

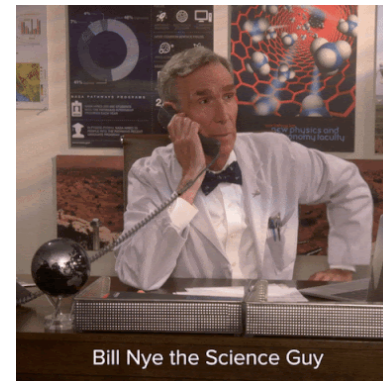
Seton's Tech in 10

Seton's Tech in 10 offers concise, ten-minute sessions on topics like internet safety, parental controls, screen time management, and social media. This initiative empowers parents to create a safe digital environment and guide their children toward responsible tech usage.



Do you ever notice that when your littlest child is asked to put down the iPad or tablet, a wave of agitation often follows? They may become restless, irritable, or begin pleading, “Just a few more minutes...”

That’s not just a whim — our brains are wired for **dopamine**, a chemical linked with pleasure, reward, and motivation. Screens, especially games and apps designed to capture attention, flood the brain with repeated dopamine spikes. Over time, the brain begins to expect that stimulation. When the stimulation ends,



dopamine dips — and what happens? Children can feel frustrated or unsettled. (HealthyChildren.org)

In very young children, this often shows up as agitation, whining, or an inability to calm down. It's a kind of withdrawal — not unlike how someone might feel when a much-loved but unhealthy habit is removed.

Here's what the research tells us:

- A study of children aged 9–11 found that more daily screen time was associated with **weaker development of inhibitory control** — meaning less ability to manage impulses and delay gratification. (PMC)
- Screen use desensitizes the brain's reward system: the more often dopamine is triggered by easy, high-stimulus input, the harder it becomes to find joy in ordinary, slower-paced pleasures. (SUNY Potsdam)
- Among children under 6, when screen time is abruptly removed, the dopamine drop can create frustration — what some call the “dopamine loop” — leading to outbursts or emotional tension. (HealthyChildren.org)

But here's the hopeful truth: this wiring was not meant to stay stuck in a cycle. We can *rewire gently* by offering alternatives, stability, and grace.

 Family Faith Challenge This Week (for the Littles)

- **“Dopamine Pause” Time:** Choose one screen (game or app) your child enjoys, and slowly shorten its use by 5 minutes each day toward your goal.

- **Replace with Delight:** When they ask, pause — then lead into something soft and delightful: a walk, drawing together, puppets, reading, or sitting outside quietly.
 - **Pray & Talk:** Invite your child to name how they feel *after* the screen is removed. Offer a short prayer: *“Jesus, help me find joy in You, not in glowing screens.”*
 - **Reinforce with Grace:** If they become upset, recognize the difficulty — *“I know your brain was expecting more — but this moment is for rest, for peace, for me and for God.”*
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👨👩👧👦 What This Looks Like at Different Ages

- **PK–5th Grade:** Meltdowns, whining, or pleading “just one more episode/game.” Younger brains haven’t yet built the brakes to manage the dopamine rollercoaster.
- **Middle School:** Mood swings, slamming doors, or getting angry when asked to shut down devices. The social pull of gaming and messaging makes withdrawal even sharper.
- **High School:** Quiet withdrawal, irritability, or late-night scrolling. Screens may start to replace sleep, relationships, and even healthy hobbies.

👉 The pattern may look different at each stage, but the brain chemistry is the same: **dopamine spikes and dips that leave kids agitated.**

Parents can help by setting boundaries, providing gentler alternatives, and reminding kids that their worth is found in God, not in a glowing screen.

In God's Love , Tim (and Bill Nye, the Science Guy 😂)
Enjoy the Week !



Sent by Tim Elstro

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