

**SMART KIDS,
DUMB PHONES
FAMILY DISCUSSION**

INTRODUCTION:

HOST'S GUIDE

Smart Kids Dumb Phones grew out of a desire to bring families together. This course aims to help you explore your device use and decide on a set of rules that you can all agree on. It's best used in a comfortable environment with willing participants. If you've never run a course like this, or you're a bit wobbly on how to make it work, the following suggestions may ease everyone in to the process.

1. START WITH GOOD FOOD

There are few things that motivate us as well as a really good meal. Cooking (or ordering) everyone's favourite meal gives the family something to look forward to, and helps the evenings feel like a family event rather than a parental lecture.

2. READ THROUGH THE SESSION BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If you're leading the sessions, have a read through the material before you begin. It might help you to know ahead of time which questions might need careful handling, or which might need a bag of sweets to get things moving!

3. DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO OFF SCRIPT

The questions included in each session are designed to promote conversation, but you might find the most interesting discussions come from a completely different angle. Use material to get things moving, but if the conversation is helpful – go with it!

4. REMEMBER THAT CHANGE TAKES TIME

These are discussions, not commandments. Don't be frustrated if you're not living device free in a cabin by the woods at the end of session one. Focus on good, honest discussion and be prepared to listen when challenges come. Sustainable change comes from the family agreeing – and that takes time!

SESSION 1:

THE SOCIAL DILEMMA

The Social Dilemma is a 2020 Netflix film produced by the *Centre for Humane Technology*. It is an exploration of our relationships with our devices by some of the people who made them what they are.

Our goal for this evening is simply to watch the film and reflect on our reaction to it – and our reaction to our devices too.

TASK

Gather the family and watch *The Social Dilemma* in its entirety (popcorn optional).

AFTER THE FILM:

Find a place for each member of the family to split off and reflect on their own. Complete the questions below to guide your thinking.

What did you find most challenging about the film?

What three things about your device use would you like to change?

How would you like your device use to look at the end of this project?

THAT'S A WRAP!

After everyone's had a chance to write down their reflections, we're done for today. Agree as a family when you'll sit down for the next session - a weekly family night is a great way to go.

SESSION 2:

SCREEN GLARE

“If you’re not paying for the product, you are the product”

- Tristan Harris

ENGAGEMENT, GROWTH AND ADVERTISING

How do phones fit into our homes? How do we want them to? This session explores the roles that we might want our devices to have, and the roles we’re currently allowing them to have. Each question below is designed to be reflected on personally, then discussed.

TASK

Brainstorm – what do we use our phones for in the home? Grab a large piece of paper and together write down as many things as you can.

Some examples to get you started:

- *Waking up in the morning.*
- *Reading the news.*
- *Taking pictures of things we want to remember.*

What positive things can we remember doing with our phones in the last week?

What are the long term goals we have for our free time? What would we like to get out of our evenings and weekends?

CLIP – 16:00 TO 20:00

Watch this clip together. The clip ends as Ben sits down with a friend at school.

TASK

Discuss the clip together. What did you find challenging about it? These questions may help shape your discussion:

What are the tools our phones use to keep us engaged? What three things are the most effective in making us pick them up?

What times of day are we most likely to waste time on our devices?

How do our phones help or hinder us in achieving our goals in free time?

HOMEWORK TASK – SCREEN TIME

At the end of this session we’re going to activate our screen time monitors. These exist in the settings for both Apple and Android devices, or they can be downloaded for free from the relevant app store. We’re going to allow the app to monitor how we’re using our devices until the next session.

Before we do that, let’s make some predictions (leave the final column blank for now):

Task	Predicted time per day	Goal time per day	Actual time per day
Phone use			
Social media			
E-mail			
Web browsing			

PREPARATION TASK FOR SESSION 3:

- Activate your screen time monitors.
- Don’t check your results until the beginning of the next session.
- Keep your predictions somewhere safe so you can review them in the next session.

SESSION 3:

FAMILY DINNER

REVIEW

Open your screen time monitors, and review your results with the family. Compare your results against your predictions and discuss as a family.

How do you feel about the amount of time you're spending on your phone each day?

What do you remember spending the most time doing on your phone this week?

Did you try to reduce your use while you knew the screen time monitoring was running? What strategies did you use?

CLIP 31:00 – 36:00

Watch this clip together. The clip ends when Isla leaves with her phone.

TASK

Discuss the clip together. What did you find challenging about it? These questions may help shape your discussion:

Why do you think Isla acted the way she did in this clip?

What do you think the mother was hoping for at the family dinner?

How could the family have prepared differently to make the dinner a success?

HOMEWORK TASK – FAMILY DINNER

The task for this session is to simply achieve what the family in the film failed to do. Have a family dinner with no phones present. Whether this is one dinner or seven, a bit of preparation will make things much easier:

- Make sure everyone in the family knows of the dinner ahead of time, so that no one is expecting a message.
- Place all phones on silent, and out of the room. A single ping from any device makes for hard conversation.
- Agree clear expectations for when dinner is 'over'. A family dinner that becomes a race to get your phone back is not good for anyone!

(OPTIONAL) CHALLENGE TASK – FAMILY GAME NIGHT

If you're planning to put the phones away anyway – why not make an evening of it? Choose a game to play together one evening before the next session. This can be a great way rebuild family conversation habits. Simple games are often better than those with complex rules. *Cheat* rather than *Game of Thrones, difficult edition*.

SESSION 4:

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

REVIEW

- Discuss your family dinners this week – what went well? What were the positive moments you could share?
- Has your phone usage changed after starting to track your screen time in session two?

NEVER HAVE I EVER

We often use our phones in ways we might be embarrassed to admit. They can be the first thing we look at in the morning and the last thing we see at night. For this game you'll need a bag of sweets (or age appropriate drinks). Read out each statement - anyone who has done what it describes has to eat a sweet!

- Taken a #nomakeup selfie while wearing makeup.
- Accidentally liked a post while stalking someone online.
- Pretended to do a poo so you could sit on the toilet and check your phone.
- Woken up in the middle of the night to check social media.
- Faked a phone call or text to get out of a social situation.
- Spent at least 10 minutes setting up a 'spontaneous' photo.
- Reposted an article after reading only the headline.

TASK:

Brainstorm as a family, then agree on the biggest three: What are the ways we are allowing phones to change our behaviour at home?

CLIP 37:45 – 42:20

Watch this clip together. The clip ends when we leave Isla at the mirror.

WHO ARE WE INVITING INTO OUR BEDROOMS?

Discuss the clip together. What did you find challenging about it? These questions may help shape your discussion:

How did Isla feel in this clip? What were the events that changed how she felt?

Who are the people that we invite into our rooms on our phones that we would never allow in there in real life?

If we were going to invite people over – what kind of people should we spend time alone with, and who would we expect to have a parent present for?

<i>People we could see alone</i>	<i>People we should see with parents</i>

What are the ways that phones make you more worried? What are the events that make you most upset?

How could we change the way we use our phones to feel less worried?

FINAL TASK – FAMILY VALUES

As a family it's time to decide what you want your rules and routines to be around phones. Open our toolkit at smartphonesdumbphones.org and choose the rules that you think will improve your family life - or decide some new ones of your own. Whatever you decide, we hope you've found this is a useful time spent together.

Rules are best when everyone can agree to them. Once you've decided your family values, book in a review in a few weeks to check in together on how they are working. Don't be afraid to adapt as you go!

OUR FAMILY RULES:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing family rules. It occupies the majority of the page below the title.