One-Page Summaries:

Technology Addiction & Online Threats

Empowered Parents Summit 2024

Strategic Parenting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Standing Up to Social Media's Toxic Culture: How to Fight Child Sexualization and Pornography

Dr. Gail Dines & Dr. Mandy Sanchez

"Our kids can't get away from those sexualised images, no matter where they look. And in the Western world, women are portrayed as objects for pleasure. That's going to mess with our kids' heads and negatively affect how they see themselves and others."

Online risks

Pornography is no longer something adults are watching behind closed doors anymore. It's everywhere, from the ads we see to the movies we watch, and it's shaping the way our children see themselves and others. This **hypersexualised culture** we live in is having a big impact on their social, emotional, and sexual development, and we need to talk about it.

What's happening on social media nowadays is pretty scary, especially for our young girls. They're facing all sorts of challenges and pressures, from viral challenges that put their lives at risk to mean-girl behaviour and cyberbullying. It's not easy being a kid these days, and we need to support them through it.

Everyday conversations

Parents, in today's world, it's crucial to be proactive in protecting our children's well-being. That means more than just setting rules; it's about fostering open, ongoing **conversations**. Start these talks early and keep them going regularly. Create a safe space where your children feel comfortable discussing their online experiences and asking questions.

It's important to approach these conversations with understanding and compassion, not judgment. Our kids are dealing with a lot out there, and they need us to be a safe space where they can talk about anything.

Educating the kids

Make sure your children understand the potential risks of pornography and the dangers lurking on social media platforms. Teach them **critical thinking skills** so they can navigate the digital world with caution.

Don't be afraid to use everyday situations as teaching moments. You know, like when you see something sketchy online or in an ad, don't shy away from asking your kids what they think about it. You want them to question what they see and make smart choices.

Choosing Wisely: Not All Parental Apps Are Safe for Your Kids

Fareedah Shaheed

"Being involved in your child's world is crucial because you can't protect them if you don't understand where they're coming from."

The two-way street

You're probably not exactly thrilled when you see your child glued to their screens for what seems like hours on end. And it's not just the time they spend on tech that bothers you; it's the feeling that they're slipping away from you, lost in this digital world.

To make matters worse, while you're trying to protect your child from harm online, the very tools you use to monitor their activities can sometimes be **turned against you**. It's like a double-edged sword; while you're keeping an eye on them, they could be doing the same thing right back at you.

The secret to bonding

Connecting with your kids in today's digital world is the best way to build trust. Sure, you might feel like you're lightyears away from understanding their obsession with YouTube or gaming, and it can be tempting to just throw your hands up and walk away. But that's not the solution.

Instead, use what they already love to connect with them. If they're all about watching YouTubers or gaming streams, ask them questions and show genuine interest (even if it's not exactly your cup of tea).

Yes, it might be annoying when they're babbling on about Roblox or Minecraft, but those moments are **golden opportunities** for connection. Instead of brushing them off, see it as an invitation to join them. You don't have to like what they do, but just being present in their world can make all the difference.

Parental control apps

When it comes to keeping your kids safe online, there are some go-to apps you can rely on. You've got Google Family Link, Microsoft Family Safety, and Norton's parental control suite – all solid choices for keeping tabs on what your kids are up to online. And if you're an Apple user, you can use features like Apple Family Sharing.

However, if you see anything labelled as "spy," run the other way. Those apps probably aren't putting your child's safety first. Instead, look for apps that talk about **security measures**, not just privacy policies.

Ways to Get Your Kids Off Screens Without the Drama That You Should Definitely Know About

Dr. Vanessa Lapointe

"Our job as parents is to be the grown-up in the situation, ensuring we respond maturely to our children's natural tendencies to push, question, and be curious, rather than reacting with childlike behaviour."

Common concerns

Parents often ask me about screen time and their kids. They're curious about how much screen time is okay each day and how they can unglue their kids from all those online games and social media platforms **without the drama**.

Another big worry is how to handle it when kids see things online they shouldn't, like **pornography**. It's shocking, but many kids have stumbled upon it by age 10. Parents are desperate to know how to help their kids deal with those kinds of experiences after they happen.

Being their North Star

I always stress the importance of showing our kids healthy screen habits by practising them ourselves. Kids tend to copy what they see, so if we're always on our screens, they're likely to follow suit.
But it's not just about our actions as parents. Many kids get hooked on screens not because of us but because they crave stimulation and connection. Instead of fighting against it, we need to focus on creating a supportive family atmosphere.

As parents, we need to guide our kids and set **the standard** for what's normal in our household. We should be the ones they feel comfortable turning to rather than relying on their peers for direction.

What can you do?

When it comes to screen time management, you should always let your kids know when their time is almost up. Give them a heads-up, like, *"Hey, five more minutes, and then it's outdoor time, okay?"*

Then, when it's time to switch off, they might throw a fit, especially if they're in the middle of a game or something. Think about it: how would you feel if someone interrupted your flow?

So, **be understanding but firm**. Maybe ask them how much more time they need to wrap up, but make sure it's reasonable. Sure, they might not be happy about it, but our job is to guide them through, even when they're not thrilled about it.

Top 3 Habits of
Tech-Intentional Families

Emily Cherkin

"If you aren't a safe place for your children to come, guess where they're going to go? The internet."

The real question

The two questions I get asked the most are *"How much is too much?"* and *"What parental controls do you recommend?"* And those are the wrong questions to ask.

The real issues are 1) whether you, as a parent, genuinely know what your children are doing online and 2) whether you have a **strong relationship** with them. These factors are more powerful than simply monitoring screen time or relying on parental control tools.

Parental rules

Parents really need to start talking openly about screen time with their kids early on. Instead of jumping to conclusions or imposing rules, it's more about being curious and asking questions.

Parental controls might seem like a quick fix, but they don't address the real issues or build a strong relationship with your child. However, holding off on giving smartphones to your kids and setting some ground rules can go a long way in keeping things balanced.

The top 3 habits

Parents should really focus on these top habits of tech-intentional parenting because they lay the foundation for raising kids who are not only savvy but also responsible in the digital world.

Sharing with your kids: Describe your tech activities to your children as you go about them. This way, your kids will get a front-row seat to see how you use technology for different tasks and purposes.

Scary vs. dangerous: We tend to get caught up in these fear-driven narratives, scrolling through gloomy headlines, but the real danger lies in giving kids unrestricted internet or social media access, especially before they're 16. What's crucial here is understanding the genuine risks and not letting fear cloud our judgment as parents.

Be their role model: It's not just about slapping on parental controls and calling it a day. No, it's about showing your kids the ropes when it comes to responsible tech use. Lead by example, offer guidance, and be the mentor your kids need to develop savvy digital habits.

Regain Control: Your Kid Might Be on a 9-Hour Screen Marathon as We Speak

Patrick Ney

"Let's see our children as the gifts they are, helping us grow every day. Let's commit to learning parenting, being present, and giving our love. And let's remember that it's okay to make mistakes; it's part of being human."

In the tech jungle

It's no secret that our kids are spending more time online than ever before, and it's impacting their brains in ways we're only beginning to understand. We're talking about issues like sleep deprivation and decreased cognitive function that are becoming all too common.

It's really up to us as parents to **help them navigate** this digital landscape responsibly. So how do we do it? How do we strike a balance between their digital world and our parenting reality?

Breaking down barriers

It all starts with bridging the gap between our world and their digital world. We should actively enter our children's world. Now, I've had countless conversations with parents who struggle to understand why their kids like what they like. But dismissing it as silly only creates a barrier between you two.

So, instead of approaching it with judgment, we can **try to understand** why they find certain things enjoyable. The more we engage with our kids in their world, the easier it will become to gain their trust and truly connect with them.

Time limits without the drama

If we're too easygoing, giving in to our kids' demands whenever they throw a tantrum or push back against our rules, we're essentially teaching them that our boundaries are flexible, negotiable even.

But on the flip side, if we're too authoritarian, yanking the tablet out of their hands the moment the timer goes off without any room for exceptions, we risk creating unnecessary conflict and resentment.

So, what's the key? **It's about finding that balance**. Sure, there can be exceptions now and then, but for the most part, sticking to the rules we've set helps our kids understand that we mean what we say. It's not about being the bad guy; it's about teaching them responsibility and self-discipline.

Don't Join the 88% of Parents Who Know Their Kid's Phone Code. Teach Them This Instead

Kiva Schuler

"Trying to keep children away from technology completely can backfire. It may make technology seem like a forbidden fruit, leading them to hide their activities from us."

Modern challenges

Have you noticed how much technology has infiltrated our kids' lives these days? It's like they're **glued to screens 24/7** with smartphones, tablets, and computers always within reach.

No wonder many parents are feeling seriously overwhelmed by this digital overload. We're kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, we want to protect our kids from the downsides of too much screen time, but on the other hand, we know that technology is just a part of their world now.

Away from screens

If you want to get your kids off the screen, instead of coming at them, try using **a secret code word**. Pick one special word that you and your family will use to remind each other when it's time to unplug.

For example, let's say you come up with the word *'Marshmallow'* - whenever someone says *'Marshmallow,'* it means it's time to put away the gadgets and hang out together. This can be a super fun way to help everyone remember the screen time rules without all the fuss.

Spending time together

It's really important to tune into your family's energy levels each day, both yours and your kids'. Some days might be low-energy, and that's totally fine! If everyone's feeling drained, it's okay to lean on screen time for a breather. But when you're all feeling more energised, take advantage of that time to bond and have fun together.

Now, when it comes to **peaceful parenting**, it's not about strict rules or always saying no to screens. It's about finding that balance and being flexible. For example, if your child is acting out online, it might be time to limit their screen time and address the issue directly. But if everything's going well, there's no need to micromanage screen time.

Ultimately, what matters most is your connection with your kids. If there's been a bit of a disconnect, prioritise spending quality time together without screens.

"While it's easy to attribute our kids' behaviour to the influence of the internet, the truth is that our actions and guidance as parents have the greatest impact on their growth."

Losing family moments

It's really concerning to see how much screen time is taking over our lives, especially for kids. When they spend so much time in front of screens, they're really missing out on important talks with their parents. And it's not just them; even parents are getting sucked into the screens, which means even fewer chances for us to connect with our kids.

Screens have essentially become the **default babysitter**. We tell our kids to just occupy themselves with screens so we can get stuff done. But in the process, we're losing out on those precious moments of bonding and conversation that are vital for building strong relationships.

Quality time with kids

Start setting up meetings with your kid. Think of it like scheduling important work meetings – except this time, it's with your precious children. Set aside dedicated time each day to connect with them one-on-one, whether it's while you're preparing dinner together or just going for a walk. Turn it into **fun routines** they will look forward to.

While you're at it, skip the scare tactics and go for empowerment instead. Instead of just listing everything that can go wrong, use this opportunity to cheer on their interests and talents. When we focus on what they're good at and what they love, we can help them take control of their screen time in a way that's healthy and balanced.

Respect and patience

When we respect our children and truly honour who they are, something magical happens. They start to trust us more, listen to what we have to say, and feel comfortable opening up about their experiences, even the tough stuff.

So, remember, **trust the process**, believe in our children's potential, and celebrate every step of their journey. No need to fear or worry about whether they're ticking all the boxes perfectly. Each child is unique, and they'll find their own path in their own time.