Screen Smart Parenting: Balancing Act for the Digital Generation

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Anxiety Disorders Center

Transforming Children's Lives

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Our teams work every day to deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain and empower parents, professionals and policymakers to support children when and where they need it most.

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Our Work

Research

We are at the forefront of neuroscience efforts to find objective biological measures of mental illness that will lead to earlier diagnosis, more individualized treatment methods, and new and better interventions.

Clinical Care

We provide world-class clinical care to children struggling with mental health and learning disorders. We have helped thousands of children get the help they need in our offices and in their communities.

Public Education

We equip millions of parents, educators and policymakers with the information they need to end the stigma and misinformation that cause so many children to miss out on life-changing treatment.

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Presentation Overview

- The format can be an open discussion– feel free to ask questions throughout!

- Topics overview:
  - The different types of technology and social media
  - The impact of social media on youth
  - Strategies for modeling, monitoring, and providing structure for safe social media use
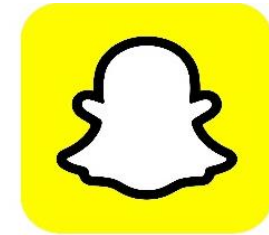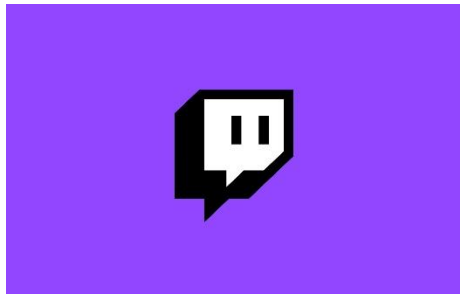

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Different forms of Technology
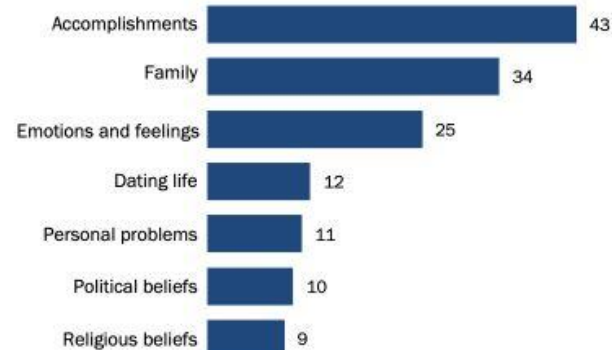
Different forms of Media

How Youth Use Social Media

- Posting pictures, "stories," or videos
- Watching/commenting on other people's pictures, stories, or videos
- Going "live"
- Blogging/vlogging
- Chatting: text, voice, video
- Watching streams, videos
- Podcasts
- Forums: Questions and answers
- Playing games with friends

Teens are more likely to post on social media about their accomplishments and family life than their religious or political beliefs

% of U.S. teens who say they ever post about their ___ on social media

Accomplishments	43
Family	34
Emotions and feelings	25
Dating life	12
Personal problems	11
Political beliefs	10
Religious beliefs	9

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
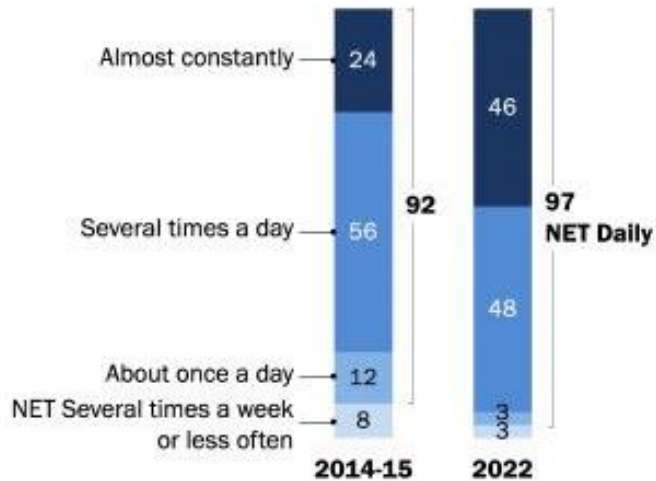"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

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Social Media Use in Youth

Nearly half of teens now say they use the internet 'almost constantly'

% of U.S. teens who say they use the internet …

Almost constantly — 24 / 46

Several times a day — 56 / 48 — 92 / 97 NET Daily

About once a day — 12 / 3
NET Several times a week or less often — 8 / 3

2014-15 / 2022

Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Figures may not add up to the NET values due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
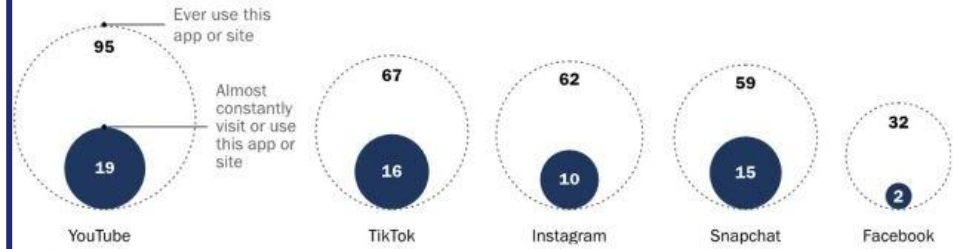Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

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*Teens who say they are online almost constantly has roughly doubled since 2014-15 (46% now and 24% then).

About one-in-five teens visit or use YouTube 'almost constantly'

% of U.S. teens who say they …

Ever use this app or site

Almost constantly visit or use this app or site

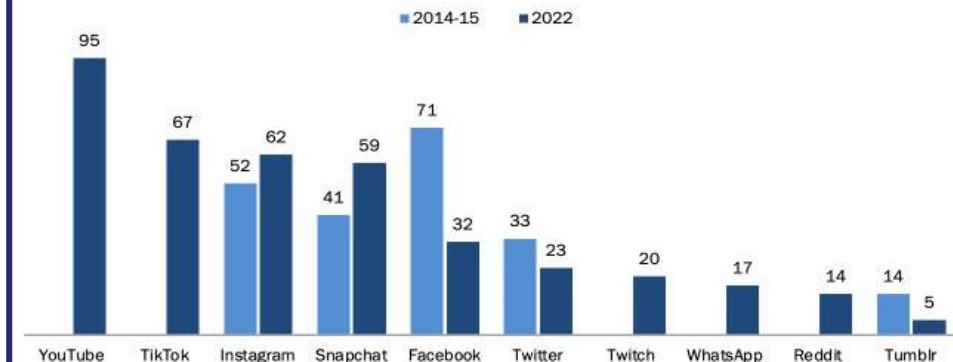|	YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook
Ever	95	67	62	59	32
Almost constantly	19	16	10	15	2

Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

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Majority of teens use YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat; share of teens who use Facebook dropped sharply from 2014-15 to now

% of U.S. teens who say they ever use each of the following apps or sites

■ 2014-15 ■ 2022

	YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook	Twitter	Twitch	WhatsApp	Reddit	Tumblr
2014-15			52	41	71	33			14	14
2022	95	67	62	59	32	23	20	17		5

Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. The 2014-15 survey did not ask about YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitch and Reddit. TikTok debuted globally in 2018.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

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Understanding the Pros and Cons

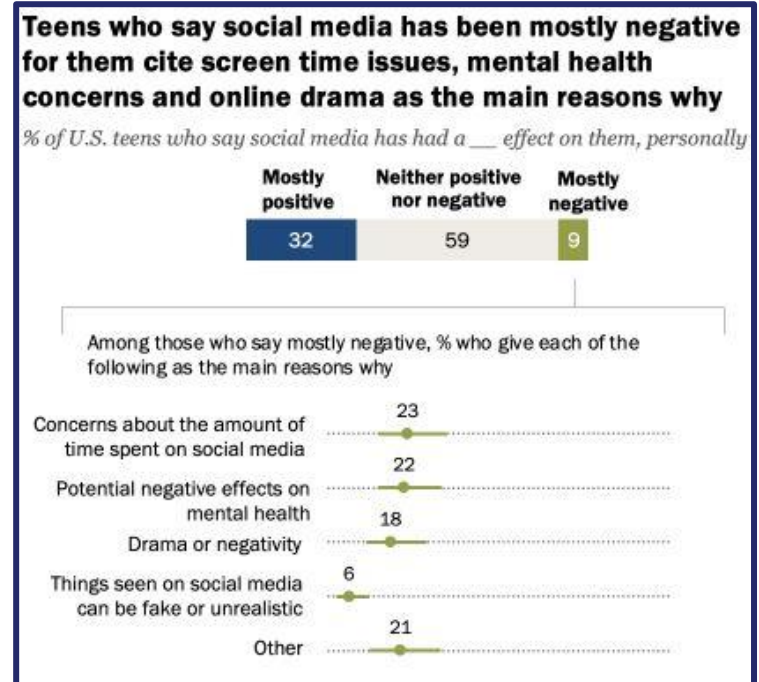**The benefits of moderate and appropriate technology use**

- Ease of communication with peers and family members
- Finding others with likeminded interests and building community
- Self-expression
- Social network especially for youth with disabilities or marginalized communities
- Practicing educational skills (reading, writing, typing, building, problem solving, etc.)

The potential harms of excessive and inappropriate technology use

- Lack of privacy
- Decline in mental health
- Engagement in risky behavior
- Cyberbullying
- "Doom-scrolling"
- Multi-tasking/procrastination
- Avoidance of activities, feelings, etc.
- Poor sleep/exercise
- Exposure to inappropriate content

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Youth Views on Social Media

- "I am kind of socially awkward and making friends in person has often been difficult. Currently, I have a couple long time friendships online and talk with them practically daily." – Teen boy

- "You can experience things that you don't have the time or ability to experience, it also passes time and can teach you many important life skills that you may not learn until much later." – Teen girl

Teens who say social media has been mostly negative for them cite screen time issues, mental health concerns and online drama as the main reasons why

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on them, personally

Mostly positive	Neither positive nor negative	Mostly negative
32	59	9

Among those who say mostly negative, % who give each of the following as the main reasons why

Concerns about the amount of time spent on social media	23
Potential negative effects on mental health	22
Drama or negativity	18
Things seen on social media can be fake or unrealistic	6
Other	21

Teens more likely to see potential negative effects of social media for other teens than for themselves

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on each of the following

	Mostly positive	Neither positive nor negative	Mostly negative
People their age	24	45	32
Them, personally	32	59	9

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

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- "I think social media has had a negative effect on me because the more I'm on it the less I'm socially active. I feel like social media has become something I cannot live without, almost like a second limb." – Teen boy

- "Pressure, comparing myself, cyberbullying, stuck in a loop of social media, having an empty-feeling effect after use, going down rabbit holes of comparing myself, overwhelming." – Teen girl

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Social Media and Mental Health

- Youth who spent more than three hours a day using social media might be at heightened risk for mental health problems.

- Youth with greater social media use, nighttime social media use, and emotional investment in social media were each linked with worse sleep quality and higher levels of anxiety and depression.

- Social comparison and feedback-seeking by teens using social media and cellphones were linked with depressive symptoms.

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Social Media and Mental Health

- Connection between mental health and social media might not be simple, or purely negative

- Correlation ≠ causation (i.e., anxiety, depression may lead to increased usage)

- Less about how many minutes and more about *how they are using social media*

- Other factors at play: academic pressures, lack of alternative outlets

- It's not just social media that's making teens anxious, it's the normal social stressors that these platforms enhance
  - The idea of wanting to fit in, the critical importance of peer relationships, and the process of figuring out how you want to express your identity to others

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Fostering Safe Social Media Use

Talk

Talk about social media.

- Talk about your own social media habits and how you handle challenging situations.
- Ask your children how they are using social media and how it makes them feel.
- Remind your children that social media has pros and cons and is full of unrealistic images.

Encourage

Encourage face-to-face contact with friends and engagement in real-life activities.

- At the very least, encourage your children to video chat with their family and friends to simulate an in-person interaction.
- Particularly important for teens with social anxiety.

Explain

Explain what's not OK.

- Discourage your children from gossiping, spreading rumors, bullying, or damaging someone's reputation — online or otherwise.
- Talk to your children about what is appropriate and safe to share on social media.

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Fostering Safe Social Media Use

Set reasonable limits.

- Talk to your teen about how to avoid letting social media interfere with their activities, sleep, eating, and homework.
- Encourage a bedtime routine that avoids electronic media use and keep cellphones and tablets out of your children's bedrooms.
- Set an example by following these rules yourself.

Monitor your children's accounts.

- Let your teen know that you'll be regularly checking their social media accounts.
- You might aim to do so once a week or more.
- Make sure you follow through.

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Fostering Safe Social Media Use

Media Literacy Training

- Gradual introduction to social media
- Have open conversations about social media.
- You are the parent but consider your child's input as well.
- Encourage limits that can change with maturity and trust.
- Monitoring based on age, maturity, and need.

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Assessing for a Problem

When your child isn't doing their "job"

- Completing basic hygiene tasks
- Going to school
- Participating in extra-curricular activities
- Being a respectful family member
- Maintaining friendships
- Helping with house chores

When your child is finding it hard to concentrate during off-screen activities

When your child tantrums when separated from their devices

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Signs More Serious Intervention May be Necessary

- Cyberbullying

- Sexting
  - Pictures or chat

- Misusing people's passwords or impersonating people online

- Making unauthorized purchases using other people's financial details

- Creating content that reveals information about themselves or others

Tips for Intervening

- Stay calm
  - Approach children/teens in a nonjudgmental way, ask questions, and listen to them
- Avoid making assumptions
  - Ask children about what happened from each of their perspectives
- Normalize challenging situations that come up often with social media
- Parents should allow children some social media use but should set boundaries around it
  - Severely restricting use does not allow them to learn from their mistakes
- If you're concerned about any health or safety issues, please seek professional help (i.e., pediatrician, psychologist)

- American Academy of Pediatrics Family Media Plan:
  - https://www.healthychildren.org/english/fmp/pages/mediaplan.aspx
- Fenced.ai
  - Monitors online activities, restricts inappropriate content, limits the use of apps, and tracks calls, messages, contacts, and location
- Bark.us
  - Monitors texts, emails, YouTube, and more than 30 apps, while alerting for issues such as cyberbullying, online predators, and suicidal ideation
- Qustiodio
  - Filters web content and safe searching, monitors all web activity and search results, sets time limits, and blocking features
- Log Off
  - A teen run community for supporting teens with social media use (logoffmovement.org)

Thank you!

Questions?

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