Digital Wellbeing For Families

Guidebook for Adult Educators

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Introduction

In an increasingly digital world, families are navigating complex challenges related to screen time, online safety, digital identity, and the emotional and social effects of digital technologies. Adult educators play a vital role in supporting families through these challenges, yet they are often left without the specific tools, resources, and guidance needed to do so effectively. The Digital Wellbeing Guidebook for Adult Educators was developed to respond to this gap (identified during a previous project Digital Upbringing, that focused primarily on families and children) by placing educators at the heart of the intervention.

This Guidebook is designed to help adult educators successfully implement Digital Wellbeing Workshops and become more confident and competent in delivering high-quality, family-focused digital education. Building on the experience of partners who have already piloted and delivered intergenerational workshops, the content is rooted in practical insights and feedback from real-life implementation. It provides both structured guidance and flexible tools that educators can adapt to different family contexts and digital realities.

The Digital Wellbeing Guidebook for Adult Educators includes

- Clear guidelines for intergenerational workshops and working effectively with families

- A curated selection of digital resources (e.g., online courses, webinars, interactive tools) to enhance digital parenting programs

- Interactive components such as quizzes and self-reflection questions to promote engagement and critical thinking

- Hands-on materials, including worksheets, case studies, and realistic scenarios

- Practical tips and tricks to address common challenges faced by educators in the field.

PART 1

Digital Wellbeing Guidebook for Adult Educators comprises the following topics:

- Introduction
- **Part 1:** Foundations of Digital Wellbeing
- **Part 2:** Workshop Facilitation and Intergenerational Approach
- **Part 3:** Delivering the Six Thematic Workshops
- **Part 4:** Practical Tips
- Evaluation and Follow-Up

Digital Wellbeing

Digital wellbeing is not a fixed skill but a shared journey between adults and children. As technology changes, so do the ways families connect, learn, and communicate. This guidebook encourages educators to see themselves as facilitators of this dialogue, helping families explore digital life together rather than prescribing one-size-fits-all rules. By creating safe, supportive, and playful learning spaces, educators can help families build trust, empathy, and balance in their everyday digital routines.

We invite you to explore the chapters that follow at your own pace. Each part of the guidebook offers practical insights, adaptable tools, and real examples to inspire your work with parents and children. Whether you are preparing your first digital wellbeing workshop or refining an existing program, you will find ideas that can be tailored to your community's needs. Use this guidebook not only as a resource but as a companion for reflection, creativity, and growth — a step toward helping families thrive in the digital age.

Foundations of Digital Wellbeing

Introduction

It matters for educators to have sound ideas about the foundations of digital wellbeing. The aim of this guidebook is to provide adult educators with a clear and comprehensive understanding of digital wellbeing and its vital, multifaceted role for families in this increasing digital world.

Throughout this document, we define digital wellbeing, explore its key dimensions in detail, and articulate precisely why fostering it is not just beneficial, but essential for every family navigating this digital age. Furthermore, this section introduces a relevant and powerful intergenerational learning approach, detailing its benefits and offering an expanded set of practical, actionable strategies to implement effectively in family workshops.

By grasping these core principles and their practical applications, educators will gain enhanced confidence and competence to proactively address complex digital challenges, thereby enabling them to deliver high-quality, impactful digital education specifically focused on promoting family digital wellbeing.

What is Digital Wellbeing?

Digital wellbeing is a profound and holistic state of being healthy, happy, and genuinely connected in an increasingly pervasive and often demanding digital world. It transcends just technological use; it's about finding and maintaining a conscious, intentional, and sustainable balance in our engagement with digital tools.[1]

This balance ensures that technology serves as a powerful enhancer of our lives, supporting our personal and collective goals, rather than inadvertently causing harm, stress, or detachment.

Digital wellbeing does not at all advocate for the abandonment of technology, but rather promotes its mindful, critical, and purposeful use. It encourages users to be active participants in their lives, also in their digital lives, making deliberate choices about when, why, and how.

[1] **Uslu, O. (2025). Understanding digital wellbeing: Impacts, strategies, and the path to healthier technology practices. *Discover Social Science and Health, 5*, 145. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44155-025-00259-5**

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Dimensions Of Digital Wellbeing?

Digital wellbeing is a multi-dimensional concept that touches on different areas of life — physical, mental and emotional, social, and professional or educational. All these dimensions are connected and influence one another.

- **Physical wellbeing** focuses on how technology affects our bodies. It includes reducing eye strain from prolonged screen exposure, maintaining good posture, moving regularly, and avoiding disrupted sleep caused by late-night screen use or blue light exposure. For families, this means setting practical routines: encourage outdoor activities, create screen-free spaces, and agree on screen-free times

- **Mental & emotional wellbeing** relates to managing digital stress, online pressure, and emotional overload. Constant notifications, comparison culture, and the fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause anxiety and lower self-esteem. Educators can help families recognize signs of digital fatigue, practice mindfulness, focus attention, and develop healthy coping strategies.

- **Social wellbeing** relates to managing digital stress, online pressure, and emotional overload. Constant notifications, comparison culture, and the fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause anxiety and lower self-esteem. Educators can help families recognize signs of digital fatigue, practice mindfulness, focus attention, and develop healthy coping strategies.

  - **Professional/Educational wellbeing** emphasizes using digital tools efficiently, effectively, and productively without succumbing to digital burnout, chronic distraction, or the unhealthy blurring of work-life boundaries.

In today's world, technology often stretches our workday beyond regular hours, making it increasingly difficult to disconnect and truly rest. It is therefore about setting clear boundaries for digital work, managing notifications, and utilizing productivity tools judiciously to maximize output while preserving personal time and energy.

Why Digital Wellbeing Is So Important For Families

Digital wellbeing is essential for families today. Technology is everywhere. It's woven into our home life, how we communicate daily, how we learn, and how we entertain ourselves. So, what does this mean for families and why should we focus on it? Let's see:

- **Shared digital ecosystems:** Families frequently share digital devices, home Wi-Fi networks, and various online platforms. This means that unhealthy digital habits or vulnerabilities from one family member could directly or indirectly impact the wellbeing and safety of others at home.

- **Powerful role modeling:** Parents and caregivers are the primary and most influential role models for children and younger family members. The grownups attitudes, behaviors, and digital habits regarding technology profoundly shape the developing digital habits of the next generation.

- **Development sensitivity:** Children and teenagers are at a very sensitive developmental stage, making them more vulnerable to the potential negative effects of excessive, inappropriate, or unsupervised screen time on their developing brains, social-emotional skills, and cognitive functions.

- **Communication dynamics:** While technology offers incredible potential to enhance family communication (e.g., connecting with distant relatives, sharing experiences), it can also inadvertently hinder the quality and frequency of essential real-life interactions. Digital wellbeing helps families strategically leverage technology for connection while consciously preserving and prioritizing quality face-to-face time.

- **Getting ready for the future:** Equipping families with digital wellbeing skills is not just about managing current challenges; it's about preparing them to responsibly, adaptably, and effectively navigate an ever-evolving digital future, fostering resilience and lifelong digital learning.

What is Intergenerational Learning and its Benefits for Digital Wellbeing

Intergenerational learning is a dynamic, collaborative, and highly effective educational approach where individuals from different generations actively learn from, with, and about each other. It fundamentally recognizes that learning is a reciprocal, two-way process. In this model, both older and younger generations are acknowledged as possessing unique knowledge, diverse skills, and valuable perspectives that can mutually enrich the learning experience for everyone involved. It moves beyond traditional top-down teaching to embrace shared discovery and mutual understanding.

An intergenerational learning approach to digital wellbeing makes possible advantages for families, fostering a balanced and effective relationship with technology:

- **Bridging the digital gap with empathy:** On one hand, younger generations are often digital natives, having been born and grown up really into technology, they are highly proficient with new applications, platforms, and new online cultural ways of behaving. On the other hand, older generations, often digital immigrants, have had to adapt themselves to technology quite late in life. Older generations, however, while not necessarily 'digital immigrants' anymore, tend to use technology in different ways: more purpose-driven, cautious, and focused on functionality rather than constant connectivity. They also bring a wealth of life experience, critical judgment, and a deeper understanding of real-world consequences. Intergenerational learning looks for facilitating an empathetic exchange, where younger family members can share technical skills and insights into all these new possibilities while older members can share life wisdom, critical thinking, responsible behavior and long-term perspectives.

- **Cultivating mutual empathy and understanding:** This approach builds empathy encouraging family members to try to understand and appreciate each other's digital life. Parents can understand the specific apps, games, and social media platforms their children like using, they can understand their appeal for them. Children can appreciate their parents' concerns regarding online safety, privacy, and the responsible use of time. This mutual understanding reduces conflict, fosters open dialogue, and strengthens family bonds around shared technology use.

- **Working together to solve digital challenges:** When dealing at home with digital challenges, like cyberbullying, spotting misinformation, or cutting back on too much screen time, the best solutions usually come from working together, not just from one person making the rules. When kids, teens, and adults learn from each other, families can team up to set healthy boundaries, create media plans that fit their own needs, and come up with creative solutions everyone can agree on and stick to.

- **Making learning engaging and relevant:** When learning content connects to the real online experiences and concerns of everyone in the family, it is more interesting and useful. Conversations about digital wellbeing become less about abstract theoretical concepts and dos and don'ts rules and much more about real-life situations we all face, making the lessons stick and feel worth remembering.

- **Promoting lasting habits:** Habits and rules related to technology work best when they're shaped through open talks, shared understanding, and agreements, not when one generation simply tells the other what to do. When the whole family has a say, it is easier to stay committed to the shared rules.

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Intergenerational learning lies at the very center of the Digital Wellbeing Workshops which are designed not only to teach digital skills but to bring generations together to explore technology as partners. Digital habits often divide families by age and experience, but this approach turns learning into a shared journey. It helps families talk openly about digital life, understand each other's realities, and find balance between independence and guidance — the true foundations of digital wellbeing. For practical examples of how intergenerational learning is applied in the six Digital Wellbeing Workshops, see Part 3.

Having explored the foundations of digital wellbeing and intergenerational learning, the next part focuses on how to translate these principles into effective workshop facilitation.

Additional Content

Reflection Questions For Educators

Reflect on the following questions:

- How do my own digital habits reflect the principles of digital wellbeing I want to teach? What could I model better?

- What digital challenges do I see most often in the families I work with? How can intergenerational learning help address them?

- How can I adapt my facilitation style, language, and activities so that everyone—children, parents, and grandparents—feels heard, valued, and involved?

- Which local organisations, community resources, or digital experts could I collaborate with to make my workshops more engaging and impactful?

Recommended Tools and Resources

Here are some types of practical tools and valuable resources that can support and enrich your digital wellbeing workshops:

- **Comprehensive Family Media Plan Worksheets:** These are essential for families to collaboratively set boundaries. Look for templates that are customizable and cover aspects like screen time limits, device-free zones, content guidelines, netiquette, and consequences for rule-breaking. Examples: American Academy of Pediatrics Family Media Plan; Common Sense Media Family Media Agreement.

- **Detailed Online Safety Guides & Checklists:** Resources that provide clear, actionable advice on protecting personal information, recognizing phishing scams, understanding privacy settings on popular social media platforms, and identifying signs of cyberbullying. Examples: Resources from national cybersecurity agencies (e.g., EU Agency for Cybersecurity - ENISA, national Safer Internet Centres), reputable internet safety organizations (e.g., Internet Watch Foundation, NSPCC).

- **Interactive Digital Literacy Checklists & Self-Assessment Tools:** Tools that allow families to assess their current digital skills, identify areas where they might need improvement (e.g., critical evaluation of news, understanding algorithms), and track their progress. Examples: Online quizzes or printable checklists from educational tech organizations. https://www.incibe.es/en

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- **Mindful Technology Apps & Digital Detox Tools:** Introduce families to applications or built-in device features designed to help track screen time, block distracting notifications, schedule "do not disturb" periods, or facilitate guided digital detoxes. Examples: Device-specific screen time management features (e.g., <u>Google Family Link</u>, <u>Microsoft family safety</u>, <u>Apple Screen Time</u>, <u>Android Digital Wellbeing</u>), apps like <u>Freedom</u>, <u>Forest</u>, or <u>Moment</u>.

- **Parental Control Software Overviews:** Provide a neutral overview of various parental control software options, discussing their functionalities, benefits, and limitations, empowering parents to make informed choices that suit their family's needs.

- **Discussion Prompts & Activity Cards:** Ready-to-use microlearning cards that can spark engaging family conversations about specific digital dilemmas, online experiences, or shared values related to technology.

Annexes/Handouts:

1. Post-Workshop Feedback Form

2. Family Reflection Form

3. Structured Self-Reflection Checklist

4. Narrative Reflection Prompts

5. Educator Reflection Template

Workshop Facilitation and Intergenerational Approach

Introduction

It It is essential for educators to have a solid understanding of the foundational principles of adult learning, especially when facilitating parenting programmes in today's rapidly changing world. The purpose of this chapter is to equip adult educators with a clear and comprehensive framework for applying Andragogy—the theory of adult learning—to parenting education. This section explores the key principles of adult learning, emphasizing the ways in which adults learn differently from children and how facilitators can leverage these differences to create more effective, engaging workshops. We will also explore the powerful concept of intergenerational learning, discussing its benefits and offering practical strategies for incorporating it into family-focused educational sessions. By mastering these principles and their practical applications, educators will be better prepared to navigate the complexities of facilitating meaningful learning experiences that empower parents and foster stronger family connections in our digital age.

Adult Education Facilitation: Theory to Practice

The Adult Learning Theory: Andragogy

The theory of Andragogy (Adult Learning Theory) dates back to 1833 when first introduced by Dr Malcolm Knowles. Andragogy focuses on how adults learn differently from children. Andragogy brings about the realisation that there is a different approach needed when facilitating groups of adults compared to youth/children. Andragogy also brings about the acknowledgement of the various learning styles which exist in any group of adult learners and supports the facilitation of various approaches.

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The Key Principles of Andragogy

The theory of Andragogy famously outlines six key principles that highlights the difference in facilitating adult learning spaces (Andragogy) in comparison to facilitating children's learning spaces (Pedagogy):

- **Adults are autonomous and self-directed:** To practice this, facilitators should involve participants in the learning process. Encourage their input to session designs and approaches.

- **Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experience and knowledge:** To practice this, facilitators could connect life experience and prior learning from the start of session. It brings the learner into the space.

- **Adults are goal orientated:** From the start, it is important the facilitator is clear about how the learners will benefit from what they learn in your programme. To practice this, facilitators should ensure they are clear on the learning objectives and outcomes of each session/workshop.

- **Adults are relevancy orientated:** Adults need to see a concrete reason for learning something. To practice this, after detailing the objectives of the training, the facilitator could incorporate some reflection exercises guiding the learners to connect the objectives to their personal life/family setting.

Practicing Adult Education: Facilitation Skills and Methods

One key consideration of Adult Education is the need to use a facilitative approach rather than a teaching approach. A facilitator is a person who helps, leads or guides adults to learn. Facilitation means working with people with the aim of enabling and empowering them. Facilitation is a method that encourages people to share ideas, resources and opinions and to be critical in their thought process. A facilitator is responsible for guiding participants through the content and stimulating the learning experience. Aligning with the principles and ethos of Andragogy, a facilitator should draw on the existing knowledge of the participants in the room in a safe and appropriate manner. Facilitation methods are generally active and participatory in nature.

Facilitation Skills: Principles and Values

Below are some basic principles and values of Facilitation Skills:

- **Impartiality** – Remaining neutral and objective with opinions only collected from participants and not expressed by the facilitator.

- **Participation** – Catering for interactive learning processes, ensuring the group is central to the discussions, not the facilitator.

- **Inclusiveness** – It is essential that the facilitator adequately involves all participants and ensures no one person/small group dominates the discussion.

- **Preparedness** – A good facilitator should be prepared to perform all tasks well, but remain flexible to work around unexpected problems.

- **Timekeeping** – Remain punctual and ensure session timings are appropriate for the group.

Families will only share openly if they feel respected and supported. As an educator, you can set the tone by:

- Physical setup of the room: Families feel more comfortable if they sit in circles or small clusters (rather than classroom-style rows). This makes the atmosphere less formal and encourages interaction.

- Setting group rules together: For example, "we listen to each other," "everyone's opinion matters," "what we share here stays here."

- Equal voices: Make space for both parents and children to speak. Use small groups, turn-taking, or pair discussions.

- Non-judgmental tone: Families often feel guilty about screen time. Emphasise that every family has challenges and that the workshop is about learning together, not judging.

- Positive focus: Start by asking families what already works well at home before exploring what could change.

- Accessibility for low literacy: Read instructions aloud, use icons or visuals instead of text, and give extra time for writing tasks.

- Supporting weak communication: Some parents and children are not used to talking about digital life. Provide conversation starters, role play, or sentence prompts to help.

Top tips for Facilitating Adult Groups:

Adults are seen to learn best when:

- They understand why something is important to know or do.
- They have the freedom to learn in their own way.
- Learning is experiential.
- The time is right for them to learn.
- The process is positive and encouraging.

Reflection Questions: Adult Education

- What way can I, as the facilitator, ensure that the learner's voice is central to my Adult Education workshop?
- What is my own preferred learning style and how might that impact my facilitation approach? (Honey and Mumford Annex)
- What are my strengths as a facilitator? What aspects do I enjoy?

Facilitating Parenting Groups: Considerations and Approaches

Approaching Parenting Groups from a Facilitators Perspective

To facilitate parenting groups, adult educators should aim to incorporate the points referenced above, while ensuring a strengths-based approach is adhered to. Focusing on parental strengths and resilience is essential, while providing opportunities for shared experience and peer support. Child well-being and safety is essential when delivering any parenting programme, particularly an Intergenerational Programme that brings together both parent and child.

Principles of Parental Participation in Education Programmes

Ensuring parents are provided with the space to actively engage in our Education Programmes is paramount. Below are some principles to consider when delivering the Digital Wellbeing for Families Workshops:

1.Participatory Practice: Ensure parents are involved not only in the workshop delivery but the planning, monitoring and evaluation.

2. Strengths Based: Adopting a strength based, non-judgmental approach in your delivery will reduce the risk of 'parent blaming'.

3. Inclusion and Equality: As previously mentioned, ensuring all parents have the opportunity to share and the information be received in a respectful manner.

4. Cultural Diversity: It is important to recognise and take account of the diverse parenting styles which exist in the space and use culturally appropriate methodologies in your practice.

5. Active Listening: Ensuring the facilitator practices and promotes active listening within the space during the workshops.

Barriers To The Successful Engagement Of Parents

Parents across Europe have shared common concerns about the barriers that prevent them from taking part in parenting programmes.

- Feeling inadequately informed about the purpose of the workshops;
- Lacking clarity about who is attending and the reasons for their involvement;
- Feeling outnumbered or intimidated by the number of professionals present;
- Perceiving a lack of respect for their views or suggestions;
- Experiencing negative or judgmental attitudes from professionals
- Facing barriers such as transport, accessibility, or childcare difficulties
- Encountering social and cultural barriers related to gender, ethnicity, language proficiency, or literacy and
- Experiencing stigma associated with seeking support.

Providing Follow-Up Support

Providing follow-up support is recommended to help parents involved in the Digital Wellbeing Workshops feel valued, supported and listened to. This support could include:

- One-to-one follow up calls/check-in's
- Connect parents in with relevant local support services;
- Continue information sharing in an informal manner such as via WhatsApp and
- Encourage peer-to-peer follow-on engagement.

Reflection Questions: For Facilitating Parenting Groups

Reflect on the following questions:

- What steps can I take to ensure the space is inclusive, welcoming and non-judgmental?

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Implementing Intergenerational Approaches

Introduction to Intergenerational Learning in Parenting Programmes

Intergenerational Practice, as defined by the Centre for Intergenerational Practice, refers to "Bringing people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contribute to building more cohesive communities". It is also said to build social capital, social networks, reduce loneliness and isolation and promote civic participation.

Benefits of Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational practice helps to re-establish meaningful connections between generations, fostering mutual understanding and respect. By bringing different age groups together, it supports the development of individual skills that contribute to a more inclusive society. Intergenerational approaches in parenting programmes help build connections across generations, fostering understanding, respect and collaboration. They support parents in developing skills, confidence and personal growth while encouraging shared learning between parents, children and the wider community.

Intergenerational Learning and Digital Skills

Intergenerational learning programmes help parents enhance their digital skills and literacy by promoting mutual learning between generations. They boost parents' confidence and digital resilience, strengthen family and community connections, and equip parents to navigate online services more effectively while actively supporting their children's digital learning.

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Approaches to Family Intergenerational Learning

Below are some approaches you might consider when delivering Intergenerational Learning Programmes to families:

1. Foster direct engagement through shared activities by encouraging families to participate together in collaborative projects, workshops or experiential activities;
2. Ensure that there is two-way communication established between the families and you the facilitator;
3. Create a holistic learning environment with activities that are sensitive to literacy requirements and cultural needs and;
4. Get creative, think outside the box and have fun with the sessions.

Strategies For Facilitating Intergenerational Learning in Workshops

When you run a workshop for families, you're not just sharing information — you're helping different generations learn with and from each other. Your job is to make the space safe, welcoming, and lively so that everyone feels comfortable. Some practical ideas:

- Plan the activities for mixed-age teams
  Create tasks where adults and children work side-by-side, each bringing their own ideas. Invite children to share their thoughts on the covered topic and not just let the adults decide.

- Help the teaching go both ways
  Give time for children to show adults how to do something, like using a new app, explaining a social media trend, fixing a tech problem… Then let adults share their own know-how, like spotting fake news or talking about how tech has changed over the years. This builds respect and shows that everyone has something valuable to share.

- Make it real. Use real-life scenarios and role-plays
  Use common digital challenges. Let families talk about how each generation might see them and come up with solutions together. Acting out these situations can help people see things from each other's perspective.

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PART 2

- **Practice listening and empathy**
  Guide the group in really listening to each other: no interrupting, no judgment, no you're wrong… Remind them that there is never a single right way to feel about technology and that we always have to keep things personal and respectful.
- **Celebrate everyone's strengths**
  Point out what each generation does well. Recognizing strengths boosts confidence and connection.
- **Create a shared tech language**
  Help families agree on clear terms for digital tools and concepts so everyone's speaking the same language to prevent confusion and make conversations easier.
- **Be a role model for respect and teamwork**
  Show the group how to handle different opinions politely, find middle ground, and work toward solutions everyone can accept. The way you lead the session will influence a lot how they interact in the workshop and at home.

Family Intergenerational Learning Brainstorming

Outside of the Digital Wellbeing for Families workshops, here are some additional ideas to engage with regarding Intergenerational Learning:

- Creative workshops focused on art, dance, music, role play or theatre;
- Life skills and practical learning focused on cooking or gardening;
- Health and wellbeing workshops focused on mindfulness, fitness and nutrition;
- Culture, history and storytelling related to history, traditions and community.

Building on the principles of facilitation and intergenerational learning, the next part presents practical examples of how these approaches are applied in the six Digital Wellbeing Workshops.

Additional Content

Reflection Questions for Educators

Reflect on the following questions:

1. What is one thing you would like to learn from an elder in your life as a practitioner and life-long learner?

2. What topic would interest you most to explore with families you support?

References

- Health Service Executive. (2016). Facilitating Learning in Groups: A Resource Manual for Facilitators Working in Health and Social Care. https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/onmsd/faciliating-learning-in-groups-a-resource-manual-for-facilitators-working-in-health-and-social-care-may-2016.pdf
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. (2011). Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education. https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=8159de20-2e04-f18b-002e-8cf996146504&groupId=252038
- TUSLA – Child and Family Agency. (2015). Toolkit for Parental Participation. https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Parental_Participation_Toolkit_Dec_2015.pdf

Annexes/Handouts:

- Honey and Mumford Learning Styles Questionnaire: https://www.mycit.ie/contentfiles/careers/4.%20honeyandmumfordlearningstylesquestionnaire.pdf

Delivering the Six Thematic Workshops

Introduction

This part of the Guidebook translates all of the mentioned principles into practical workshop delivery and focuses on how to deliver the six Digital Wellbeing Workshops with families. They were developed by building on the Digital Upbringing project, where intergenerational workshops were first piloted with over 120 children and parents. From this experience, the most effective practices were selected, refined, and restructured into a modular "pick and mix" format, meaning that you can choose and combine activities to fit your group, time, and local context.

This approach gives educators the freedom to adapt the workshops to different groups, timeframes, and contexts. Each workshop can be stand-alone as a short 45-minute session, or several modules can be combined into longer events. The structure is designed to be flexible, practical, and engaging.

Families today face many questions around digital life: How much screen time is too much? What should children share online? How can we set fair rules about devices at home? These workshops give families a chance to explore these issues together in a safe and practical way through play and dialogue. They are not about strict rules or "one right answer," but about helping families find balance, trust, and shared strategies that work for them.

This section will cover

- A short overview of each of the six workshop themes.
- The main learning outcomes for families.
- Examples of activities that have been tested and enjoyed by families.
- Practical tips for adapting workshops to different groups, including rural communities, disadvantaged backgrounds, or participants with low literacy.

As an educator, your role is to guide the process, encourage dialogue, and create space for parents and children to learn from each other.

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Foundations of the "Pick and Mix" Approach

The Digital Wellbeing Workshops are designed as a flexible toolkit where educators can select and combine activities depending on the group's size, available time, and family needs. This "pick and mix" principle allows workshops to fit into different settings (schools, community centres, or weekend family events) while keeping the core structure the same.

The workshops build on six guiding principles:

- **Strength-based framing** – begin with what families are already doing well.
- **Playful, dialogic learning** – short, active cycles with movement and tangible outputs.
- **"Both-and" approach** – acknowledge both risks and opportunities of digital life.
- **Co-creation of family rules** – children and parents design rules together, educators act as facilitators.
- **Evidence-informed practice** – rooted in the Digital Upbringing project and supported by recent research (e.g., Digital Wellness Lab, 2024).
- **Family Agreement Toolkit** – templates and rituals to help families commit to shared rules.

Core Workshop Topics

The six workshop themes cover the key areas of digital wellbeing for families:

- **Balanced Device Use –** exploring routines that support healthy screen habits and encouraging device-free family moments
- **Digital Identity –** understanding how online actions shape identity and how to manage digital footprints responsibly.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – recognizing emotions linked to digital use and building empathy, resilience, and healthy boundaries.
- **Empowering Interdependence –** encouraging mutual learning between parents and children, fostering trust and respect.
- **Learning Apps & AI** – exploring opportunities and challenges of AI and learning tools in everyday life.

All of these workshops are available for download here:
https://digitalfamilies.esfc-project.com/my-account/

PART 3

Workshop Flow and Age Groups

Workshops for families work best when they are short and focused. Based on our experience, 60 minutes is ideal, and 90 minutes should be the maximum. Instead of organising a single long session, it is more effective to plan a series of shorter workshops where families return regularly. This keeps energy high and helps families gradually build habits.

Suggested flow:

- **Ice-breaker (5-10 minutes)** – a playful, low-pressure start helps to relax both parents and children. Icebreakers are especially valuable in family workshops, as they help reduce initial tension, equalize parents' and children's voices, and make it easier for everyone to participate.

- **Mini-input (5-10 minutes)** – a short introduction to the theme (quiz, storytelling, or example).

- **Main activity (20–30 minutes)** – families work together or in parallel parent/child groups.

- **Family co-lab (10–15 minutes)** – co-creation: agreements, posters, or shared solutions

- **Reflection & closing (5–10 minutes)** – each family shares one insight or commitment to try at home.

The workshops are designed around three age pathways:

- 0–6 years – shared devices only.
- 7–13 years – first personal devices or consoles, no social media.
- 13–16+ years – smartphones and active social media use.

Each workshop should ideally focus on one age group so that activities and discussions match children's developmental stage.

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Adapting to Families' Needs: Lessons Learned

This section explores common situations that may arise during Digital Wellbeing Workshops, including differences in motivation and attention, parent–child dynamics, communication challenges, family diversity, emotional factors, and specific contextual realities such as rural settings. Understanding these patterns helps educators create flexible, inclusive, and meaningful learning spaces for all families.

Engagement, Attention, And Motivation

Maintaining engagement can be especially challenging when working across generations and age groups. Younger children (ages 6–10) may have short attention spans, become bored quickly if activities are abstract or lecture-based, and may need more physical movement and play to stay engaged. There is often a mismatch in energy levels, as children are naturally active and curious, while parents may expect more structured, discussion-based formats.

With preteens (ages 10–13), motivation and cooperation may be hindered by feelings of embarrassment or self-consciousness, especially when asked to participate in front of peers or engage in activities they perceive as "uncool" or childish. Some older children may actively resist cooperating with their parents, particularly when conversations touch on emotional or personal topics. However, even in this older group, boredom remains a risk if the session is overly passive or disconnected from their interests.

There is also a challenge of different motivation levels between parents and children. At times, parents are eager to talk about digital wellbeing while children resist, believing that workshops will criticise their media use or highlight what they are doing wrong. This mismatch can create tension. The Digital Wellbeing resources were developed with this challenge in mind. Activities are designed to be non-judgmental, playful, and strengths-based, encouraging families to talk about both the positives and challenges of digital life.

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Educators can highlight that:

- Workshops are not about blame but about sharing perspectives and learning from each other.
- Parents are also invited to reflect on their own digital habits, which shows children that the responsibility is shared.
- Activities focus on co-creation and opportunities (creativity, fun, learning, connection), not just rules and restrictions.
- Families are free to choose and adapt which activities or rules to try at home, giving children a sense of ownership.

Parent-Child Dynamics

Intergenerational settings can highlight unspoken tensions or assumptions in parent–child relationships. Children of all ages may struggle to see their parents as co-learners, making it difficult to engage as equals during joint activities. Younger children may over-rely on their parents, while parents—out of a desire to get things "right"—may unintentionally dominate tasks, limiting their child's independence and voice. Some parents also feel embarrassed in front of other adults, which may lead them to behave more cautiously or artificially, rather than engaging openly and playfully with their child.

Communication Barriers And Dialogue Challenges

Open and equal communication does not come naturally to all families. Children may withhold their true digital habits, fearing consequences if they are too honest. In some families, hierarchical communication styles mean that children are not used to being asked for their opinions, or parents are uncomfortable exploring topics where they are not the authority — especially with regard to digital tools or platforms. Parents may also find it difficult to verbalize their values and concerns, particularly if they're not accustomed to discussing emotional or moral issues with their children.

In these cases, structured prompts can help (e.g., "One thing I like about our device use is...", "One thing I would change is..."). Role-reversal activities, where children explain apps or digital tools to parents, also break down barriers and create playful opportunities for dialogue. The educator's role here is to gently guide the conversation, ensuring that both sides are heard and respected.

These challenges can be compounded by cultural taboos or generational discomfort with specific media topics—such as gaming, online friendships, or influencer culture. When such topics are seen as unfamiliar or inappropriate, parents and children may struggle to have honest conversations without judgment or defensiveness.

Family Differences and Literacy Levels

These different digital knowledge levels. It is very common for children to know more about apps, games, and online platforms than their parents. Instead of seeing this as a challenge, it can become one of the workshop's strengths. Encourage role-swapping activities, where children become "digital teachers" and parents take on the role of learners. It reinforces the message that digital wellbeing is a shared responsibility and that everyone in the family has something to contribute.

Some parents struggle with reading and writing, which can make worksheets and written exercises a challenge. It is important to give these parents more time, to simplify materials, and to use visual alternatives such as icons, drawings, or colour coding. One useful strategy is to invite children to support their parents by reading instructions aloud or helping with writing. This not only reduces stress but also creates positive role-reversal moments where children feel proud of helping, and parents feel supported instead of embarrassed.

Recognizing and adapting to these differences creates a more inclusive and empowering learning environment for all families.

Emotional and Social Dynamics

Finally, intergenerational workshops often bring underlying emotional tensions to the surface. Power struggles may arise when children feel their autonomy is being challenged, or when parents feel insecure about their own digital habits and skills. If either side communicates in a critical or impatient tone, it can quickly block the opportunity for genuine dialogue. Children may mock their parents' digital limitations, while parents may avoid sharing their habits out of shame or fear of being judged —either by their children or by other adults. In such cases, both sides may retreat into silence or defensiveness, limiting the potential for connection and shared learning.

Also, parents may underestimate their own role. Some parents arrive thinking digital wellbeing is only about controlling children's behaviour. Workshops help them see that their own habits (checking phones at dinner, scrolling late at night) strongly influence children. It helps to invite parents to reflect on their own digital routines as role models.

Rural and Contextual Realities

With the lack of the extracurricular options in smaller communities, it's important to emphasise that everyday, low-cost activities are equally valuable for digital balance and family wellbeing, such as cooking together, going for a walk, visiting relatives, or having a device-free dinner. Framing these simple routines as meaningful shows parents that they already have the tools for balance, and that they don't need expensive or specialised programmes to strengthen their family's digital wellbeing.

In smaller communities, it sometimes happens that parents bring along younger siblings who are not the target age group. While this can be disruptive if not managed, it can also be an opportunity for inclusion. If there are two educators, one can focus on the younger children with age-appropriate activities. If only one educator is present, it is helpful to prepare simple, engaging side activities such as colouring, sticker games, or free play with safe toys. This allows parents to participate fully while the younger children remain occupied and feel included rather than excluded.

In practice, these challenges often become opportunities for creativity — for example, children proudly supporting parents with reading, or parents gaining confidence by learning directly from their children.
After examining the six thematic workshops in detail, the final part offers additional tips, communication strategies, and practical insights to help educators adapt sessions to diverse family contexts.

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Reflection questions for educators

- What worked well in encouraging dialogue between parents and children?
- Which activities sparked the most energy and participation?
- Did any participants struggle (literacy, confidence, attention span)?
- How might I adapt next time to better meet family needs?

A short reflection log after each workshop will help you build confidence, improve your facilitation, and develop a toolkit of strategies that fit your community.

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Practical Tips for Efficient Intergenerational Workshops

Introduction

Part 4 offers practical, experience-based guidance for educators and facilitators leading such workshops. Drawing on field-tested methods and feedback from previous sessions, the tips are grouped into five key areas: recruitment and participation, engagement and motivation, communication and cooperation, emotional and social dynamics, and practical arrangements. Each area includes clear strategies, interactive techniques, and examples that can be adapted to fit different age groups, communities, and cultural settings.

Educators will learn how to prepare inclusive, playful, and balanced workshops that support both children and adults as active participants. The goal is to empower families—not to prescribe rules, but to encourage curiosity, dialogue, and shared responsibility around digital media. These tips aim to help facilitators create safe, welcoming spaces where all voices are heard and where learning continues long after the session ends.

Challenges in Intergenerational Workshops with Parents and Children

Recruitment and Participation

One common barrier to participation in intergenerational workshops is the low perceived urgency, particularly among parents of younger children (ages 6–10), who may believe digital topics are not yet relevant for their family. For parents of older children (ages 10–16+), the challenge may be different—they often assume their children are already independent enough online, and may underestimate the value of shared reflection. Logistical constraints, such as the lack of childcare for siblings, busy work schedules, or transportation issues, can also reduce attendance across both age groups.

In some cases, parents hesitate to bring their child into a shared learning space out of fear of being judged, feeling unprepared, or lacking confidence in their own digital knowledge. Older children may resist attending altogether, especially if they were not consulted or feel the topic is "for little kids." In families where screen use has already caused tension, the fear of conflict or difficult conversations may also deter participation.

Tips for Recruitment and Participation

Make the invitation family-friendly and inclusive:

When planning promotional materials, use clear, welcoming language and avoid judgmental tones. Highlight fun, shared activities rather than "parenting advice" or "digital safety warnings." Emphasize mutual learning with messages like "You'll explore together, not be tested." Include small incentives—quizzes, games, snacks, certificates, or take-home items—to help families feel excited and valued.

Tips for Recruitment and Participation

Offer flexible timing and support for attendance:

Choose session times that suit families' routines—after school, evenings, or weekends. Offer support for parents with younger children (such as childcare or a quiet corner for siblings), and consider repeating workshops or offering them in flexible formats. This can increase accessibility for busy or low-income families.

Build trust before the event

Reach out to families in advance with a short, friendly message or video from the facilitator. If possible, invite participants through trusted schools or community organizations. Helping families feel welcome and prepared reduces anxiety and increases attendance.

Tips for Engagement and Motivation

Use hands-on learning methods:

Keep energy levels up by alternating between talking, moving, writing, and creating. For children aged 6–10, use short, colorful, tactile activities. For older children (10–13), include current, real-life media examples and encourage reflection on personal experience.

Let children take the lead as "Experts"

Invite children to demonstrate a tool or app they enjoy using. This not only builds their confidence, but also helps level the power dynamics between parents and children, making the learning space more collaborative.

Let parents take the "tech expert" seat for a few activities

Invite parents to share their early experiences with technology—how they used devices for fun, work, or learning 10–20 years ago. Bring in old objects like a Tamagotchi, Walkman, analog camera, or VHS tape to create a hands-on "retro tech" moment. Children can explore the objects while listening to their parents explain how they worked, what their limitations were, and why they were still fun or exciting at the time. This role reversal builds respect, curiosity, and empathy between generations.

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PART 4

Create take-home artefacts:
Include activities that result in something concrete families can take with them—a family screen use agreement, a shared "media time" plan, or a creative poster. These artefacts encourage families to keep the conversation going at home.

Use games and quizzes to spark fun and connection:
Incorporate playful elements like games and team-based quizzes to ease tension and create a relaxed, joyful atmosphere. When parents and children are on the same team – competing with other families – they often forget rigid roles and start interacting more naturally. This shared experience fosters laughter, teamwork, and even a bit of friendly competition, which can strengthen bonds. Digital quiz platforms like Kahoot can be easily adapted to cover relevant content in an engaging format.

Highlight both digital risks and opportunities
Avoid the trap of portraying all screen time as bad. Acknowledge digital risks, but also show how tech can support creativity, learning, and connection. This balanced view is more relatable for both children and parents, and reduces resistance. Invite both parents and children to come up with examples for creative, positive media use.

Let parents take the "tech expert" seat for a few activities

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PART 4

Tips for Communication and Cooperation

Make Space for Every Voice
Design activities that allow both children and parents to express their thoughts individually before moving into discussion. This is especially helpful in families where open dialogue is not common or where one voice tends to dominate. A fun and effective method is having parents and children sit back-to-back while answering a few questions – using cards, scales, or worksheets – and only then turning to face each other to compare and discuss their answers. This approach reduces pressure and encourages honest, thoughtful reflection from both sides.

Model respectful disagreement
Encourage both generations to express their views without trying to "win" the argument. Frame disagreement as a natural part of healthy communication, and emphasize that the goal is not identical opinions, but shared understanding. An engaging way to explore this is through role reversal: the parent takes on the role of the child and argues for more screen time, while the child plays the "strict parent" who gives reasons for setting limits. This activity helps both sides understand the other's logic and emotional needs, often leading to surprising moments of empathy and laughter.

If role play feels too uncomfortable for some families, try an alternative where each person writes down two reasons they think the other person might have for their position (e.g. "why my parent wants limits" or "why my child wants more time"). They then read these to each other and reflect on what they got right or missed. This method still promotes perspective-taking without the pressure of performi

Confident parenting in
a digital world

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PART 4

Tips for Communication and Cooperation

Respect diverse parenting styles
Avoid making assumptions about how families "should" manage digital life. Use open-ended questions like "What works for your family?" or "What would you like to improve?" to encourage reflection without judgment. At the same time, gently encourage parents to involve their children in setting family media rules and expressing family values. Even in more traditional family structures, co-creating rules helps children feel heard and more likely to follow them, while also reinforcing a sense of shared responsibility.

Support parents with lower digital confidence
Use clear, simple language when introducing digital tools or concepts, and avoid jargon that may alienate adults with less tech experience. Let children assist when appropriate – this can create playful, empowering moments for both sides. You can also include a fun quiz game with mixed digital vocabulary, where children and parents work together to solve terms from both generations. Include recent slang (e.g. FOMO, DM, filter bubble) as well as "retro" tech references (e.g. floppy disk, MSN Messenger, Tamagotchi), giving each side the chance to shine and learn from the other.

Adapt for cultural and practical realities

Provide materials in multiple languages if needed, and be mindful of norms around privacy, religious practice, or home dynamics. Let families adapt examples and rules to suit their context.
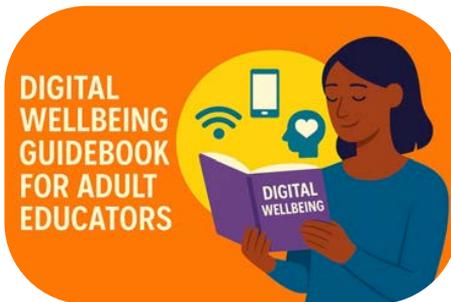
Tips for Emotional and Social Dynamics

Normalise parental vulnerability
Reassure parents that it's okay not to be perfect or "digitally fluent." Many feel uncertain or guilty about their screen time. Sharing relatable examples helps create a safe space for honest reflection.

Create safety for children's honesty
Let children know that this is a learning space – not a monitoring space – and that they won't be punished for speaking openly. For sensitive topics, provide anonymous ways to ask questions or express opinions.

Manage tension with empathy and humour

If tension arises between parents and children – such as teasing, eye-rolling, or disagreement – gently redirect the conversation with empathy. Remind families that every generation has its strengths and struggles in adapting to digital life. Light humor can ease defensiveness, so consider using relatable memes, cartoons, or short videos that show common family tech dilemmas. These can spark laughter and help participants see that they're not alone. However, always choose content carefully – avoid humor that could be seen as judgmental, ageist, or culturally insensitive.

End on a positive, forward-looking note

Conclude the session with a warm, achievable action that families can carry into the days ahead. Invite each parent to commit to teaching their child something "that can't be learned on YouTube" – a practical skill, a craft, or a story from their own life. In return, ask children to introduce a digital game, app, or tool that they think their parent might enjoy or find useful. These simple exchanges reinforce that both generations have valuable knowledge to share and that learning together doesn't stop when the workshop ends.

Tips for Practical arrangements and logistics

Plan for two separate spaces
RIdeally, use two adjacent classrooms or workshop areas – one for joint or adult-focused discussions and another adapted for children's movement and play. One space can be set up with a projector and circular seating for presentations or dialogue, while the other remains open for games, quizzes, or creative activities. Having flexible, age-appropriate environments increases comfort and engagement for both generations.

Involve at least two facilitators
Intergenerational workshops work best when two adults lead the session—one focusing on children's needs, the other guiding the parent group. This ensures smoother transitions, better supervision, and more tailored support during parallel sessions or group discussions.

Provide snacks and hydration

Offer light, healthy snacks—especially for children, who may get tired or distracted. Food also helps create a relaxed, social atmosphere and gives families a chance to connect informally. Make sure there's water or juice available, particularly in longer sessions.

Set-up a quiet corner for siblings

If families bring younger siblings, provide a safe, quiet corner with simple toys, books, or drawing materials. This helps parents stay focused, makes the space more inclusive, and reduces the stress of arranging extra childcare.

Prepare materials in advance and test equipment

Have printed worksheets, markers, and digital tools ready beforehand. Test the projector, speakers, or internet connection in advance – especially if you plan to use Kahoot or other tech-based activities. Good preparation prevents interruptions and keeps the workshop flowing.

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Reflection questions for educators

- How will I ensure that both children and parents feel equally valued and engaged throughout the session – without one generation dominating the other?

- (This invites reflection on balance in voice, activity design, and facilitator behavior.)

- What strategies can I use to make the topic relevant and appealing to both younger and older children, especially those who may be resistant or feel the session isn't meant for them?

- (Encourages planning for age-appropriate, interest-based engagement.)

- Am I prepared to support families who may have very different communication styles, parenting approaches, or comfort levels with open dialogue?

- (This promotes cultural sensitivity and adaptability in facilitation.)

- How will I create a safe emotional environment that reduces fear of judgment – both for parents who may feel insecure about technology, and children who may fear being restricted?

- (Focuses on emotional safety, empathy, and tone-setting.)

- What barriers might prevent families from attending or participating fully – and how can I address these in the design, timing, space, or invitation process?

- (Encourages practical problem-solving related to recruitment and logistics.)

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Evaluation and Follow-Up

Why Evaluation Matters

Evaluation and follow-up are not simply administrative steps. They create intentional pauses where families and educators can reflect on what was meaningful, what remains challenging and how small insights might grow into sustainable change.

Digital wellbeing is not achieved in a single session. It is a living process that requires attention, feedback, and dialogue. Evaluation tools are therefore not meant to measure success in strict terms, but to create spaces for honest feedback, collective learning, and sustained growth.

By listening to families' voices, educators gain insight into what resonates, what challenges remain, and where new opportunities for connection can emerge. By reflecting on their own practice, educators embody the very principles they encourage: mindfulness, balance, and critical engagement with the digital world.

Evaluation and follow-up are not about judgment. They are about cultivating awareness and nurturing growth. Just as digital wellbeing invites us to be intentional with our devices, evaluation invites us to be intentional with our teaching and learning.

Each form, question, or reflection is a gentle reminder that we are all learners in this process. Families discover, negotiate, and adapt together. Educators refine, adjust, and deepen their practice. And in doing so, both contribute to a more mindful and balanced digital culture.

Final Reflections

The conversations and activities you lead will continue to shape how families experience technology and each other. As educators, you are the bridge between knowledge and everyday practice — helping families turn awareness into action.

Visit the resources section to explore the full collection of workshops, handouts, and materials. We'd be delighted to hear your impressions and how you used this Guidebook, what resonated with your learners, and what you discovered along the way. Together, we can keep growing a community of practice that promotes balance, connection, and wellbeing in the digital age.

Part 1. Feedback Tools for Families

I. Post-Workshop Feedback Form (to be completed immediately after each workshop)

**Family Feedback Form — Digital Wellbeing Workshop
Please take 2–3 minutes to share your thoughts. Your feedback helps us improve future workshops.**

Please circle or check the option that best describes your experience.

1.Overall Experience
 ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

2.The workshop was clear and easy to follow.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

3.The activities were engaging and meaningful for my family.
 ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

4. I learned something new that I can apply at home.
 ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

5. I felt comfortable sharing and participating.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Open Questions:

One thing I will try at home after this workshop is:
_____
_____
_____

The part of today's workshop I enjoyed most was:
_____
_____
_____

One suggestion I would make for next time is:
_____
_____
_____

2.Post-Workshop Feedback Form (to be completed 1-2 weeks later at home)

Family Reflection-Bringing Digital Wellbeing Home

Please complete this together as a family. Take a few minutes to reflect on what has changed since the workshop.

Since the workshop:

☐ We have tried activities or ideas at home regularly
☐ We have tried them once or twice
☐ We have not tried them yet

What postive changes have we noticed in our digital habits or conversations

_____
_____
_____

What challenges or difficulties have we faced when trying to apply what we learned?

_____
_____
_____

One digital wellbeing goal we want to keep working on is:

_____
_____
_____

Part 2. Educator Self-Reflection

I. Structured Self-Reflection Checklist

Educator Reflection Checklist- Workshop Delivery

Pr**eparation & Delivery**
☐ I was clear in explaining the objectives of the workshop.

☐ The activities matched the time, age group, and needs of participants.

☐ I prepared materials and setup in advance.

Engagement & Inclusion
☐ Families were actively engaged throughout the workshop.

☐ Both parents and children had space to contribute equally.

☐ I adapted flexibly when something did not go as planned.

Atmosphere & Wellbeing
☐ The space felt safe, respectful, and encouraging for open sharing.

☐ I balanced discussion with activity so participants did not feel rushed.

☐ I noticed signs of fatigue, discomfort, or confusion and adjusted accordingly

Follow-up
☐ I reminded families about tools they can use at home.

☐ I gathered feedback and considered how to integrate it into future sessions.

2.Narrative Reflection Prompts

After each session, take 10-15 minutes to write freely in response   to these prompts.
Guided Journaling — After Each Session

What challenges did I face, and how did I respond?
_____
_____
_____

What moments felt most alive or impactful during the workshop?
_____
_____
_____

Did I notice any patterns in how families interacted with one another?
_____
_____
_____

How did I feel as a facilitator-energised, rushed, connected, uncertain?
_____
_____
_____

If I were to repeat this workshop, what would I change or keep the same?
_____
_____
_____

What did I personally learn about digital wellbeing today?
_____
_____
_____

3. Educator Reflection Template

Educator Self-Reflection - Digital Wellbeing Workshop

Date/Workshop Title: _____

Highlights of the session (what worked well):
_____
_____
_____

Challenges or difficulties (what could improve):
_____
_____
_____

Feedback received from families (summary):
_____
_____
_____

My next steps as an educator:
_____
_____
_____

Personal reflection (feelings, insights, or new ideas):
_____
_____
_____

What did I personally learn about digital wellbeing today?
_____
_____
_____

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