SUPPORT, LEARN, & EDUCATE

We know the benefits of social media and digital communications for families who can't always be together, the internet lets us all stay closer than ever before. Whether it's the long distance video calls via FaceTime or the sharing of photos on Facebook or Instagram, we have created a way to stay connected when you can't be together in person. What's important for children is that parents and caregivers effort to understand that the internet isn't going to disappear or magically become a safer place. Digital citizenship is an active part of the connected reality for youth and the majority of youth want to use the digital tools in their lives for positive connections, to help create, and develop their opportunities for the future.

EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND LOOK FOR RED-FLAGS

Youth who are interested in art, creative or professional writing, or music can use social media to find numerous useful resources to engage their talents - being able to promote their work is the greatest equalizer that parents and caregivers may overlook. It might appear as if the children are only watching YouTube and wasting time or scrolling through social media without direction, but they're part of a major economy that values creation, content, and community participation. Kids need guidance to navigate this new world as social media is the conduit to an audience that can help raise a profile as young people explore their talents, parents and caregivers are key participants in supporting that experience. As you consider how kids use these tools, keep in mind that we are more aware of the anxieties and frustrations that are associated with concerns about how kids use social media and many speculate a number of concerns that the internet is contributing to an increase in mental health problems. There isn't enough evidence yet to say whether this is the case, but it is important to look for any red-flag behaviours of concerns that are explored or triggered by social media or various internet uses.

BEST PRACTICES

KEEP AN OPEN MIND ABOUT DIGITAL TRENDS
EMBRACE THE POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES THAT EXIST FOR YOUR CHILDREN WITH TECHNOLOGY - EXPLORE TOGETHER AND SET BOUNDARIES
FIND A HEALTHY BALANCE BETWEEN SUPPORT, INTEREST, AND MAINTENANCE OF PRIVACY
BE EXCITED ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE INTERESTS OF YOUR CHILD
CONSIDER HOW YOU MODEL BEHAVIOUR INVOLVING TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUR CHILDREN
CONSIDER WHAT YOUR CHILDREN HAVE SEEN AS FAMILY TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES
AND REFLECT ON HOW THEIR DIGITAL VALUES HAVE BEEN GUIDED