

The First Hour Home. How we stopped fighting over the tablet and started hearing about school.



Three kids, Grade 1, 3 and 4, one kitchen table. This is the page we wish someone had handed us. Stick it on the fridge.

1 Tick what happens in your house

- ☐ You ask "Anong ginawa niyo sa school?" and get "Wala."
- ☐ When you need to finish something, the tablet is the easiest way to keep them quiet.
- ☐ Getting the tablet back turns into crying, bargaining, or a fight.
- ☐ The iPad has caused more fights than anything else in the house.
- ☐ Homework starts after dinner, when everyone is tired.
- ☐ The lesson looks nothing like the one you learned.
- ☐ You have raised your voice over homework and felt bad that same night.
- ☐ You are not sure your child really understood what they took up today.
- ☐ Screen rules are a roller coaster. Strict one week, gone the next.
- ☐ You feel guilty when you are not 100% present.

2 The one question

"Anong ginawa niyo sa school?"

A tired kid answers a big question with one word. Ask a small one instead, and ask it while your hands are busy: at the sink, in the tricycle, at bedtime. Kids talk sideways, not face to face.

"Ano ang pinakamasaya kanina?"

- "Sino ang kasama mo sa recess?"
- "Ano ang pinakamahirap na tinuro ni Teacher today?"
- "May tumawa ba sa class today? Bakit?"

Then stop. Let the silence sit. The second answer is the real one.

Three or more? That is not a lazy kid and not a bad mom. It is where the first hour after school goes. The screen takes it first. By the time you get the tablet back, the studying hour and your patience are both gone, and what is left is after dinner and "Wala."

3 The first-hour routine. What we do at home.

Study first, then screen. Same tablet.

The moment they get home, the tablet does not open on YouTube. It opens on one thing they took up today. Fifteen minutes on a light day, longer with an assignment. The screen is the reward, not the enemy.

Say: "Isang lesson muna, tapos sa 'yo na."

Explain it back. Two minutes.

After the lesson, they teach it to you in their own words. If they can, they understood. If they cannot, that is tonight's one thing to ask about, not tonight's fight.

Say: "Turuan mo ako. Paano 'yun?"

Set the stop before it starts.

Agree on when the screen ends before it begins, and then it ends. Bag packed before dinner. At bedtime: "Kumusta ang araw mo?" and, if you shouted, the sorry, in your own voice.

Say: "Isang oras lang. Tapos, bag muna."