

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT
WITH KIDS AND TECHNOLOGY



Recent surveys show that young people should have a voice in the design of the rules and regulation of tech and social media use because the home & school rules created by adults have a direct impact on the quality of their lives and opportunities for communication with peers.

While parents & caregivers may understandably be concerned about various online risks, youth indicate that needed guidance and support reflect an understanding of the reasons for rules involving technology. Additionally, kids thrive when ongoing and safe communication with parents & caregivers about tech and internet use isn't judgmental and comparative to how things happened in the past.

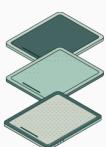


Empowering youth to discuss and care about identity management is important as they do care about online privacy. The conflict for parents and caregivers is that youth see the value of privacy differently as they are the product of the digital world we have created. Many of the values that fit into privacy management do not fit with many online platforms - youth need to be able to discuss privacy, passwords, and online safety in a manner that reflects their value of social sharing and community participation.

CONTROL THE TECH



Research has found that parents' use of digital controls can be bypassed by youth and many adults find tech controls to be difficult to use. Also, technology controls didn't always work as anticipated or were hard to understand - parents who introduce technology limiting tools to their children and regulation is best introduced at a younger age. Although the tools from apps and technology in the home did not offer the level of protection parents wanted many parents opt for individual control compared to full home control as limiting the internet can be constrictive for adult use.



- Parents and caregivers concerned with technology use by youth should encourage the development of processes that engage an understanding of the benefits of balance in tech use, how privacy can be maintained, and where consent and participation can be encouraged in digital environments and personal tech use.
- Concerns about screen time and participation in other activities should highlight the importance of balance in technology decisions that reflect the benefits of both online and face-to-face connections, and how technology can be used to enhance relationships and hinder healthy communications.

Recognizing that children are growing up in a world without information boundaries, encouraging healthy dialogues, offering trusted resources, and having open and safe space to discuss any issue that kids experience online are the best safety tools that parents and caregivers can offer - when in doubt, talk to other adults about their experiences involving kids and technology.

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT

Parents & caregivers need to acknowledge that youth today are growing up in a connected world and are the products of a new age where we all rely on social media, on-demand media, & digital communications to facilitate our work, our families, and our social lives. The reality for youth is that they are now a product of a world we have created where technology is interconnected in our everyday lives yet we are quick to malign how our children use or approach it. Technology use is expected for youth today, we're not going back in time.

RECOGNIZE THAT THE EXPECTATIONS ARE DIFFERENT

Youth use technology as a normal part of their home, school, and entertainment lives - what's important for parents & caregivers to understand is that an authoritarian approach to controlling how children use the internet can backfire drastically. Digital literacy supports for parents & caregivers can make the transition easier for families to open dialogues about how to use technology in the home and away - demonstrating leadership good tech use and balance is key.

Kids regularly use technology in the classroom and that educator guided use translates to better use at home compared to previous connected generations of youth, especially as media literacy and appropriate use become more normalized from the classroom out. If families offer non-judgmental opportunities for young people to share their experiences with technology and how they interact with known and unknown persons, youth begin to recognize that the safest audience they may have to find advice about their online experiences begins at home. If we consider four main things that kids want from the Internet, entertainment, social connection, information access, and personal space - adults need to assess how they open dialogues about oversight, distraction, fears of unknown persons, and screen time regulation.

ADDRESS THE CONCERN IN A NEW WAY

Kids today are going online at younger ages, partially because parents actively introduce forms of technology to support the raising of children – handing a child technology at an early age requires parents & caregivers to be actively involved in the digital lives and guidance of good technology habits. Some adults feel completely out touch when it comes to technology, but as a reminder, parents & caregivers have an important role to play in helping youth navigate safely sharing on social media, playing video games, and opening conversations about the negative experiences kids have online involving unknown persons, threats to safety, hyper sexualization, and cyberbullying.