

PARENTING ON CUE

with **Queenie Tan**



POC 141: If you feel the urge to justify screen time, listed to this!

Welcome back. I would like to say "hi" to all of you here who are tuning for the first time. Please subscribe on any podcast channel that you are using, feel free to subscribe to this podcast. We try to upload every week, and definitely be addressing different aspects of parenting and early childhood education. So feel free to tune in as much as you want, or you can go to our website at ParentingOnCue.com, and leave a question if you have any question that is related to parenting or working with children under the age of seven.

So today, I would like to talk about something that is rather sensitive, and that's about screen time. So there are some people who would oppose using screen time for children, like really young children under the age of six. And some people think that it's absolutely fine. And I think that there's enough research out there that talks about how screen time affects us as adults and children alike because it does affect us to varying degrees. So I'm not going to talk about how screen time affects young children because we all know it does. But I'm going to talk about us, as parents.

I recently had a conversation with a particular parent. And she said that her child was watching something on TV, I think it was Paw Patrol or something like that. And she said that, he's so into it. He wants Paw Patrol t-shirts, merchandise, everything, like the whole thing. And that's all he wants to watch. So I asked her, I got curious, and I say how much screen time does he get every week, like on average. And she got really... I can sense that her voice changed, and she didn't exactly answer my question but she just immediately sprung into a whole debate defending and trying to justify her child's screen time. And she was like "he learns english and sentence structure, and he memorizes all their names." And so she just sprung straight into that. And I could sense that she was really struggling with it. She was really struggling to be at peace with the whole situation. And that's usually the case. When when we get defensive, it's because we are not comfortable with the situation.

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So that's where I'm coming at. I think that when we feel that we need to defend our children's screen time, is when we really need to take a look at what we can do to put in place certain screen practices that will sit well with us. So if you feel like and you catch yourself being defensive, and trying to justify, I'm not saying don't try to justify even though you feel the need to, I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that, as soon as you feel triggered about it or by it, then that is a good time for us to sit and think, that maybe we can do this differently.

How can we do this differently? What can we do to put in place screen time that is just as educational, and maybe less anxiety inducing, and super fun, or how can we use this time and slot in a little bit more open-ended play or constructive play, or pretend play, or how can we wean off our children so that they can choose to do activities with their friends, or maybe start collecting stickers, or something like that. That is what I want you to get curious about when you're triggered. So that would be a really good start. And I find that a lot of times when we are triggered, it's because our subconscious is trying to tell us that something isn't sitting right with ourselves. And this whole concept is a very internal one, like we don't have to talk about this to anyone. This is a hundred percent internal. And it's a good call to have this chat with ourselves, and to see what is it that we're struggling with.

Well, I don't think we can always figure out what is it that we're struggling with. We just know that it's uncomfortable, but I think it will be easier to try and figure out, especially when we feel like we have to justify our children's screen time. I think it will make more sense for us to try and think about how we can try and balance it out with different activities.

So what can we do that does not involve screen time, like how can we be more involved in other things? So that is something for us to get curious about. I don't have an answer for this, as to how we can stop justifying our children's screen time. That's not what I'm here to discuss. But I'm here to discuss about those of us who feel like we need to justify our children's screen time.

When you feel like you have to justify something, it usually means that we're triggered, and that is a good sign if we can take that moment to just sit with it for a bit, and to try and figure out how we can make this more comfortable for us. What can we change with this environment, so that

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it sits better with us. Because I think if we tune in with ourselves, we will be able to figure the answers.

But unfortunately most of us, like myself, I have to learn how to tune into myself because most of the time I was raised looking for external validation. I need to look at research to tell me what to do. I need to listen to an expert to tell me what to do. And I live in my intellect, in my brain, most of the time. And it was really hard for me to learn, to listen to my gut instinct. And when there's a disconnect between my brain and my gut instinct, that's when I get triggered. And that's when I have to take a step back and calm down a little bit, or do whatever it takes to calm down, and to re-examine how I can do this differently.

So that's all I have for you today. And if you have any questions, please go to ParentingOnCue.com, and leave your questions there. And I'll jump right on it. Thanks. So see you next week. Until then. Remember, happy and confident parents have happy and confident children.