Strategies for Parents to Support Young Children in the Digital World

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Greetings and Introductions

"You are among the first humans tasked with simultaneously raising kids in both physical and digital worlds"

-Richard Culatta

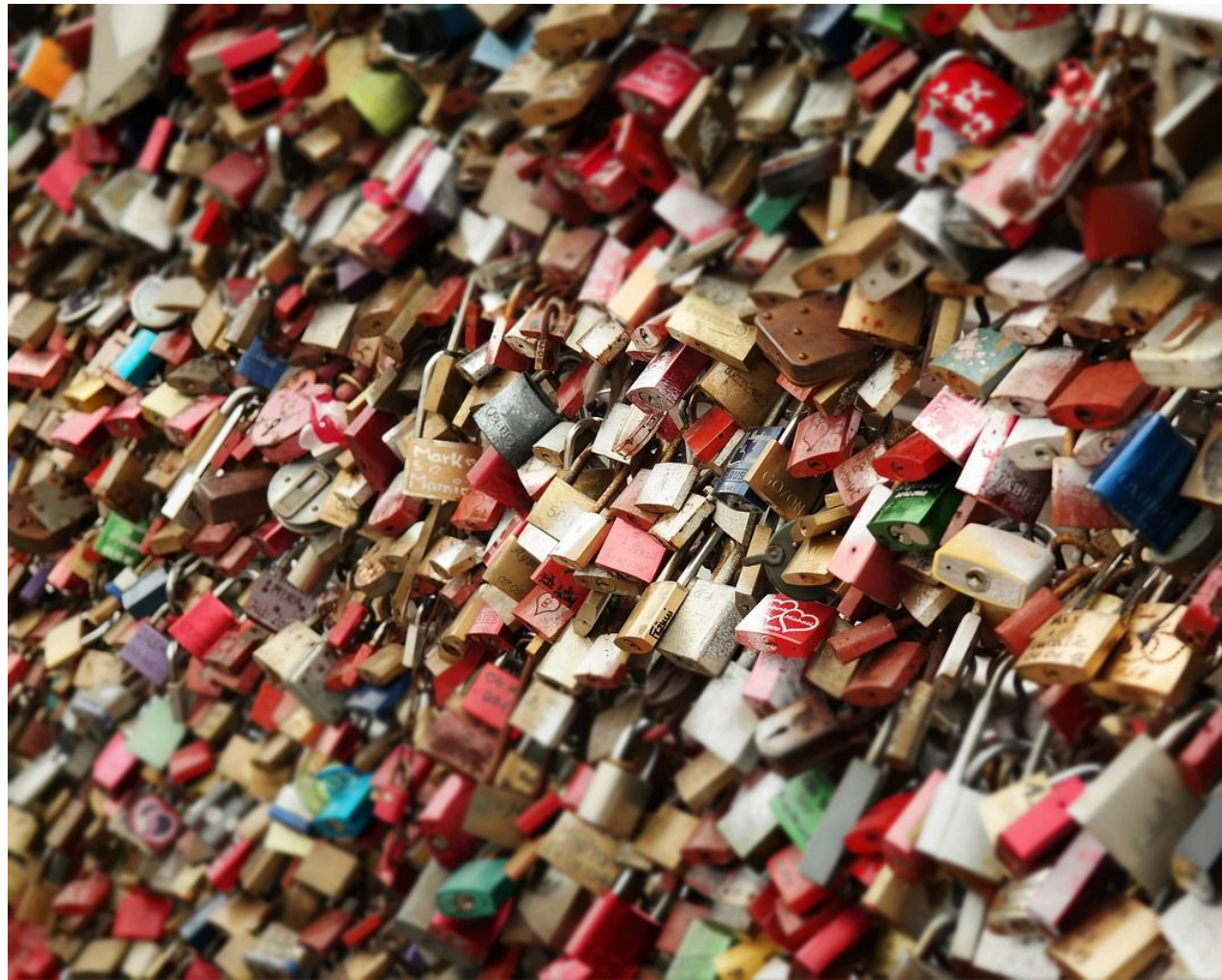Therefore life as a parent feels a bit like this sometimes

Which makes us, by instinct, want to buy a whole lot of this

Or make use
of a few
of these

Which in reality would need to be more like using all of these ... every day....

As a result, on some days this seems likes a really inviting parenting option

Our goal is to share with you some key strategies that will shift us away from old habits and instincts towards more positive, healthy growth opportunities for our children

Inspiration for Today's Presentation
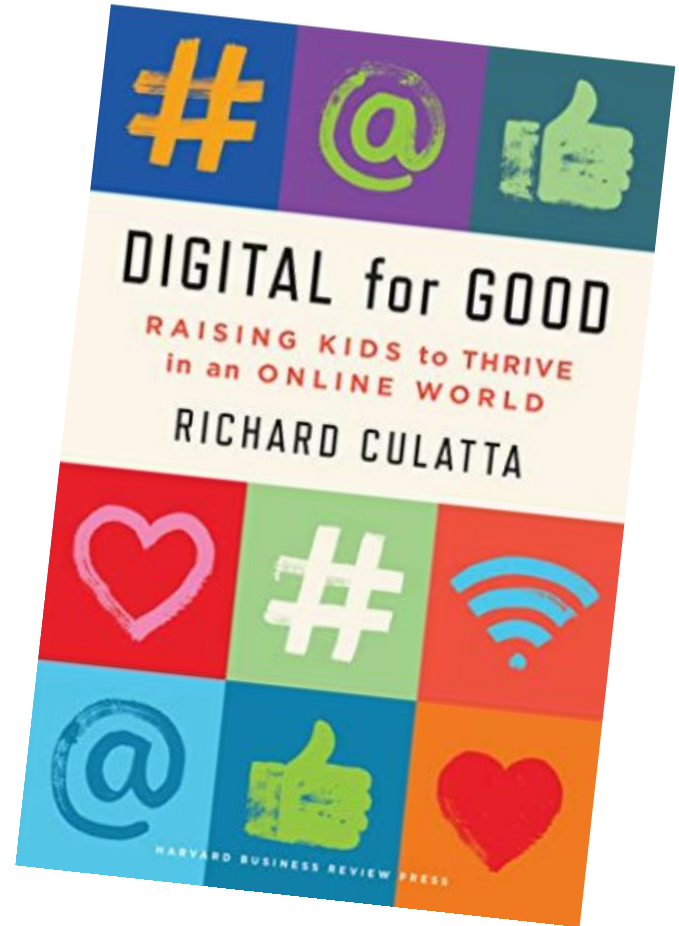and credit to Richard Culatta*

The focus and overall approach is shifting.

Beyond Internet Safety

Digital Do's instead of Digital Don'ts

Building Competency and Agency Within our Children

*This book would make a great Book Club read too

Our Approach to Digital Citizenship in School

- Shifted from Online Safety to Digital Citizenship
- Shifted from "Don'ts" to "Dos"
- Use Common Sense Media lessons
- Connect RULER lessons to online behavior

ISTE.org
DigCitCommit.com
CommonSense.org/education

: during the workshop we played from timestamp 8:59 to 12:32

Articulate and share your family norms and culture

Balanced

I prioritize my time and activities online and offline

Finding Balance: Going Beyond Screen Time

Move away from using "screen time" to set limits
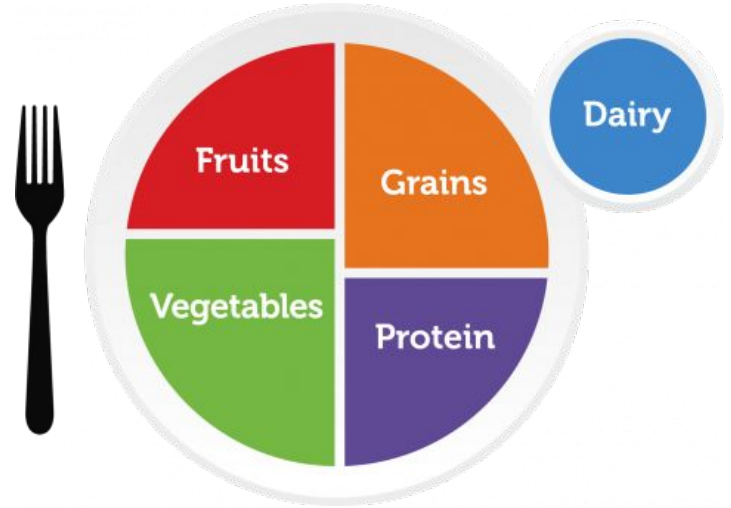
Teach balance

Finding Balance: Going Beyond Screen Time

Expand their *digital palate*

Recognize the value of different digital activities

All digital activities are not created equal

Adapt to the unique needs of each child

Resetting Your Language

"You're addicted to your phone."

Try: "I notice you have not gotten any exercise yet today... spent any time with your family... let's do that for a bit"

"You've been playing that game for too long."

Try: "It seems like your game is getting more of your time than it deserves given that it is mostly based on repetition or luck

"Stop sitting around on the computer all day."

Try: "You need to find an appropriate time to go for a bike ride or run, or you need to spend some time reading today."

"You need to interact with real people."

Try: "Your family wants to spend some times with you as well," or "It's good to have some in-person interactions with your friends too."

Evaluating Apps- Kids "pitch" the app

- How does the app connect me to other people?

- How does the app make money?

- How does the app keep me engaged?

- Does this app make sense for me?

- How does this app handle the issue of privacy?

- What do credible third-party reviews say about the app?

Good Habits to Find Digital Balance

- Use alarm clocks instead of phones

- One charging station in the house in parents room

- Discuss taking tech breaks rather than punishment

- Create Device-use agreements with your children

- Turn off all unnecessary device/app notifications and autoplay features, and program necessary notifications to go silent during family times

- Alert them about intentional app designs

- Praise your child when you've noticed them self-regulating their device

Balanced

I prioritize my time
and activities online
and offline

Informed

I evaluate the accuracy, perspective, and validity of online information

Learning to Love Learning

- "Information is not knowledge"--Einstein

- Encourage curiosity

- Focus more on exploration than mastery

- Create a family culture that values asking good questions vs having the right answers

- Model digital learning with your child; help them find answers with digital tools

Becoming Information Curators

- Model how to identify useful information
  - Ask good questions
  - Choose the best source
  - Evaluate the usefulness
  - Don't forget the power of other people
- Tagging and storing
  - Playlists
  - Album
  - Digital note-taking
  - Tagged content
  - Other people

Building Up Your Curation Skills

- Watch for alternative facts
- Beyond fake news (spidey sense)
  - News or advertising
  - Charts and graph manipulation- keep your eyes out for examples to share
- Updating tool set for virtual spaces
  - Who is the author or creator (what else have they created)
  - Who is paying to make this content available?
  - What is the goal of the author?
  - Is the content endorsed by an organization you trust?
  - Do the URLs check out?
  - Can you validate the claims with another source?
  - How old is the information?
  - Does the content use hyperbolic, alarmist, or emotional language?
  - Do photos or graphs appear to be manipulates?
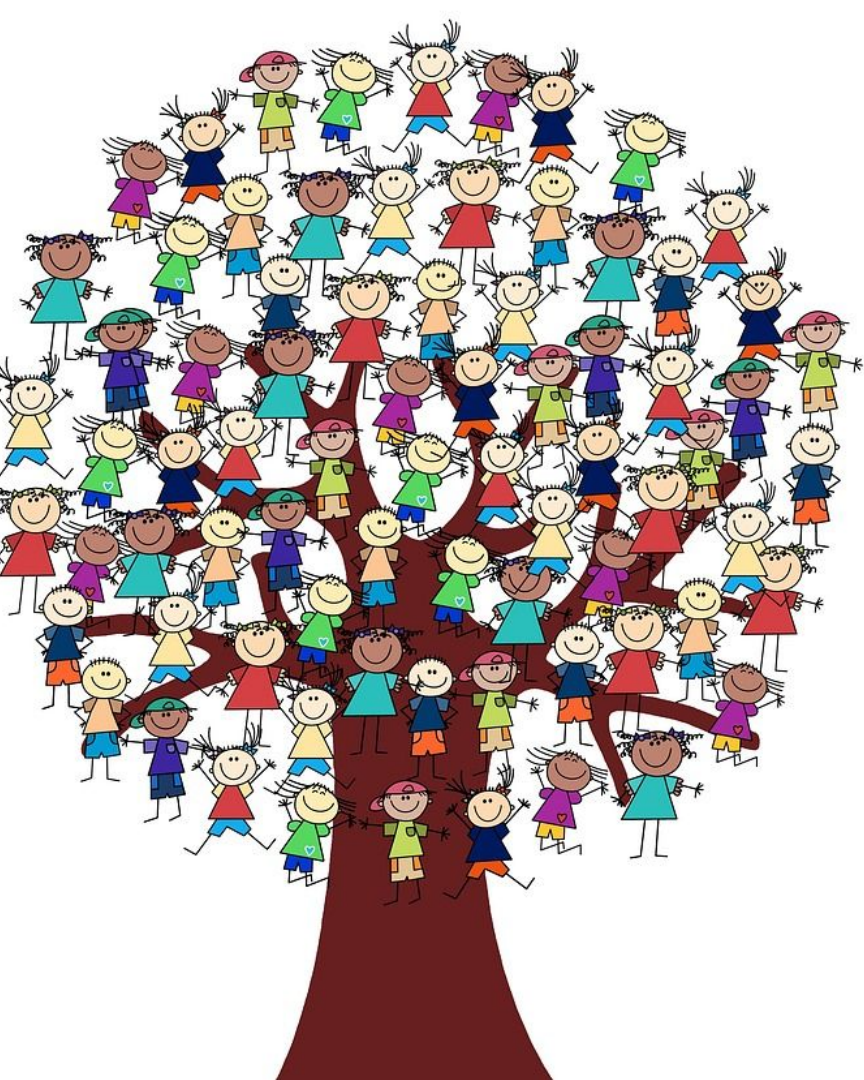
Inclusive

I engage with others online with respect and empathy

Understanding How Our Brains Work
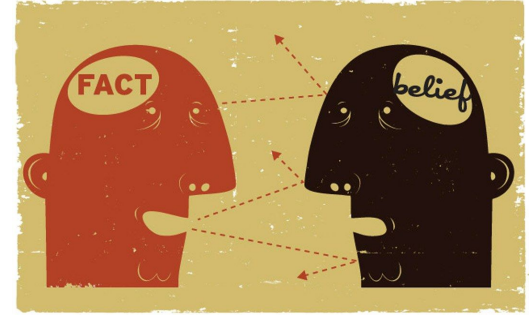
- Cognitive Dissonance
    - Discomfort when we experience conflicting ideas, thoughts, beliefs
    - Raise awareness about cognitive dissonance and how to learn from different viewpoints
- Help them realize there are real people behind the ideas they encounter online
- Double-Whammy effect of online interactions
    - We are shielded from effects of intolerance online
    - Our virtual spaces have been designed to reinforce our own viewpoints

Create a safe environment for others
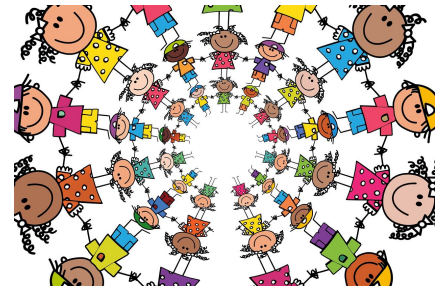
- Alert digital citizens know how to switch from bystanders to upstanders
- Being kind online is being quick to invite and include those who might be left out
- Talk through how to respond if they witness unkindness and celebrate them when they do
- Share examples of things we do and see others do online
- Kindness is contagious too

Engaged

I use technology for civic engagement and to be a force for good

Beyond Entertainment ... Using the Internet for Good

- Model opportunities ourselves- large or small
  - Use your social media accounts to promote charity events or causes
  - Be an active participant in State government through their online comment sections
  - Join forces to work together
    - Smithsonian Institute Digital Volunteers Transcription Center
    - World Archives Project
    - Be My Eyes
    - Foldit
- Strengthening Family Relationships
  - Digital family councils
  - Capturing family experiences

Share with young people that their contributions and opinions matter

PRESS RELEASE from the ALS ASSOCIATION

Ice Bucket Challenge dramatically accelerated the fight against ALS

...reases in ALS research
...ollaborations, dollars leveraged

...endent research organization reported
... Challenge enabled The ALS Association
...round the world by 187 percent. During
...vances, care for people living with ALS
...h from the federal government grew.

als.org

MEDICAL TREATMENTS

The Ice Bucket Challenge wasn't just for social media. It helped fund a new ALS drug

October 1, 2022 - 12:39 PM ET

WYNNE DAVIS

Participants tip buckets of ice water over their heads as they...
Stadium on Aug. 22, 2014, in Melbourne...
Scott Barbour/...

npr.org

Alert

I know how to be safe online and create safe spaces for others

Don't confuse tech skill with tech literacy

Communication is Key

- Go online *with* your children, let them be your guide
- Be curious - ask questions
- Have conversations about their online life
  - What apps are they hearing about
  - What posts are they most interested in
  - What is trending among their friends
  - What do kids focus on in an app
- Be calm, withhold judgement

Helping Children Set Expectations About the Online World

- Not everyone is trustworthy
- Not everyone is truthful about who they really are, be alert when
  - Asking questions that are not part of the norm
  - Needing money or information sent immediately
  - Being unwilling to communicate any other way
  - Asking for inappropriate pictures or personal information
- Some virtual spaces are riskier than others
  - Review apps on Common Sense Media
  - Monitor the app once you get it, use it together at first
  - Review the links and look for unusual parts of the URL
- Recognize the value of personal information and the value of privacy
  - Personality quizzes
  - Pictures we post that provide information about us

Become Familiar About and Discuss These Risks

- **Trolling**- sending harassing texts or posts about a group or individual
- **Doxing**- finding and widely sharing personal info to embarrass someone
- **Impersonating**- using someone's password to access their account or setting up an account in their name and pretending to be them.
- ➡ **Sexting**- sending nude or intimate selfies to another person
- **Sextortion**- threatening to post actual or fake nude photos in order to manipulate someone
- **Catfishing**- pretending to be an online romantic interest in order to manipulate or embarrass someone
- ➡ **Phishing**- tricking someone into giving money or personal information
- **Recruiting** for extreme ideologies or risky behavior
- **Illegal buying or selling** of substances or media online

Adapted from page 126

Signs of Distress in Children

- Become upset, sad or angry during or after being online or using phone
- Withdraws from family or friends
- Doesn't want to participate in activities they previously enjoyed
- Doesn't want to go to school or a specific class
- Changes screens whenever you walk by or only wants to use the computer in a private place
- Seems nervous or jumpy when they get an instant message, text or email
- Has changes in eating or sleeping habits

Action Steps to Take to Help Your Child

- Remain calm
- Take a break, but don't take technology away
- Don't respond or retaliate against offender
- Use digital tools to block them and/or flag the posts
- Save copies of inappropriate messages or posts
- Have an honest conversation with your child about what they might have done to trigger the behavior or attention
- Contact the police (Westport's youth officer or Staples SRO)

Cyberbullying.org

Some precautions are worthwhile

Physical Protections

You own the device, so you can define. . .

- When you provide it
- Where is it appropriate to use it and not
- When it is appropriate to use it or not
- When headphones can be used
- Which direction the screens face
- Where the devices are charged and stored

Technical Protections

- Parent Controls
  - Web filters and firewalls
  - Device filters
  - iOS and Android have built in parental controls
  - Create user profiles for each family member
- Limit device functionality
- Limit app tracking and notifications

Beware of False Sense of Security

- Lulls you into complacency
- Devices you don't control are everywhere
- Doesn't help your children gain agency or learn how to make decisions
- Companies are actively developing work arounds

Final Thoughts

Be Mindful that You as a Parent are THE model

- What do you post on social media?
- Where do you get your daily news? How many different types of sources do you look at?
- When do you look at your phone, where do you put it during dinner?
- Have you read and determined if the social media agreements agree with your values?
- Do you know how search algorithms work enough to know how each site's content is curated and targeted?
- Have you ever intentionally tried to find your way out of the "echo chamber" of your social media feed?

Parents are Learners Too

- It's Ok to press reset
- Read the End User License Agreements (EULAs) for everything
- Become familiar with popular games and apps like TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, Instagram
- Be alert to news stories about technology
- Become familiar with the parental controls and how to block or report users
- Ask you children to show you how they use sites, why they use sites

Circling Back & Choosing Your Next Step

5 Competencies of Digital Citizenship

Balanced - I prioritize my time and activities online and offline

Informed - I evaluate the accuracy, perspective, and validity of online information

Inclusive - I engage with others online with respect and empathy

Engaged - I use technology for civic engagement and to be a force for good

Alert - I know how to be safe online and create safe spaces for others

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Parental Controls Resources

Android Parent Resources
    [Google Play Family Link App](#)
    [How to set up parental controls on Google Play](#)
    [How To Set Up Parental Controls on Android: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)

Apple Parent Resources (iOS)
    [Family Sharing](#)
    [Set up parental controls with Family Sharing on iPhone](#)
    [Use parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch](#)

[Circle](#)- Referenced by Richard Culatta

Common Sense Media- [Parents' Ultimate Guide to Parental Controls](#)

PCMag [The Best Parental Control Software for 2023](#)

General Resources

All pictures are from Pixabay.com unless specified otherwise.

Common Sense Media

Cyberbullying.org
      Cyberbullying.org/report

How to preserve your private life in the age of social media. Ted Talk by Bryce Howard

TikTok Resources

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tiktok-pushes-potentially-harmful-content-to-users-as-often-as-every-39-seconds-study/

https://www.npr.org/2022/11/17/1137155540/fbi-tiktok-national-security-concerns-china

https://www.tiktok.com/legal/page/us/terms-of-service/en

https://www.tiktok.com/legal/page/us/privacy-policy/en

Recent News Articles about Tech and Parenting

Fortnite creator accused of collecting teen player's perosnal information
https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fortnite-epic-games-ftc-520-million-fine/#:~:text=Epic%20Games%2C%20maker%20of%20the,purchases%20and%20violated%20privacy%20laws.

Parents beware of in-app purchases
https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Family/mom-warns-parents-son-charges-16k-app-game/story?id=74756591

https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Family/mom-shares-lessons-learned-after-son-spends-800/story?id=95749984