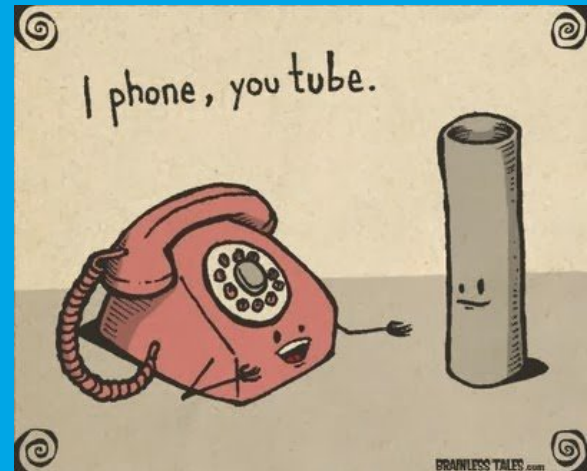


# #KidsMentalHealth and the Digital World

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# Goals for Today

What we know  
about kids &  
technology



Risk & Benefits



Tips for  
supporting kids  
use of  
technology

In 1939, The New York Times predicted that TV would fail because people wouldn't have time to stare at a screen.





# Digital Natives

- First generations to grow with new technology. Spent their entire lives surrounded by computers, video games, digital music, cell phones, and other tools of the digital age





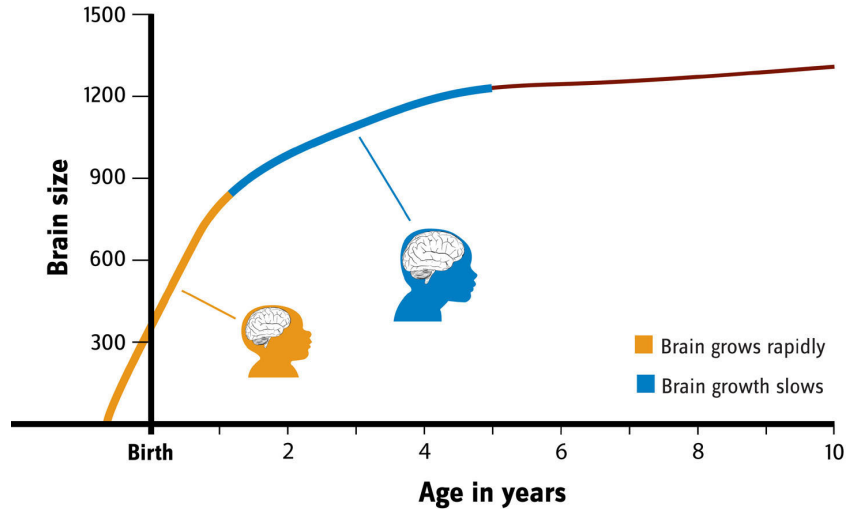
DIGITAL NATIVES

DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS

MIND THE GAP!



# Human Brains



- First three years of life the brain triples in volume
- Stimuli & challenges are essential for development

# Screen Time

18  
months  
or  
younger



No screens are still best.

The exception is live video chat with family and friends.

18  
months  
to 2  
years



Limit screen time and avoid solo use.

Choose high-quality educational programming, and watch with kids to ensure understanding.

2 to 5  
years



Limit screen time to an hour a day.

Parents should watch as well to ensure understanding and application to their world.

6 or older

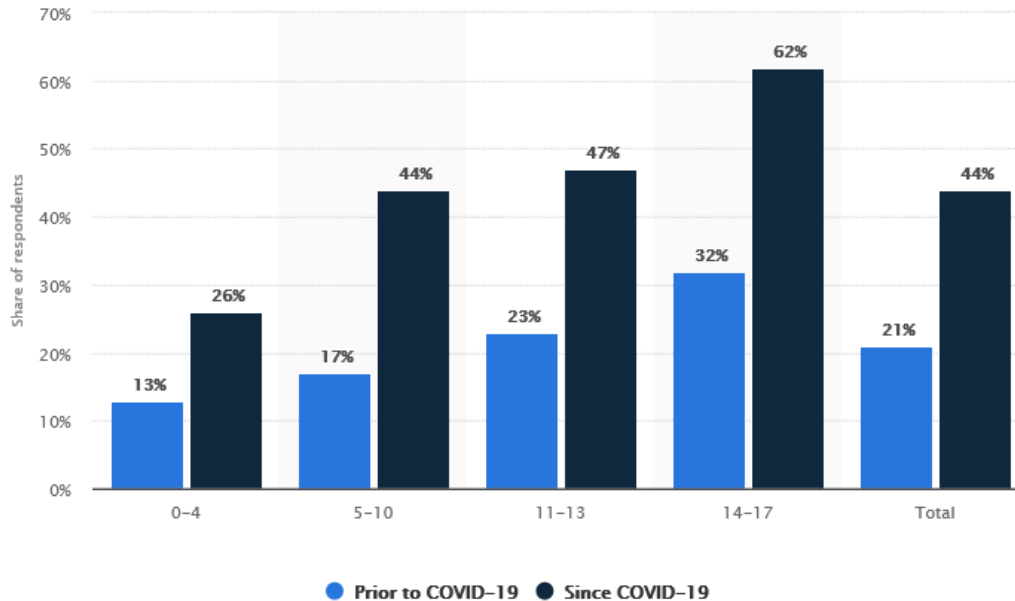


Place consistent limits on the time spent and types of media.

Don't let screen time affect sleep, exercise or other behaviors.



# Children and teens from United states who spent more than four hours daily using electronic devices



**It's more about what's not happening**



**LANGUAGE**  
Increased screen time is linked to delayed language acquisition and academic challenges later in life.



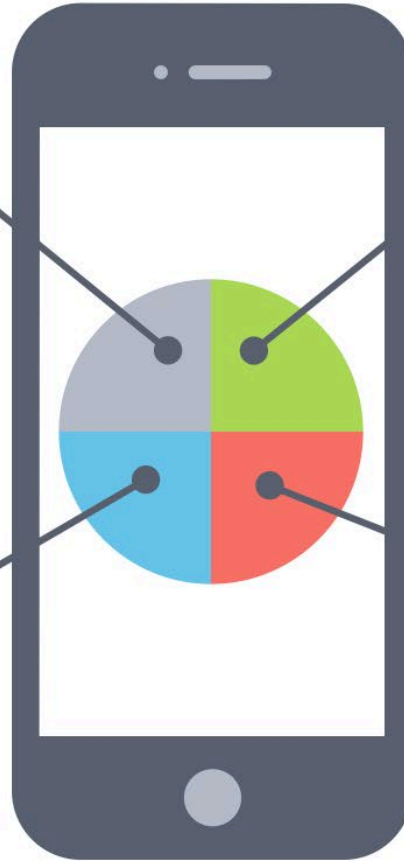
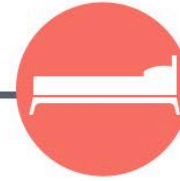
**MOTOR**  
Use of screens at an early age hinders the development of gasping, cutting, handwriting, tying shoes, and painting — fine motor skills.



**COGNITIVE**  
Screens increase the presence of hyperactivity, impulsive behaviors, and difficulty self-regulating.



**PHYSICAL**  
Blue light emitted by screens causes disturbances in sleep patterns. This light is stated to have the same effect as caffeine.





## Problematic internet use

- Consist of three main factors
  - Obsession
  - Neglect
  - Lack of control

# Social Media

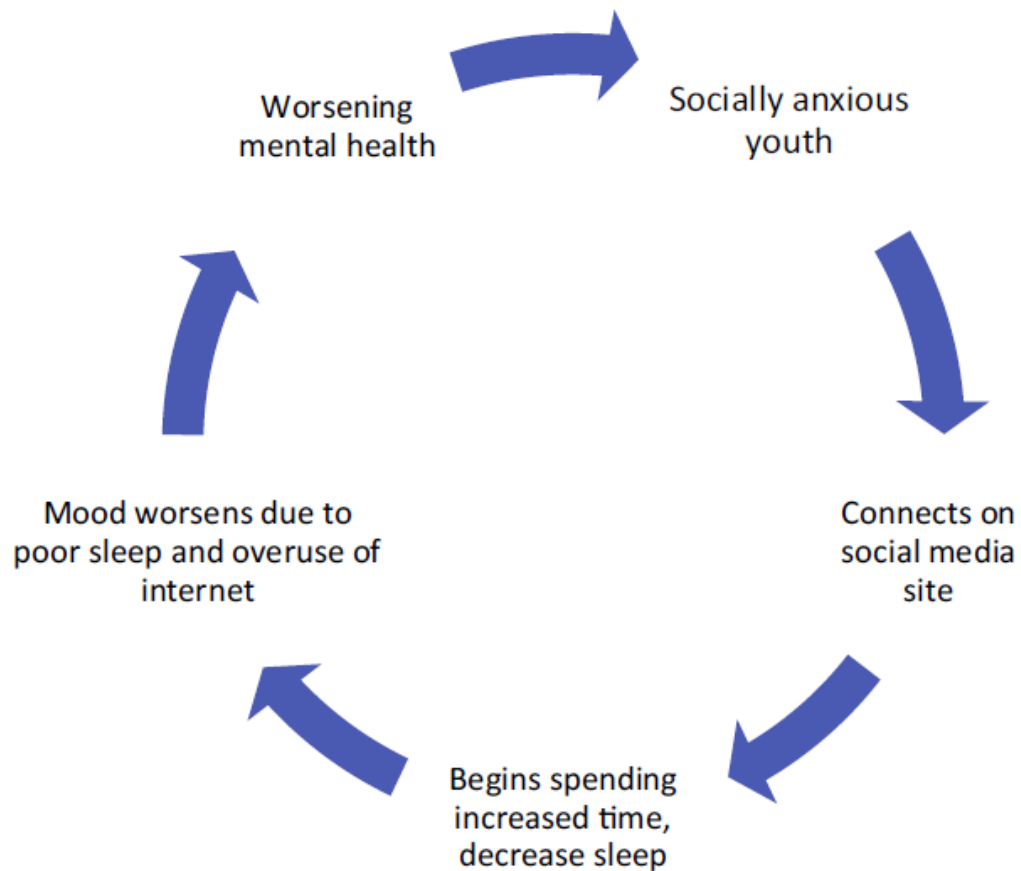






## The good, the bad, the ugly

- Computer Mediated Communication
- Connection vs. Comparison
  - Appearance-related social media consciousness
- Social Media Disorder
  - Uncontrollable urges to be on social media and maintain active presence at all times.
  - Need for approval in form of likes and retweets.



**Fig. 1.** Cycle of socially anxious youth and social media.

## **Risks for Developing Problematic Internet Use/Consequences of PIU**

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History of premorbid mental health concerns

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Loneliness

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Shyness

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Preference for online social interactions

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Great need for social assurance

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High levels of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

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Use social media for more than 2 h daily

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Multiple social media accounts

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*Case Example 1:* A 10-year-old with long history of anxiety; separation concerns, social phobia, generalized anxiety concerns has open access to constant news feed and recent mass shootings, COVID deaths, and natural disasters has led to further fears of leaving home and returning to school.

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## Benefits of technology

- Identity exploration and expression
- Increased creativity
- Augmenting real-world social relationships
- Access to health-related information
- Destigmatizing mental health forums
- Companionship for members of marginalized groups

Risks for Developing Problematic Internet Use/Consequences of PIU	Benefits of Online Engagement
History of premorbid mental health concerns	Identity exploration and expression
Loneliness	Practice with self-disclosure
Shyness	Increased creativity
Preference for online social interactions	Augmenting real-world social relationships
Great need for social assurance	Access to health-related information
High levels of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	Increased availability of mental health treatments
Use social media for more than 2 h daily	Destigmatizing mental health forums
Multiple social media accounts	Companionship for members of marginalized groups
<p><i>Case Example 1:</i> A 10-year-old with long history of anxiety; separation concerns, social phobia, generalized anxiety concerns has open access to constant news feed and recent mass shootings, COVID deaths, and natural disasters has led to further fears of leaving home and returning to school.</p>	<p><i>Case Example 1:</i> A 13-year-old female adolescent always socially shy, able to connect with peers online to “practice” social conversations and engagement. Family monitors to ensure peers are “real peers”, from school or extracurricular activities.</p>



# Encouraging Healthy Social Media Use

Acknowledge/Accept  
social media is  
important to kids

Privacy

Teach kids what they  
see is crafted and  
not represented of  
IRL

Take social media  
breaks

Limit social media  
accounts

Discuss Digital  
Footprints

# Guidelines for Usage

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Child

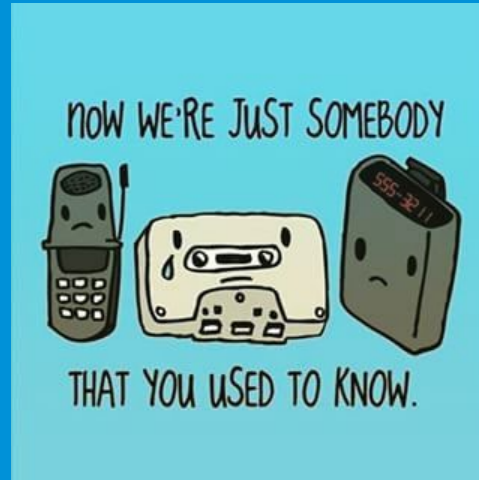
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Context

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Content

# Tips for Providers



# Recommendations for Providers

- Type and frequency of online activities:
  - What are the primary online activities (eg, YouTube, instant messaging [IM], social media, gaming) and how much time is spent on each?
  - What is the general content, and does it include age inappropriate material or interactions?
  - How many social media accounts are currently being used?
- Emotional valence:
  - Is the content viewed and shared primarily positive (liking others' posts, communicating positive messages or stories about one's own life) or negative (unhappy status updates, sharing frustrations, critical or contentious interactions with others)?

# Recommendations for Providers

- Beliefs and attitudes:
  - Do individuals prefer online communication over face-to face interactions? If so, why?
  - How important are either the need for social assurance or FOMO as motivators for online engagement?
- Balance of screen time use vs. physical activity and restful sleep:
  - What times of day are screens being used, and how is screen time impacting sleep habits, quantity, and quality?
- Positive or avoidant coping skills:
  - Is the youth using online activity to extend real life friendships or spending time online avoiding school and other interpersonal interactions?



# mHealth & eHealth Interventions

- mHealth (apps) can be used to help youth better engage in treatment
  - Reminders to take medication (e.g., Round Health Medicine Reminder and Pill Tracker),
  - Track mood (e.g., Moodtrack Diary), keep thought diaries (e.g., Moodnotes Thought Journal)
  - Practice self-regulatory skills such as mindfulness (e.g., Calm, Headspace).
- eHealth interventions for acute and chronic health conditions
  - Online programs and games have demonstrated effectiveness as tools for children with preoperative anxiety, anticipatory dental anxiety, and anxiety comorbid with chronic physical conditions

# Finding Helpful Apps

- <https://mindapps.org/Apps>



- <https://psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/mental-health-apps/evaluations>



APP **ADVISOR**

An American Psychiatric Association Initiative

Sample App Evaluations

# Take Home Messages



# Keep the Pillars in Place

Required Amount of Sleep

Good Nutrition

Physical Activity

Connecting IRL

Completing Responsibilities

# Overall Considerations

Shape	Shape behaviors rather than try to radically change them
Create	Create fun family challenges around
Use	Use technology as a reward not a privilege
Connect	Connect with your kids through technology
Practice	Practice what you preach & set the example





American Academy  
of Pediatrics



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**Table 2**  
**Resources for families**

Resource	Link to Resource	Potential Use
Facts for Families Guide by the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)	<a href="https://www.aacap.org/aacap/families_and_youth/facts_for_families/fff-guide/FFF-Guide-Table-of-Contents.aspx">https://www.aacap.org/aacap/families_and_youth/facts_for_families/fff-guide/FFF-Guide-Table-of-Contents.aspx</a>	Downloadable materials to guide parents in matters related to social media and internet use, including documents titled "Internet Use in Children", "Listening to Music and Watching Music Videos", "Movies, Media, and Children", "News and Children", "Social Media and Teens", "TV Violence and Children", "Video Games and Children: Playing with Violence", and "Watching TV/Screen Time and Children"
Healthy Children.org website by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)	<a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx</a>	Practical guidelines and support for families around mindful media use from birth through adolescence
Age-Based Media Reviews for Families by Common Sense Media	<a href="https://www.commonsensemedia.org/">https://www.commonsensemedia.org/</a>	Guidelines for parents around media use, and independent ratings of appropriateness of social media apps and games for youth of various ages
The App Evaluation Model by the American Psychiatric Association (APA)	<a href="https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/mental-health-apps/the-app-evaluation-model">https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/mental-health-apps/the-app-evaluation-model</a>	Evaluation of mental health apps including ease of use, privacy and safety, clinical foundation, and therapeutic benefits.