



Create Connection Pockets

Shift from "Restriction" to "Replacement"

When we simply take screens away, children often feel a void—a sudden drop in engagement that can feel jarring. This often leads to power struggles because the child feels something is being *done to* them rather than *for* them.

Instead of focusing solely on the limit, focus on filling that space with connection.

- **The Why:** Behavior is communication. If your child fights you tooth and nail for the tablet, they might be communicating that they are bored, lonely, or overstimulated and using the screen to regulate.
- **The Strategy:** Proactively schedule "connection pockets" during the times you usually rely on screens (like right after school or while making dinner). You act as the bridge from the digital world back to the real world.
- **Try this script:**
 - Instead of saying, "No more TV, turn it off,"
 - try saying: *"I'm going to pause this show in five minutes because I missed you today and I really want to build that Lego tower with you. I'll come sit with you while you finish this episode, and then we'll tackle the Legos together."*
- **Why it works:** You are offering your presence as a more attractive alternative. You aren't just taking away their fun; you are offering them you.

Breaking the screen time cycle doesn't happen overnight. It's messy. But if you lead with empathy, stay calm when the feelings get big, and prioritize your bond over the battle, **you'll find your way through.** You've got this.

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