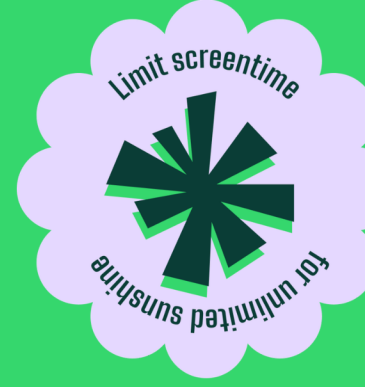
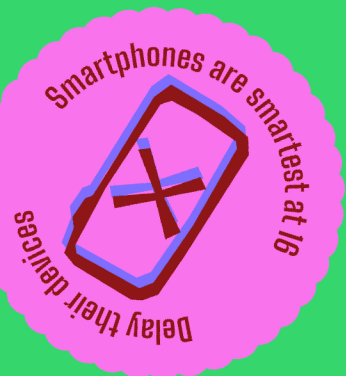


HELP THE MESSAGE STICK



SFCNZ 2026

SPEAKERS LIST



Smartphone Free
Childhood Aotearoa
New Zealand

Our Talks

The SFCNZ speakers are a group of passionate experts dedicated to helping parents, educators, and communities navigate the challenges of raising children in a digital age. Our speakers come from a variety of backgrounds, including education, research, mental health, parenting experts and technology, and are committed to sharing research-led, valuable insights and practical solutions. They are all independent speakers who believe in the work SFCNZ are doing.

Whether you are a school, community group, or corporation, we offer tailored talks, workshops, and courses designed to inform, engage, and empower through in-person or online sessions.

Our experts delve into different areas of research depending on their professional background. You may be interested in:

- A stand-alone session from one speaker
- Or we can work together to build a program incorporating a few speakers and areas of interest over a term or year.

Our sessions are designed to:

- Inform parents and educators about the issue from a research-driven perspective.
- Share expert advice and practical solutions for moving forward.
- Foster community support and solidarity among parents, empowering us to tackle this issue together, because together we are stronger.
- Answer questions and provide guidance on how to create a healthier, more balanced relationship with technology for our young people.



Sexual Content
& Behaviour



Physical Health



Focus &
Brain Change



Mental &
Emotional Health



Social Development



Opportunity Cost

***** 5 Star Reviews

100% of the responses said "the content of the webinar was very useful"

"It was very informative, the statistics presented were shocking but good to know what we as parents are dealing with. It's also good to have the data to make informed decisions for your kids."

Unispace Corporate Webinar

"A very informative, well-researched webinar. The statistics are overwhelming, providing a strong case for delayed smartphone access. This is the information we need as parents of children growing up in a digital world. Let's reclaim childhood."

Mum to 9 yr old and 6yr old.

"My husband and I got so much out of the Our Kids Online talk. The information was pretty shocking, but it really confirmed what we've been thinking and gave us great points to share with other parents and families in our circle. It's so reassuring to see a growing movement toward less smartphone use for kids and teens. The talk also gave us a good reality check about our own screen habits and how they affect our kids. Change really does start with us, and we'll definitely be encouraging other parents to join future webinars!"

Mum to 5 and 8 year olds, Riverview School

"Raising Resilient Kids in a Digital World was fantastic. It was pretty sobering listening to all the ways smartphones and social media are impacting our children's mental health - especially the real-life stories. I'd already decided not to give my son an iPhone next year, and this just confirmed my decision. However I also came away feeling more empowered with some practical tips to make things easier. A must-listen for all parents!"

Mum to an 11yr old and a 9yr old, Point Chev School

"A very informative talk by Dr Marsh. The statistics are overwhelming, providing a strong case for delayed social media and smartphone access. This is the information we need as parents of children growing up in a digital world. Let's reclaim childhood."

Dad to 9 yr old and 6yr old, Balmoral School



Dr Samantha Marsh

SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND · SPEAKER

Samantha is often asked to discuss this topic in the media. However what she is truly passionate about is talking about this complex issue with parents and communities.

BACKGROUND

Samantha is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of General Practice and Primary Healthcare at the University of Auckland. Her PhD focused on the relationship between screen use and childhood obesity in children and adolescents.

Samantha's interests include social media use, youth mental health, and cyberbullying. She approaches these issues through the lens of relationship science, drawing on her 10 years of experience in science communication to share her research with both academic and broader audiences.

THIS TALK FOCUSES ON...

Samantha gives two different talks on screen use and children.

For rangatahi (youth), her presentation focuses on smartphones and social media use, making it suitable for primary, intermediate, and secondary school parents and educators. The first part of the talk explores how social media and other technology are designed, how teens develop, and the mismatch between the two.

The second part is solution-focused, aiming to empower parents and communities to navigate the digital environment effectively and make informed decisions for the well-being of their children.

For tamariki, Samantha's presentation targets parents of kindergarten and early primary school children, addressing a range of screen use topics from TVs to smartphones. It examines how screens impact early childhood development and provides a holistic parenting approach, emphasising the importance of nurturing a strong parent-child relationship.



Public Speaker



Workshop Facilitator



Webinar sessions



Vanessa McHardy

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING
CONSULTANT

Vanessa is an experienced workshop facilitator and presenter. Mother of a teenager, and counsellor and coach to young people and parents.

BACKGROUND

Vanessa McHardy worked for over 20 years in the UK as an Integrative Child Psychotherapist (MA, UKCP registered) and now works in NZ, where her kaupapa focuses on reigniting a love for learning in schools through Life Skills for Mental Health and Wellbeing—a whole school community approach.

Vanessa also provides counselling and coaching for young people and parents.

THIS WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON...

Reclaim Your Family Life with the Digital Reset

In today's tech-driven world, screen time can feel like a constant battle. Vanessa empowers families with practical tools to reclaim balance, foster confidence, and support mental wellbeing.

This powerful, three-step programme helps families:

- Explore their values and priorities
- Identify their true relationship with technology
- Implement real, lasting changes to reclaim family life

Digital Reset Workshop Series

Vanessa facilitates parents with simple, actionable strategies over two sessions, one month apart:

- Navigate the challenges of raising children in the digital age
- Promote emotional resilience and healthy social development
- Foster independence and mindful tech use
- Reduce stress and create a more balanced family dynamic
- Look at the different impact on girls and boys



Public Speaker



Workshop Facilitator



Webinar sessions



Adrienne Wood

S P E A K E R • W R I T E R •
P A R E N T C O N S U L T A N T

Adrienne grounds her talks in her experience as a High School teacher, a lecturer in human development, and in parenting her two now grown kids through the “guinea pig years” of smartphone use since 2011.

BACKGROUND

Adrienne offers support to both parents and professionals with troubling or complex child and adolescent behaviours through her business Heartsync NZ.

Her current role on Faculty with the Neufeld Institute alongside her past experience puts her in a unique position to make sense of what is behind our kids’ drive toward screens in the Digital Age we now find ourselves in.

THIS TALK FOCUSES ON...

Teens and their Screens (Targets parents of 11-18yrs)

- Understand key risky online behaviours that are driving the adolescent mental health crisis
- Learn about recent research-based protocols around digital safety
- Get insight into the root cause behind teens’ drive towards screens grounded in instinct, emotion and the attachment-circuitry of the brain.

Raising Resilient Kids in a Digital World

Can be tailored to target either teaching professionals or parents of teens and pre-teens

- Discover the roots of resilience based in rest, play and emotional expression
- Uncover the impact of screens on the natural resilience process
- Equips parents and professionals to cultivate resilience in kids amidst the challenges of the digital age



Holly Jean Brooker

EDUCATOR · PARENTING
PRESENTER · ADVOCACY
AND CO-FOUNDER AT
MAKES SENSE

Holly Brooker is a passionate communicator, motivated to empower parents to understand the tech landscape and how to tackle tech.

BACKGROUND

Holly is involved with two groups focused on combating child exploitation online and human trafficking and has a solid understanding of the harm kids experience online in New Zealand.

She was previously a high school teacher of health education and social sciences.

Holly holds a BA Majoring in Political Studies and Sociology, a Graduate Diploma in Education and is currently undertaking a Masters in Public Policy at the University of Auckland focusing on online harm.

THIS TALK FOCUSES ON...

This talk is focused on guiding our kids through a digital world – online safety, screen-time, social media, gaming and how to set a healthy family culture around device use.

Holly wears a few hats. She is a PR specialist and communications specialist. She has worked in parenting education, media and content development with Parenting Place for 5 years.

Holly is the co-founder of Makes Sense, working in advocacy and education around online harm to kids, calling for better regulation for child protection online from Government and industry.



Public Speaker



Workshop Facilitator



Webinar sessions



Martin Hughes

TEACHER · CHANGE
MANAGER · LEARNER
ADVOCATE · PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING COACH

Martin delivers professional learning experiences that are Meaningful, Memorable and Motivating.

BACKGROUND

Martin has worked with schools and communities across New Zealand over the last 20 years to raise learning outcomes and lower screen time for students and to reduce stress and workload for teachers and caregivers.

He is a certified Google trainer, Change Manager and Professional Learning Coach.

THIS TALK FOCUSES ON...

Martin's talk is equally accessible for students (year 5 and above), teachers and caregivers. Screentime is a complicated issue and so Martin's talk covers the following topics:

- Brain development
- Learning
- Parenting
- Adulting
- Managing changes of habits within a school, whanau and community
- Technical solutions as part of an holistic approach

When we develop a shared understanding of how our brains develop and thrive, collective action around screentime can become much easier for everyone to manage.



Richie Hardcore

SOCIOLOGIST · SPEAKER ·
EDUCATOR · MENTOR ·
MENTAL HEALTH AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
PREVENTION ADVOCATE

Richie is a speaker and educator, whose work discusses domestic and sexual violence prevention, pornography, Masculinity and mental health.

BACKGROUND

Richie has runs a private practices as an educator and consultant, as well as working with New Zealand's Ministry of Social Development #Change Is Possible campaign.

His work on mental health and sexual violence prevention bought him to study a Masters of Sociology and the impacts social media and smart phone use has had on society, especially our youth.

THIS TALK FOCUSES ON...

Richie's presentation covers some of the risks that unrestricted access to phones and social media has on young people. These include online predators, exposure to pornography and sexual content, and online bullying.

He also presents the research and argumentation of how social media is negatively affecting mental health, and body image, as well as being part of the driver of political radicalization and social polarization.

Richie has spoken with tens of thousands of students in high schools, as well working within businesses, government agencies and NGOs.



Public Speaker



Workshop Facilitator



Webinar sessions



Rob Cope

OUR KIDS ONLINE
DOCUMENTARY MAKER
· SPEAKER · ONLINE
SAFETY ADVOCATE

Rob is a world class story teller,
documentary maker and online safety child
advocate

BACKGROUND

Rob Cope is co-founder and director of Our Kids Online, a New Zealand initiative protecting children from online harm. A filmmaker and advocate, he began his work after seeing the pressures his own children faced.

Rob now leads parent education events across Aotearoa, combining research and storytelling to equip families, while also lobbying for stronger online safety legislation.

THIS TALK FOCUSES ON...

Rob's powerful parent sessions shine a light on the hidden risks of the digital world. With humour and honesty, he unpacks how smartphones, gaming, social media, and online predators impact children's wellbeing, sleep, and development. His talks focus on equipping families with practical tools to set boundaries, foster open conversations, and create safer, screen-smart homes. Rob's message is clear: informed, courageous parenting can protect childhood in the digital age.



Public Speaker



Workshop Facilitator



Webinar sessions