

October 2022



Digital Life Newsletter For Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This month's Newsletter covers HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED MODERN PARENTING. I hope you find it interesting and informative.

Olga Garey
WHS School Library Media Specialist

Parenting has changed drastically over the last few decades as technology has increasingly become part of everyday life. Thirty years ago, parents had to help their children navigate the complexities of interpersonal relationships, but the majority of those relational dynamics happened face to face. Today's parents must also factor in how technology impacts the way children interact and communicate. While some aspects of parenting have arguably become easier as a result of technological advances, new challenges have arisen as well.

Here are a few positives and negatives about this brave new world of modern parenting. Let's start with the good news. The Internet is a wealth of information. From the leading parenting experts to aggregated social information and forums, parents have never had more support and resources that are readily and freely available, twenty-four hours a day.

Common sense dictates that each parent must filter advice and information through their own belief system and household rules. It can be extremely helpful, however, to have a wide network of support through online parenting groups and forums as issues with children arise.

Activity is easier to track

Connected devices have made it much easier for parents to keep an eye on their children. From video baby monitors to GPS-enabled smartwatches and smartphone tracking apps, parents can have more peace of mind than ever before that their children are safe.

Technology continues to evolve and the “Internet of Things” (IoT) brings even more connected devices to households. In tandem, companies continue to provide additional parental controls (and improve existing controls) to make it even easier for parents to ensure their children are safe — both in their physical location and in their online activities.

It’s easier to capture and share memories

The days of carrying roll after roll of film to the store to get developed are over. When a roll of film could only proffer a couple of dozen photos, we were much more judicious about the memories we chose to capture. Today, nearly everyone has a high-quality camera and video equipment in their purse or back pocket. Smartphone cameras continue to become more sophisticated with each new release.

It’s incredibly important to live in the moment with your children, instead of living life behind your smartphone screen. It’s also a wonderful thing to be able to snap a photo of your sweetly sleeping baby or the first time your toddler kicks a soccer goal. Just a few decades ago, it used to be a luxury to own a video camera. Today, video clips are just a “screen unlock” away.

Just as powerful as accessibility to modern camera equipment is the ability to share videos and photos with family and friends. Thanks to the widespread availability of cloud storage and its widely available photo-sharing apps, you can save, edit, and share entire albums with services like Google Photos and the Apple “Photos” app.

The Negatives

Now that we’ve explored some of the many benefits of technology on modern parenting, let’s take a closer look at the potential negatives.

The impact of social media

We just discussed how fun and simple it can be to capture and share some of life's most precious moments. A word of caution, however: just because it's easy to share the things our kids do, doesn't mean we should. Take care to protect your child's digital footprint and think twice about who and what you share when it comes to your children. When used properly and with your child's safety in mind, social media offers many benefits. Unfortunately, when it's misused, social media presents the potential for a serious negative impact for you and your child.

Social media is a hotbed of comparison. We tend to put our best foot forward in our online personas. We show the best aspects of our lives and carefully curate an envious highlight reel. It can lead to anxiety and a "fear of missing out" as we look at the online lives of others and worry that ours doesn't compare.

Friends and family who post about their "perfect children" may lead us to compare our child's grades, sports performance, appearance and behavior to others, and subconsciously project a feeling of inadequacy on ourselves — and worse — on our children.

The bottom line? Be careful what you share and with whom, and when you scroll through your social media feeds, remember that you're likely looking at an edited version of someone's life without the bumps and problems that we all experience as parents.

More disconnect within families

The strange contradiction of technology is that while it keeps us connected, it can also create a disconnect when it comes to building relationships between children and their parents.

Think about how much time you spend looking at your computer or smartphone. Has that time gradually (or sharply) increased since you bought your first smartphone? Distracted parenting is a real issue and one that affects even the most vigilant and loving of parents.

Even something as innocent and simple as checking a text message while your child is asking you a question can make them feel unimportant and deteriorate trust. If your child feels as if they are competing with your smartphone to get your attention, negative habits and behaviors can soon set in.

Technology has the potential to creep into times that are typically devoted to building relationships. Consider removing devices from meals, serious conversations, and family activities to remain mindful and present.

Screen time and playtime

While quality screen time spent on age-appropriate apps can be beneficial to your child's development, it requires strict time limits and parental controls. Excess screen time has been one of the most influential (and controversial) factors in modern parenting. It is often used as a reward or to placate children when they are upset. Conversely, parents take screen time away as a punishment for misbehavior.

Keep a healthy balance between screen time and playtime. Physical play not only helps develop healthy exercise habits and physical dexterity, but it also helps spur creativity and imaginative play.

Safety and well being

Before the Internet, parents were primarily concerned about the physical safety of their children and the limited programming they were exposed to on television and the radio. The Internet poses an immense number of new safety concerns for today's parents, including cyberbullying, inappropriate content, excessive screen time and more.

Take an active role in your child's online presence. Have conversations about responsible digital citizenship early. Keep an open dialogue with your child about the dangers of predatory behaviors or content online. There is no denying that technology has changed modern parenting. It's up to each parent to make sure the changes are positive when it comes to the wellbeing of our children.

All the information in this article was taken from -
<https://jelliesapp.com/blog/technology-modern-parenting>

