

The background features a grid of dots that transitions from dark blue on the left to light blue on the right. Overlaid on this grid are white circuit-like lines with circular nodes, some of which are highlighted in a light green color. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and tech-oriented.

# DIGITAL USE & WELL-BEING

WESTMOUNT

PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 28, 2025



# AGENDA

Kids these days

Benefits and challenges of  
technology for children

- Gaming
- Social media

Tips for healthy technology use



# GENERATION ALPHA

Born in the years  
2010-2025

Children of Millennial  
Parents

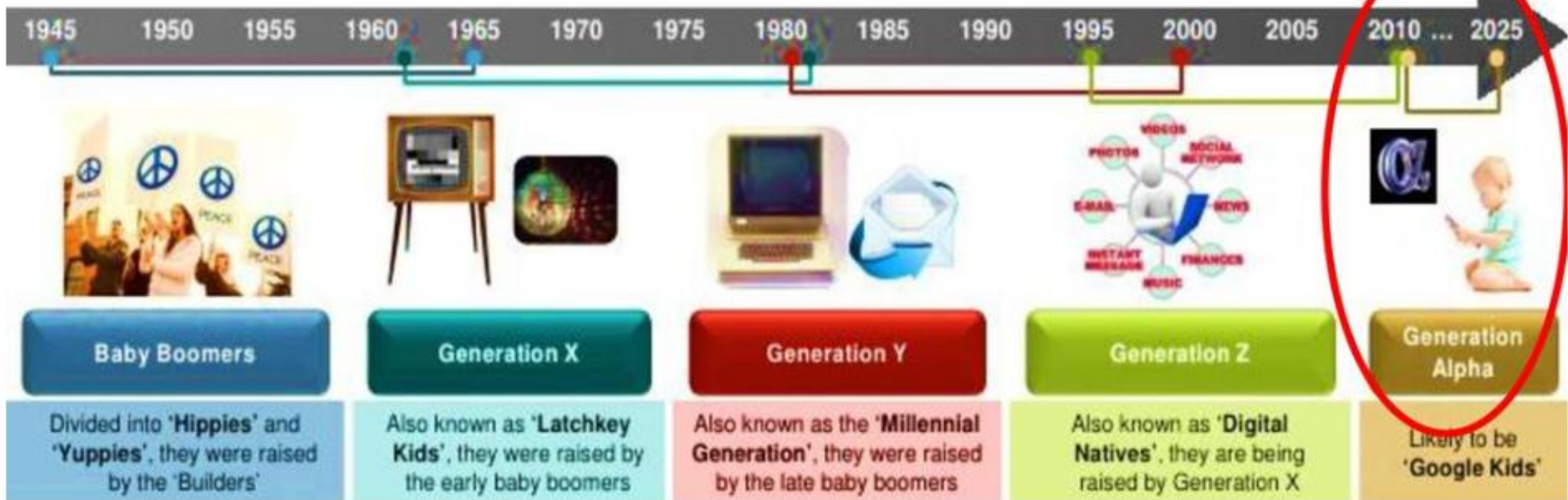
2 billion of them by 2025

Unlike other generations  
which merely use  
technology, Gen Alphas will  
spend the bulk of their  
formative years completely  
immersed in technology.

# Each generation is characterized by different experiences that shape their perspectives and behavior

Generation Z includes people born between the mid 1990s and 2010, characterized as 'Digital Natives'

## Generation Terminology by Birth Year



Source: Tripathi, S. (2017) *Neuroscience: Impact on Cognitive and Behavioral Function in Early Childhood*

# GENERATION ALPHA: CHARACTERISTICS



## **Individualism**

Habit of being independent and self-reliant



## **Robust education technology savvy**

Very proficient in use of modern technology



## **Less human contact; relationships**

Virtual apps and online contacts are favoured over face-to-face interaction with others



**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio

**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio, television

**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio, television

**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio, television, cable television, arcade video games

**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio, television, cable television, home video game consoles, portable music players (i.e. Sony Walkman), VCRs, home computers.

**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio, television, cable television, home video game consoles, portable music players, VCRs, home computers, portable handheld video game systems, internet, cell phones

**Popular media platforms:**  
Movies, print, radio, television, cable television, home video game consoles, portable music players, DVDs, home computers, portable handheld video game systems, internet, cell phones, MP3 players, DVRs, electronic interactive toys, internet-connected smart phones, tablet computers

Joan Ganz  
Cooney Center  
2011

# WHAT IS SCREEN TIME?



Passive consumption:  
watching TV, reading,  
and listening to music



Interactive consumption:  
playing games and  
browsing the internet

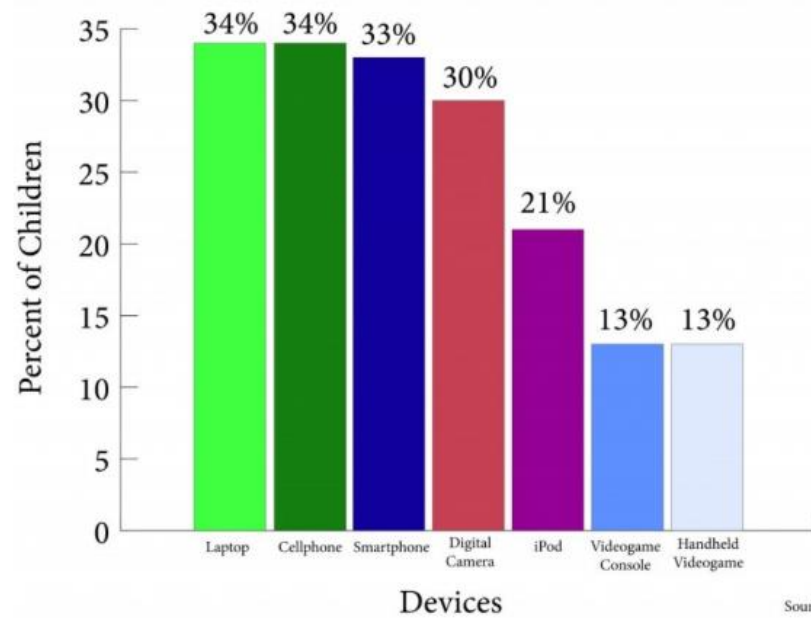


Communication:  
video-chatting and using  
social media



Content creation:  
using devices to make  
digital art or music

### Technology Children Use by Age 2



Source: American Academy of Pediatrics







## Screen Time Recommendations by Age

Here's a chart showing screen time recommendations by age, from infants to adults. Keep in mind that these are guidelines rather than hard and fast rules.



Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2022)

# BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY FOR CHILDREN

- Educational tools and resources
- Opportunities for creativity
- Staying connected with family and friends
- Development of digital skills





# GAMING

- Online gaming is very common in youth.
- More than 8 out of 10 youth play online games.
- Nearly 3 out of 10 video game users (called gamers) are under the age of 18.

# TYPES OF GAMING:

- puzzles
- role-playing
- sports
- action
- simulations or pretend games (games that copy an activity from real life, such as driving a train, submarine, race car, or space ship or playing a sport)
- real-time strategy (games that allow players to play without waiting to take turns)
- first-person shooter (the player has a gun or other weapon and experiences the game as the shooter)
- multiplayer or single player

# GAMING CAN HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP OR IMPROVE SKILLS



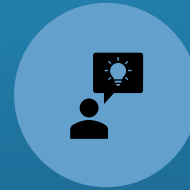
PROBLEM SOLVING



SEEING PATTERNS



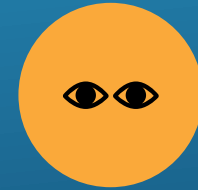
TESTING THEIR IDEAS  
TO FIND OUT IF  
THEY WORK



MEMORY AND  
THINKING



MAKING DECISIONS



HAND-EYE  
COORDINATION



## TO KEEP GAMING BENEFICIAL:

- Knowing about the games your child plays can help you guide them and lower the risk of problems.
  - Check the content rating of the game
  - the number of players in the game – Is the game played alone? If it's played with others, do you know who they are?
  - the type of game – Is the game a competition or do the players work together?

# RISK FACTORS FOR CHILDREN THAT GAME

don't have friends  
outside of  
gaming/very shy &  
prefer to be alone

have a medical  
condition that limits  
their physical activity

tend to act before  
they think things  
through

are depressed,  
anxious, nervous, or  
worry often

are dealing with  
trauma

Not taking care of  
their physical needs  
(not eating  
regularly/healthy  
foods)

Disengaged  
parents/no  
boundaries

Diagnosed with a  
mental health disorder  
(ADHD or ODD)

# SOME PROBLEMS THAT CAN RESULT FROM EXCESSIVE GAMING:

Lower grades/failing academics

Inability to pay attention in school or elsewhere for as long as previously

More health problems than others the same age who play less

Fewer real-life relationships

Relationship problems

Depression and anxiety symptoms

Not enjoying other activities as much as you used to



# WARNING SIGNS THAT IT'S A PROBLEM

Mood changes  
Skipping Meals  
Staying up late

Losing friends  
Spending less time  
with family

Not being able to  
stop thinking about  
gaming (obsessing)

Low self-esteem,  
doubting themselves,  
and thinking they're  
not good enough

Feeling more  
confident and  
comfortable with  
others online than in  
person

# SIGNS OF AN ADDICTION

Thinking about gaming all of the time

Having trouble controlling their mood, feeling sad or angry without a reason, or having other mood changes

Needing to play longer to still enjoy (having a higher tolerance)

Feeling angry and upset when they're not playing (having withdrawal)

Not getting along with or having trouble connecting with friends or family

Finding it hard to make or keep friends outside of gaming

Wanting to cut back or stop playing but they can't

# SETTING LIMITS ON YOUR CHILD'S GAMING

Manage online game time so there is a good balance between it and other activities:

- homework
- physical activity
- sports
- family relationships
- being with friends their own age
- household chores

# WAYS TO SET LIMITS



- Turn off games an hour before bed to help with sleep.
- Check what games your child plays and how they interact with others online.
- Remind your child that having access to games is a privilege and there are responsibilities and limits (First/Then).
- Do what you say you'll do if they don't follow rules. For example, if they don't stop when they're supposed to, they lose some screen time the next day.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

- As of 2023, there were more than 32 million users of social media apps and sites in Canada. Since 2012, the number of teens using social networking apps and sites has doubled, and almost half of all teens are on social media most hours of the day.

# THE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES YOUNG PEOPLE SPEND THE MOST TIME ON ARE:

Tik Tok

Reddit

Tumblr

Instagram

Pinterest

Twitter

YouTube

Snapchat

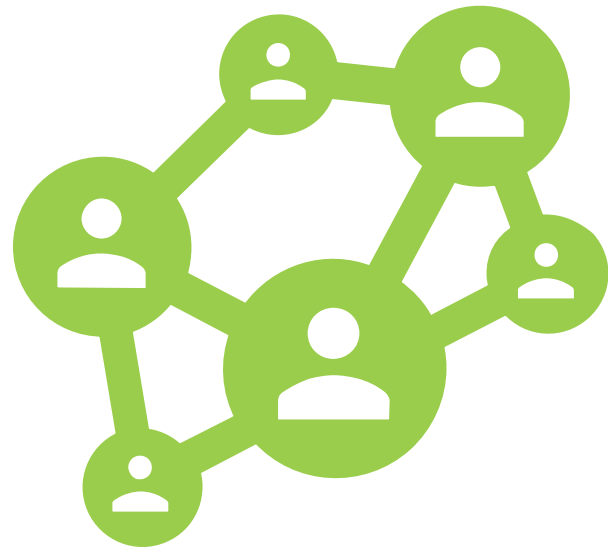
LinkedIn

Facebook

Telegram

House  
Party

Discord



## SOCIAL MEDIA: BENEFITS

- Allows children to stay connected with friends and family as well as build their social networks
- Exposes children to more diversity and provides opportunity to broaden their world view and develop respect and tolerance
- Facilitates engagement with the community with activities such as raising money for charity or volunteering
- Provides a platform for collective creativity
- Finding support
- Access to resources



# SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS

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Information on the internet can be inaccurate and misleading, and children lack the judgement to filter what they read

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Social comparison

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Cyberbullying

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Sexting

---

Risk of predation

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# WHEN IS IT TOO MUCH?



- Spending less time with their family and friends, leading to relationship problems
- Lost interest in things they used to enjoy
- Feel isolated
- Mood changes
- Have trouble sleeping
- No longer being active
- Experiencing trouble at school
- Being exposed to cyberbullying, disturbing content, and unwanted sexual images and messages
- Spending more time comparing themselves to others
- Refuse to reduce use even when they know it's a problem

# TIPS TO HELP YOU KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE WHILE USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- Set up a safety plan.
  - updating security software,
  - using different passwords on social media accounts,
  - teaching youth to only accept friend requests from people they know well,
  - checking any new sites before your child uses them.
- Block your child from being able to make purchases within applications (called in-app purchases).
- Teach your child about the possible harms of social media.
- Learn how to use the apps that they use to make sure they're using them safely.
- Know the signs of social media becoming a problem.

# GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY TECHNOLOGY USE

Set clear boundaries and time limits

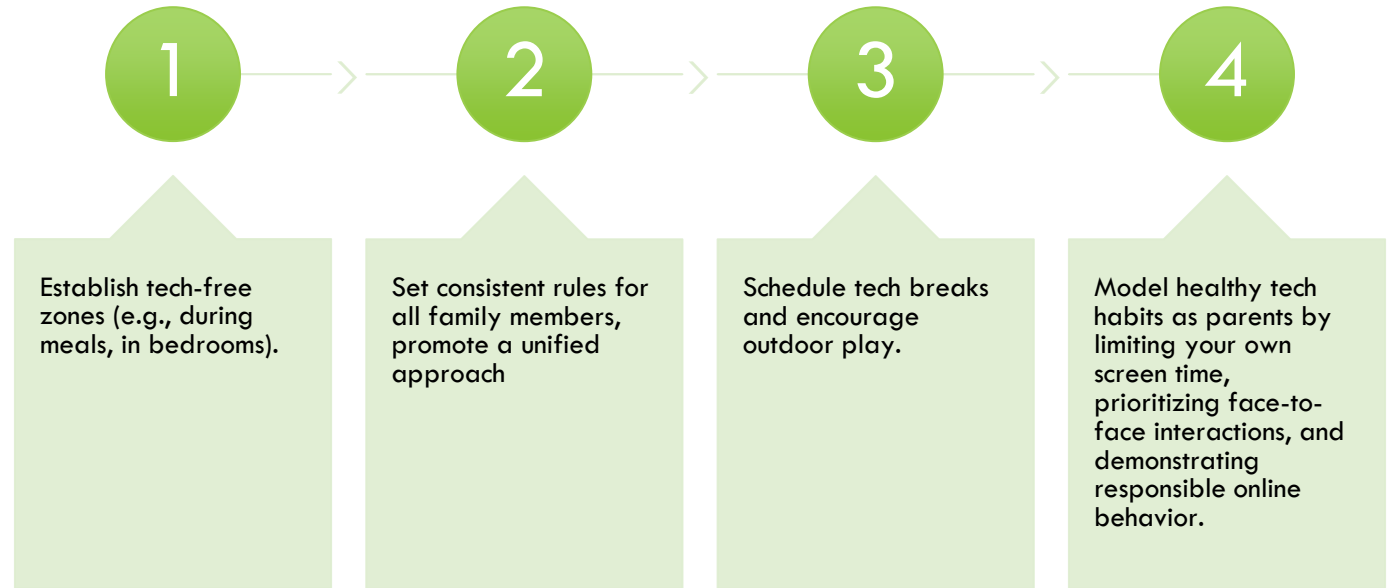
Encourage active use

Co-view and engage with your child during screen time

Teach critical thinking about online content

Foster offline activities and hobbies

# CREATING A FAMILY MEDIA AGREEMENT



COMMON SENSE MEDIA

## Family Media Agreement



I, \_\_\_\_\_, will:

### ... take care.

- I will take care of the device I'm using and tell my family if it's broken, stolen, or lost. As a family, we have agreed on the consequences if I lose or break a device, and I understand those consequences.
- Unless I have paid for a device with my own money or it was a gift, I understand that the device belongs to the family member(s) who bought it.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### ... stay safe.

- I will not create accounts or give out any private information — such as my full name, date of birth, address, phone number, or photos of myself — without my family's permission.
- I will not share my passwords with anyone other than my family. I will ask my family to help me with privacy settings if I want to set up devices, accounts, or profiles.
- If anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable or acts inappropriately toward me online, I'll stop talking to that person and will tell a family member or other trusted adult about it.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### ... think first.

- I will not bully, humiliate, or upset anyone online — whether through sharing photos, videos, or screenshots, spreading rumors or gossip, or setting up fake profiles — and I will stand up to those who do.
- I know that whatever I share online can spread fast and far. I will not post anything online that could harm my reputation.
- Whenever I use, reference, or share someone else's creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist.
- I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true. I will consider whether a source or author is credible.
- \_\_\_\_\_

COMMON SENSE MEDIA

## Family Media Agreement



### ... stay balanced.

- I will help my family set media time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.
- I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities — and people — in my life.
- If using media or being online is making me unhappy or it's hard to stop, I will take a break and talk to a family member.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### ... communicate openly.

- I will talk to my family about what media I use and what I do online and answer any questions they have openly and honestly.
- I will tell my family if I'm struggling with media use, have made a mistake online, or need help.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### In exchange, my family agrees to:

- recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- talk with me about what worries them and why before saying "no."
- talk to me about my interests and embrace my world, including helping me find media that's appropriate and fun.
- \_\_\_\_\_

X

SIGNED BY ME

X

SIGNED BY MY PARENT OR CAREGIVER

# RESOURCES:

The screenshot displays the Common Sense Media website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for "For Parents" (highlighted), "For Educators", and "Our Work and Impact". On the right, a language dropdown menu is set to "English". Below the navigation is the Common Sense Media logo and a search bar with the placeholder text "Find movies, books, and more ...". To the right of the search bar are "Sign in" and "Join us" buttons. A green navigation bar contains links for "Movies", "TV", "Books", "Apps & Games", "Podcasts", "Parents' Guides", "Tips & FAQs", and "Celebrating Community". The main content area features the heading "Ratings and reviews parents trust" and six category icons: Movies (green), TV (blue), Books (purple), Games (red), Podcasts (pink), and Apps (magenta). Below these icons are four media thumbnails: "nostradam" (text), a character in a green suit, a character in a blue suit, and "SQUID GAME".



MENU ▾

[Canada.ca](#)

# GETCYBERSAFE.CA

Get Cyber Safe is a national public awareness campaign created to inform Canadians about cyber security and the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online.

Follow:





## Resources to Help Our Kids Thrive

### Monitoring Your Teen's Social Media

Once you've gotten your kid a phone, should you start monitoring their social media? Some argue that it's an invasion of privacy, while others insist that it's necessary given growing concerns about cyberbullying and the negative effects social media can have on self-esteem.

This week at [childmind.org](https://childmind.org), we take a **deep dive** into the ongoing debate around keeping a close eye on your teen's social media use. And we provide tools and tips for monitoring their social media, should you choose to do so. We also discuss how to know when your kid is ready for a social media account and provide **useful strategies for helping them get started**. Additionally, we cover the potential negative effects of social media on teens and **ways to shield them from harm**. The internet can be an unforgiving

place, so we talk about recognizing the signs that your child is experiencing



# REFERENCES

- <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/growing-up-online/social-media/facts-for-youth>
- <https://schools.healthiertogether.ca/en/get-the-latest/resources-for-families/articles-for-families-with-children/digital-wellbeing-and-your-child/>
- <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/growing-up-online/gaming/tips-for-parents>
- <https://www.nu.edu/blog/negative-effects-of-technology-on-children-what-can-you-do/#:~:text=Mayo%20Clinic%20recommends%20limiting%20screen,consistent%20limits%20on%20technology%20use.>
- <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/screen-time-brain>
- <https://www2.childmind.org/webmail/908232/3309877765/a106e571372a85094e3d719585eaaab50e883084466250bbf50b13e5f29f547f>