

# The Educator

**A publication of the Drug Free Schools Committee at HVCASA – Fall 2018**

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## **Young People and Screens; What We All Need to Know**

The use of technology and social media in our culture can be a blessing. It helps us stay connected with family and friends. Sharing photos on Facebook or Snapchat, and texting with our friends is a fast, convenient way to communicate and share what is going on in our lives with those we

love. But with these conveniences and luxuries comes some caution. Data is surfacing that is shedding light on the consequences of excessive use of screens- smart phones, tablets, computers and TV. The group hit hardest by the negative consequences are children and teens.

Psychologist and researcher Jean Twenge found a sudden increase in teen's symptoms of depression, suicide risk factors and suicide rates in 2012- around the same time when smartphones became popular.

The amount of screen time- not the specific content- goes hand in hand with higher instance of depression

In a 2016 Common Sense Media study, teens reported feeling addicted to their devices, felt the need to immediately respond to texts and social media messages, were distracted, experienced conflict and engaged in risky behavior. Studies have shown that the mere presence of a cellphone, even if it is off or on do not disturb, can be distracting. Overuse can prevent children from developing critical social and emotional skills because of too much communication through a screen.

### **Here's the data on teen use:**

**95% of teens reported they have or have access to a smartphone. Use is up 22% since reported in 2015.**

**45% of teens say they use the internet, either on a smartphone or computer "almost constantly", and 44% say "several times a day"**

**(2018 Pew Research Center survey)**

There is hope however. Kids appreciate structure and rules and parent's still have the ability to influence their children's behavior. **We need to talk to our kids- they listen!**

## **We can protect our young people from the addiction of screens and social media use by doing the following:**

- ❖ Setting limits- rethink the unlimited data and cell minute plans
- ❖ Encouraging activities with opportunities for engagement- sports, art, music, outdoor fun
- ❖ Removing all screens from the bedroom and/or eating areas of the home
- ❖ Modeling appropriate use- don't text your kids when they are at school, don't use your cell phone while driving
- ❖ Planning family outings and leaving devices behind- go to the beach, go hiking, volunteer with a local church or civic group

Hi tech business leaders are taking the lead by limiting use with their own kids. In a recent article in the Washington Post, Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook said he would keep children in his life away from social networks. Business Insider reported that in 2007 Bill Gates, the former CEO of Microsoft, capped his daughter's screen time when she started to develop an attachment to a video game. He also didn't allow his kids to have a cell phone until age 14.

### **The American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations for Children's Media use:**

(digital media for entertainment purposes only)

- Birth to age 2- none
- Children age 2-5 years- 1 hour per day
- Children age 6 and up- parents should determine what is acceptable and monitor use. Up to 2 hours per day is a good guideline and should be permitted after time spent on homework, physical activity, social contact, and sleep. This goes for adults and children!

### **Tools for Parents- Parental Control Apps**

These can be used to block certain apps, and monitor and schedule screen time:

OurPact  
ScreenLimit  
Limitly

Breakfree  
Moment  
Unglue



*Coming up in the next edition of **The Educator**...more information on **Vaping and Juuling**.*

***-At a recent HVCASA Drug Free Schools Committee meeting, there were reports of high school students asking for help quitting electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) such as Logic and Juul. Young people who want to stop using vapes say they are finding it difficult. Cigarettes may have changed but nicotine has not changed, it is still addictive-***

Sources: The Washington Post, Common Sense Media, NPR Morning Edition, NPR Weekend Edition Sunday, American Academy of Pediatrics, Pew Research Center, Igamemom.com, Oneguardonline.com

Talk to your kids about the following safety and behavior guidelines when they are online:

1. Set up **privacy settings** on all social media platforms
2. Don't share passwords
3. Know who you are interacting and sharing with. **Limit "friends" or "followers"** to only people you know
4. What you post is permanent
5. If you see something inappropriate, like bullying, tell a trusted adult
6. **Be kind**- be just as polite to someone on-line as you would be in person. Stand up for others you see who are being bullied
7. Learn about "social mapping"