

The Unplugged Tech Starter Guide

Welcome to the Unplugged Tech Starter Guide. This resource provides hands-on, analog activities designed to build foundational digital literacy and establish healthy technology boundaries for your family.

Activity 1: How AI Works - Reinforcement Learning (Performance)

Short Overview: Artificial intelligence learns through reinforcement learning. It tries a move to see what works. Success brings a reward. Failure brings a penalty. The computer tracks the data and remembers the successful moves. Today, your family acts as the AI. You will train a paper airplane to hit a target using rewards.

Parent Prep

- Clear a runway in the hallway.
- Gather materials: Paper/pen or whiteboard and markers, tape measure, target, paperclips.

Quick Instructions

1. Pass out a tracking chart or draw one on a large whiteboard.
2. Someone builds a paper airplane.
3. Pick a target.
4. Someone throws the plane.
5. Someone measures the distance.
6. Change one thing.
7. Throw again.
8. Record the data. Closer to the target means a point. Farther means zero points.
9. If you get zero points, undo the change to the paper airplane.
10. Repeat for five or more tries.

What to Say to Your Kids

"Computers learn by making mistakes. This process is trial and error. Today, we are building an airplane. It will act as our robot. AI gets a reward when it succeeds. It gets nothing when it crashes. We will throw our plane at a target then change one part of the plane, perhaps a fold. If

the plane flies closer, we keep the fold. That is our reward. If it crashes, we undo the change. Let's see how smart we can make this aircraft."

Age Modifications

Ages 10+	Ages 8+	Ages 4+	Ages 2+
Build the plane. Manage the chart. Measure exact distances. Explain variables.	Make single changes. Throw the plane. Record the scores.	Retrieve the plane. Count footsteps. Cheer for rewards.	Throw crumpled paper. Run to the target. Enjoy family time.

Discussion Prompts

- If Try 3 was worse than Try 2, did you undo the change for Try 4? Why is this step important?
- If you had a million tries, could your airplane hit the target every time?
- When playing a game or learning a skill, how do you use trial and error?

Activity 2: Human Rules - Managing Screen Time

Short Overview: This high-energy transition drill teaches children how to physically break the hypnotic effect of screens. By practicing the sudden movement from a digital zone to a physical challenge, kids build the internal discipline required to put devices down without an argument.

Parent Prep

- Clear a safe path across your living room or yard to create two distinct areas: the "Digital Zone" (like a couch) and the "Real World Zone" across the room.
- In the Real World Zone, set up a physical challenge that requires focus and movement (e.g., building a pyramid out of plastic cups).
- Place a piece of paper that says "OFF" on the wall halfway between the two zones.
- Grab a powered-off phone, tablet, or a book to act as the practice device, and have a timer ready.

Quick Instructions

1. Have the kids sit comfortably in the Digital Zone holding the practice device.

2. Set your timer for a random amount of time (like 15 seconds).
3. Explain the Trance Breaker Rule: When the alarm rings, you have exactly three seconds to make your hands empty.
4. When the timer rings, the kids must instantly drop the device, sprint to the wall to slap the OFF Switch, and run to the Real World Zone to quickly complete the physical challenge.
5. Time them to see how fast they can completely transition their brain and body.

What to Say to Your Kids

"Screens are designed to be sticky. They put our brains into a 'Screen Trance' where we forget about our bodies and the room around us. Today we are practicing the 'Screen Time Switch.' We are going to train your brain and your muscles to break that sticky trance. When the alarm goes off, you have to prove that you are the boss of the machine. You have three seconds to empty your hands, hit the switch, and get your body moving. We are building the muscle to walk away!"

Age Modifications

Ages 10+	Ages 8+	Ages 4+	Ages 2+
Act as the drill sergeant. Control the timer, enforce the 3-second drop rule, and design complex physical challenges.	Try to beat their own transition time on each round and explain why it is physically hard to shift focus quickly.	Hold the practice device, run to slap the OFF Switch, and do a simple task like jumping over a pillow.	Run between the zones with their siblings and help knock down the plastic cup pyramid at the end.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does your body sometimes feel heavy or tired right after you put a tablet down?
- How can we make it this easy to put the device down when it is actually turned on?
- What is a physical activity you can plan to do immediately after your screen time is over to help your brain switch gears?

For the complete curriculum, visit [EdTech Blueprint online](#).