

Raising digital kids

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Overview

- Potential harm of digital technologies?
- Five steps parents can take to help raise digital kids
- End with a few resources for parents



How harmful are digital technologies?

- Growing concern for the impact of smartphones, social media etc. on adolescents' mental health.
- Evidence suggests that SM is likely a small but meaningful contributor to adolescents' well-being in both good and bad ways
 - Depression and anxiety
 - But also social connection and happiness





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Before we jump in, how to apply this advice to your specific life

- Parenting is obviously not the same for 2 and 18-year-olds
 - Interpret this through your specific kids
 - Recognize that many of you have years of established rules/norms in your house.
 - Going home tonight and trying to upend those norms will likely be met with...resistance.
- This advice will work best for kids in elementary school, but can be adapted to older kids as well.
 - (You might notice that it applies to adults as well...🤔)



1. Protect kids' sleep

- Smartphones interfere with kid's sleep, and this predicts practically any/all problems
 - Keep phones/devices out of bedrooms at nighttime
 - Get them an alarm clock!
 - For older kids, integrate this into a conversation about sleep (and exhaustion), as well as disconnecting in general.



2. Teach kids to limit their use, and take breaks

- Set targeted limits for amount of screen use
 - Establish no-phone periods (e.g. dinner time and bedtime) and brainstorm how to take breaks
 - Aim to reduce “mindless media time” first
 - Teach kids to monitor how much time they’re on their phones and SM (e.g. Apple’s screen time settings is a good tool)
 - Be respectful of the challenges of disconnecting



3. Have conversations about the good aspects of these technologies

- Have **conversations**, about the **good (useful/helpful/enjoyable)** aspects.
 - Start by asking them (non-loaded) questions.
 - Acknowledge the aspects they like about tech.
 - Seek their input and ask for their help.



4. Have conversations about the problematic aspects of these technologies

- Have **conversations** about the **problematic** aspects of these technologies.
 - Active vs. passive use
 - Reality vs. what's presented online
 - Social comparison
 - Bullying, sexting, stranger danger, disclosing personal information, etc.



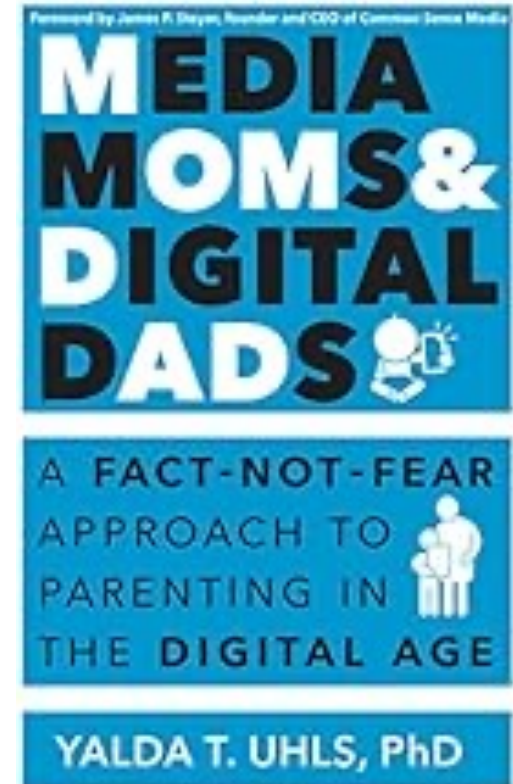
5. Model these healthy digital behaviors for your kids

- Most parents are guilty of using these technologies in the very ways we want our kids to avoid (I know I have been).
 - How many of you used your phone as your alarm clock this morning?
 - How many of you check your email at dinner?
- Reflect on your own use.
 - Sometimes there *are* differences, but you should be able to explain those differences.
 - But let's be honest with ourselves.



Resources

- [Common Sense Media](#)
- [Center for Digital Thriving's "Project Zero"](#)
- *Media Moms & Digital Dads: A Fact-not-fear approach to parenting in the digital age.*



Questions?

