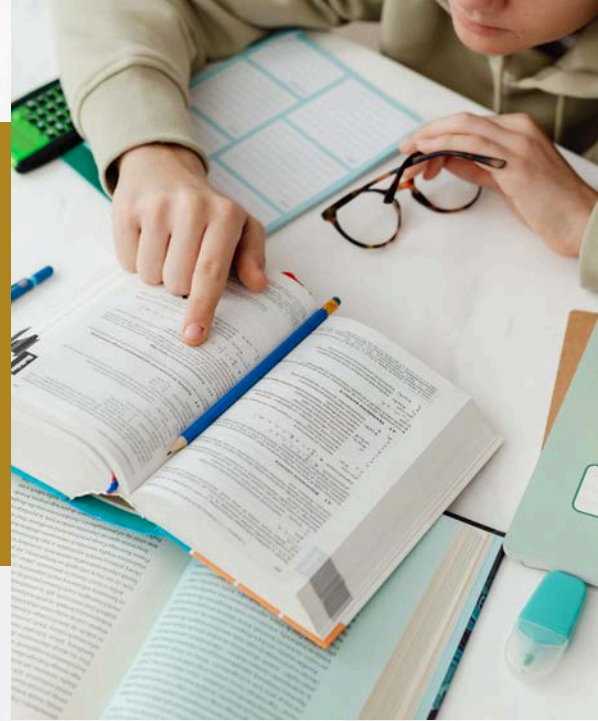




INSIGHTS ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

FROM YOUR STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM



HELLO!

Last year we introduced our *Insights on Adolescent Development* newsletter, and we are thrilled to bring it back this year as we continue to partner together to nurture each student’s growth—academically, socially, and emotionally.

These monthly newsletters will explore a whole range of topics from effective study habits to teen mental health and safety, to the importance of failure and resiliency. If you have topics that you are particularly interested in, please feel free to share with us!

This month we are going to begin with a deep dive into an important, and sometimes scary, topic: online safety. Because our kids now spend more time at home on their computers rather than being out with friends “until the streetlights come on”, we often have the misperception that they are safer. While this is the case in some sense of the word, they are also exposed to a whole world of risks online. As their parents and educators, our understanding of these risks is crucial to our ability to protect them and foster their growth into healthy, happy, young adults.

- *Student Support Team*
- *Lauren Garrett, Head of Student Support Team and High School Counselor*

AT A GLANCE

- 1) WELCOME
- 2) ARCHIVED NEWSLETTERS
- 3) INTRODUCTION TO WIN @ SOCIAL
- 4) FOCUS ON AI CHAT BOTS
- 5) FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

#WinAtSocial



You may recall our partnership with The Social Institute from last year. TSI is an organization working to empower students, families, and educators to navigate their learning and well-being – including A.I., social media, and devices – in healthy ways.

Follow this link [this link](#) to learn more and register your family for their resources!



If you missed our newsletters last year, do not worry! They are all archived and easily accessible through the Altamont website.

Follow this link to explore:

Counseling and Support at Altamont

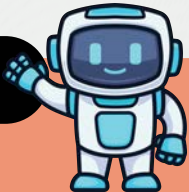


SAFETY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

While we have previously discussed broad online safety and health surrounding technology, this month we'd like to narrow our focus to safety when engaging with AI chat bots. We know that apps like Snapchat, Tik Tok, and Instagram provide opportunities for users to connect with friends (known and unknown). This can be a huge positive, and teens often name connection as one of the main reasons they enjoy being online.

With the increase in popularity of generative AI, there is now another avenue for connection. We are all wired to seek connection, teens especially so. We are seeing more and more often, teens are turning to AI chatbots for connection, reassurance, advice, and companionship. While these chatbots are designed to create emotional connection, and agree with the user, they do not have sufficient methods for flagging and stopping concerning content. As Common Sense Media founder and CEO, James Steyer states in one of the following articles, "...these systems easily produce harmful responses including sexual misconduct, stereotypes, and dangerous 'advice' that...could have life-threatening or deadly real-world impact for teens and other vulnerable people."

This issue in the news....



[Common Sense Media Survey Report](#)

[AI Companions Decoded: Common Sense Media Recommends AI Companion Safety Standards](#)

[Teen AI Addiction: Risks of Chatbots and AI Companions](#)

[Parents of 16-year-old Adam Raine sue OpenAI](#)

[Kids and teens under 18 shouldn't use AI companion apps](#)

Content warning - these final two articles discuss youth self harm and suicide.

Close to home

This case in Helena is a good reminder to stay mindful of what our kids are doing online. Even games that look fun and harmless can sometimes have risks, so it's important to keep an eye out

[Read more here](#)

What can you do?



1. Talk to your kids about these dangers - not to scare them but to inform them and have a discussion about the issues. Ask them what they think and who they can talk to if they are struggling.
2. Educate yourself on signs of depression and/or anxiety in teens.
3. Set boundaries within your family regarding use of technology in common vs. private areas of the house.

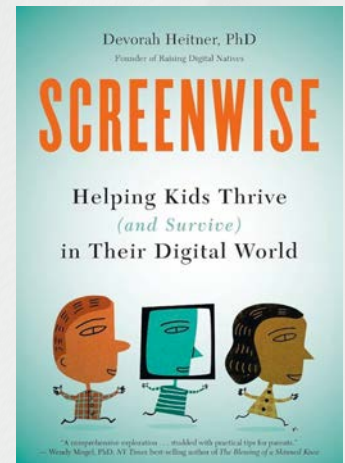
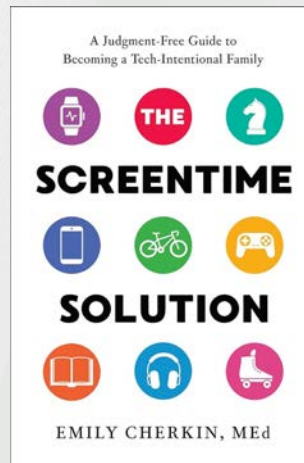


FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

[AI Chatbots: Who's Behind the Screen? | Common Sense Education](#)

[Helping Kids Navigate the World of Artificial Intelligence](#)

Explore this #WinAtSocial family resource on ChatGPT, responsible use, and pitfalls to be aware of - [ChatGPT playbook](#)



Parent Guide on Social Media and Technology Safety from Altamont's Counselors

