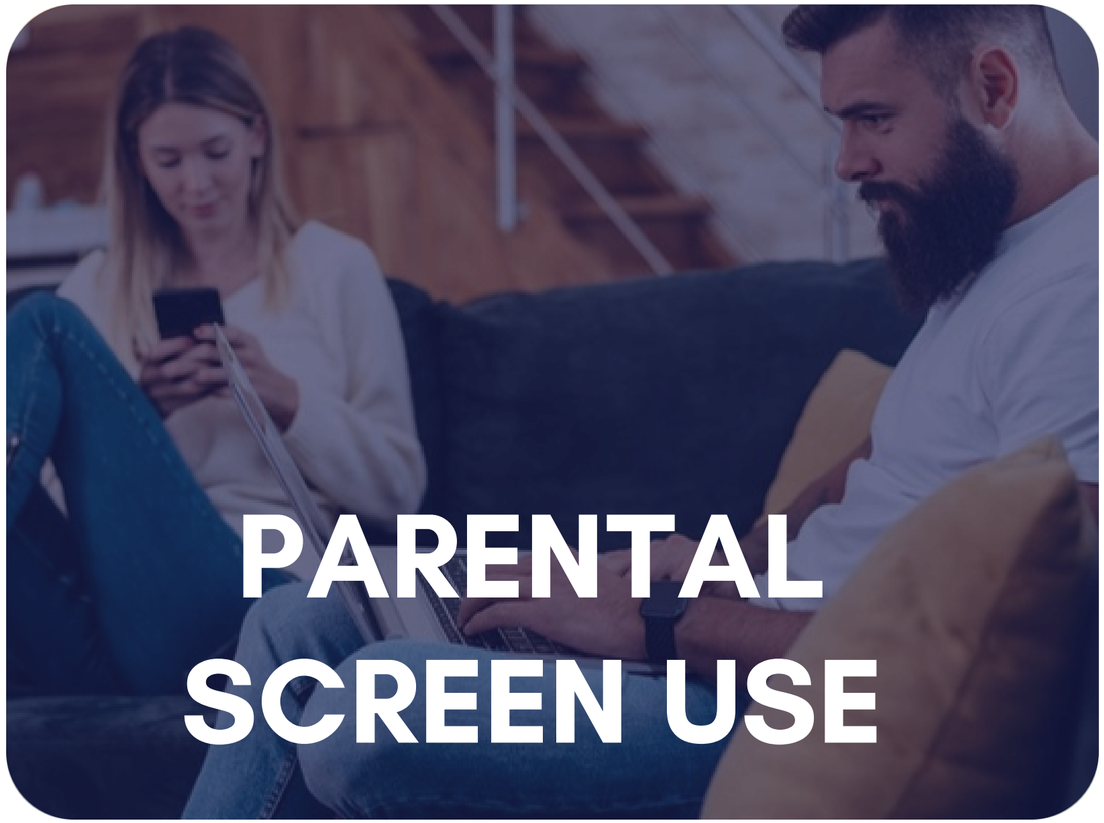


If we do this...



...it's harder to say "No" to this.

What really matters





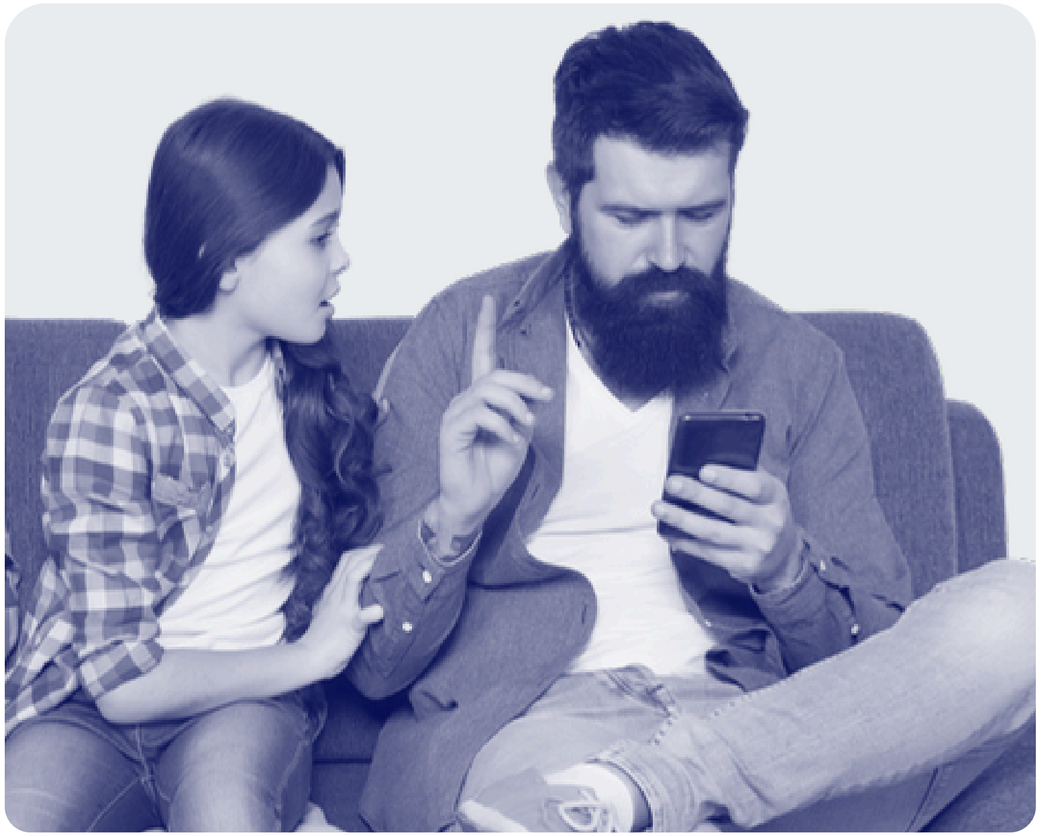
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Parental screen use impacts kids

- **56%** feel they spend too much time on their phones

- **2 in 3** admit to feeling distracted by their devices when they are engaging with their children

- **66%** believe parenting today is harder that it was for previous generations because of smartphones and social media



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Source: Pew Research, 2020



the power of relationships

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How?



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The two questions I hear the most:

How much screentime is “too much” screentime?

What parental controls should I use?





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How much is “too much”?

What parental controls should I use?



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The two questions to ask instead:

Do I know what my child is doing online?

Do I have a strong relationship with my child?



Source: Gallup/IFS (2023)

04

Three Habits of Tech-Intentional Parents

HABIT #1

Understand “scary” vs. “dangerous”

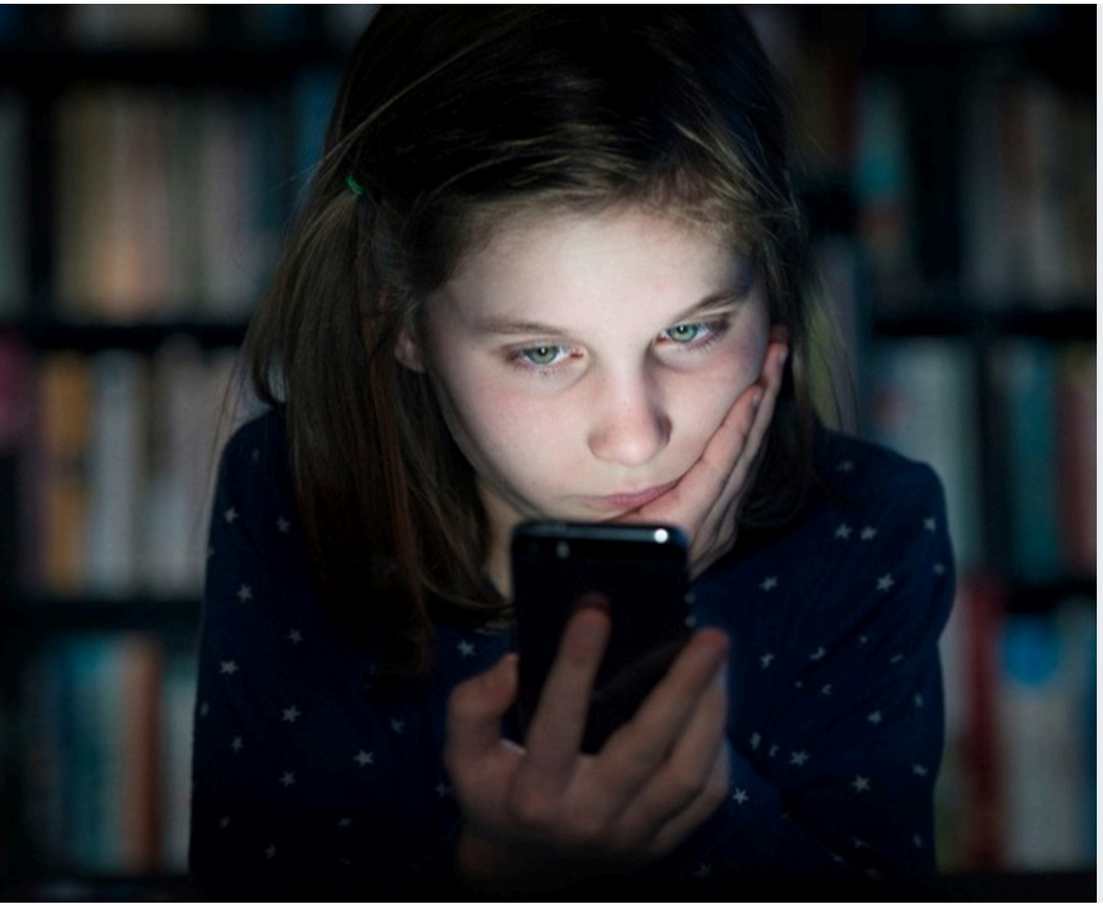


VS



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Top 3 parental fears



1. **Youth Mental Health**
2. **Bullying**
3. **Kidnapping**

Source: Pew Research (2023)

HABIT #2

Choose mentoring over monitoring



HABIT #3

Live your life out loud

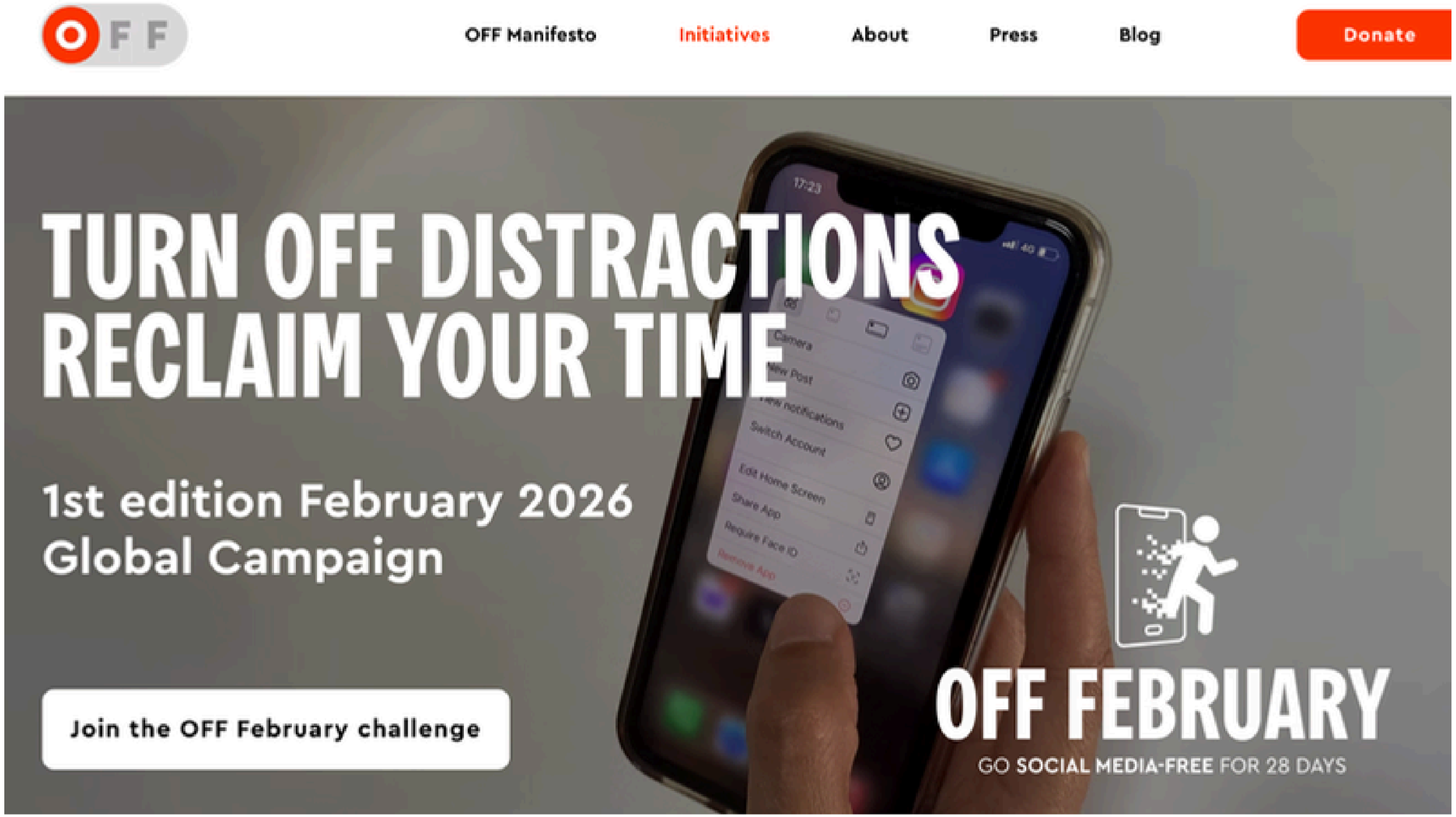




Share a Phone, Save a Tween

OFF February

offm.org



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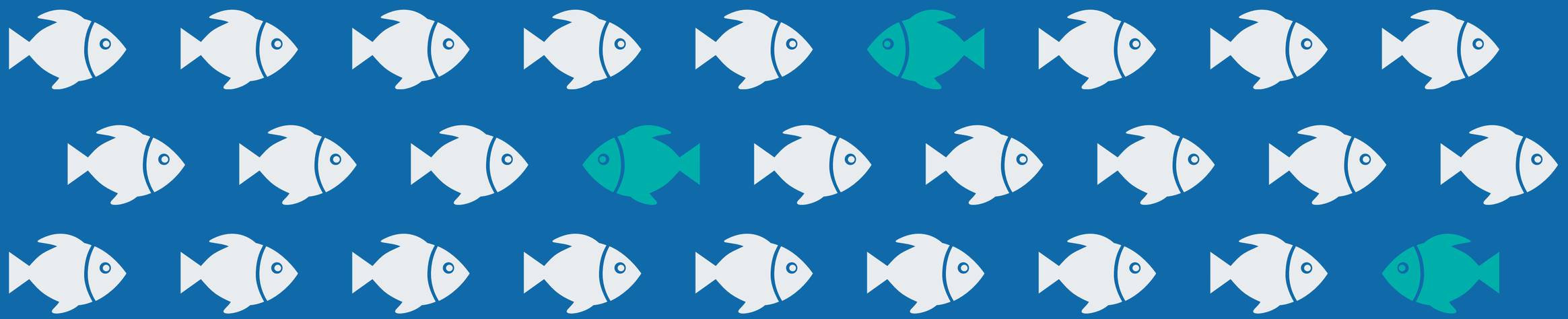
“I forgot to teach you.”

05

A few final thoughts...

HINT: YOU'RE ALREADY DOING A LOT OF THIS!

Be a first fish...or second or third



2026 will be a big year for change...

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD UNITED STATES

Phone-Free Schools State Report Card

A vital resource for lawmakers and advocates dedicated to strengthening school communities.

Take Action / Overview / What the Evidence Indicates / Criteria & Methodology / Resources / FAQ

Select from the menu below or click on a state to view that state's report card.
For a detailed breakdown of all state and D.C. laws, click here.

-- Select a State -- ▼ GO

A	B	C	D	F	0	Incomplete
Bell-to-Bell, Inaccessible Storage	Bell-to-Bell, Accessible Storage	Class Instructional Time Only	Policy Required, No Mandated Elements	Bill Failed	No Bill Introduced	Bill Pending
90 – 99 PTS (2 States)	80 – 89 PTS (17 States + DC)	70 – 79 PTS (8 States)	60 – 69 PTS (9 States)	50 PTS (4 States)	0 PTS (2 States)	----- (8 States)

Click here to see an at-a-glance list of states by grade

Snap Settles Social Media Addiction Lawsuit Ahead of a Landmark Trial

The settlement means Snap will avoid a trial where plaintiffs had planned to argue that social media platforms are inherently defective and subject to personal injury liability.

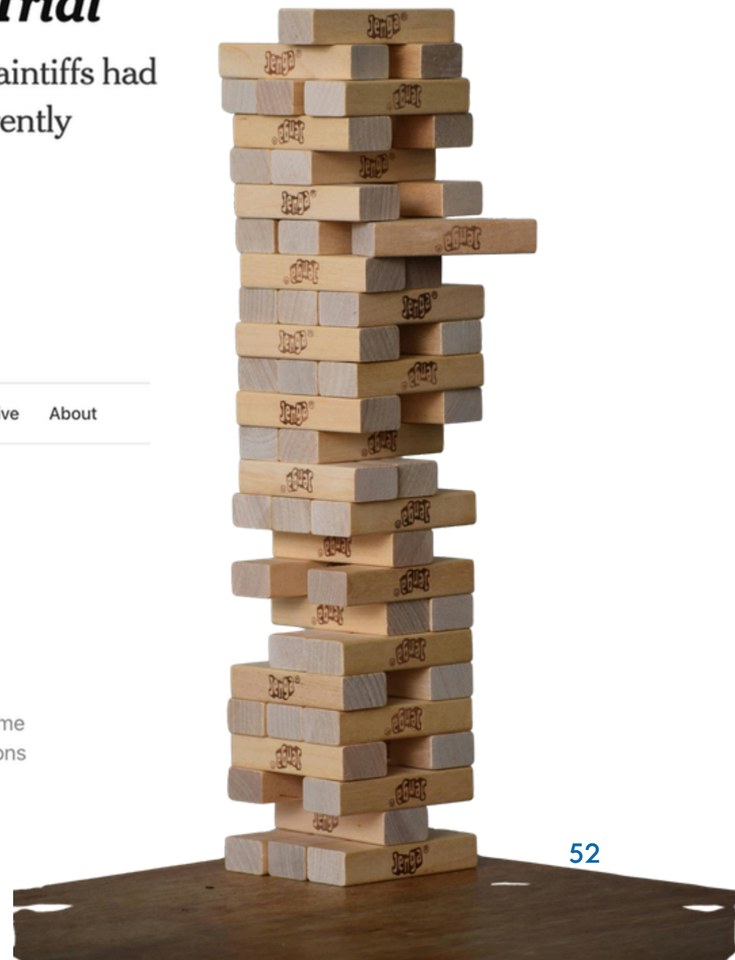
FIRST FISH CHRONICLES

Home Notes News Roundup Screentime Solutions **The Reckoning: A Series** Archive About



The Reckoning: A Series

A reckoning is a coming to grips with reality. In this series, my co-author, Denise Champney, an experienced speech-language pathologist and longtime educator, and I will daylight the problematic connections held by organizations who defend EdTech. This multi-part series will tackle one organization at a time.



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- Less is more.
- Later is better.
- Relationships and skills before screens.



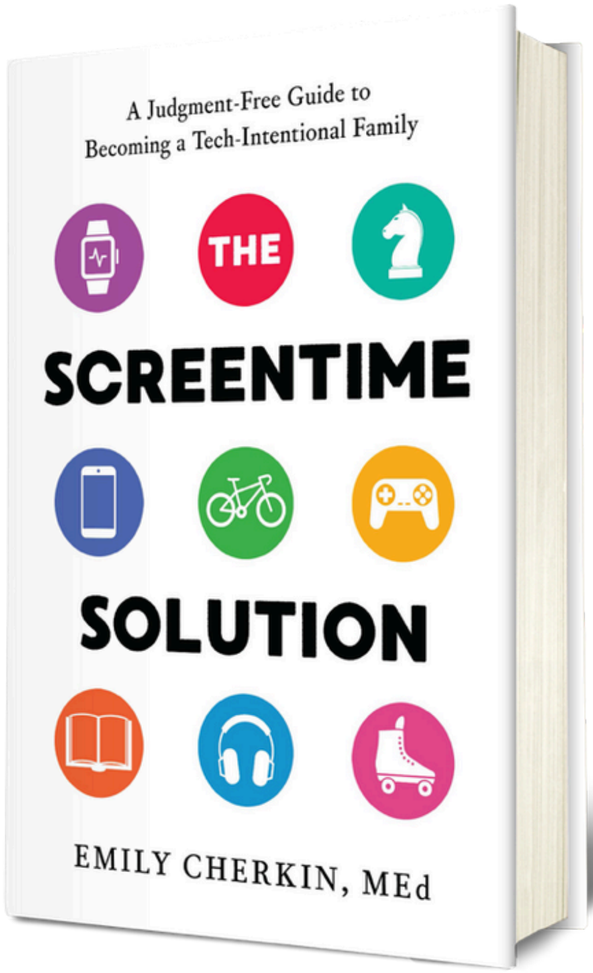
This *is* a fight worth having.



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Want to Learn More?

- Join the movement!
- Subscribe to my Substack (First Fish Chronicles)
- Visit thescreentimeconsultant.com
- Host a book club and read my book!



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Thank You

It’s been an honor and a privilege to be your teacher



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emily@thescreentimeconsultant.com

Questions?