Family Online Safety Institute

Policy & Research

Parents, Privacy & Technology Use
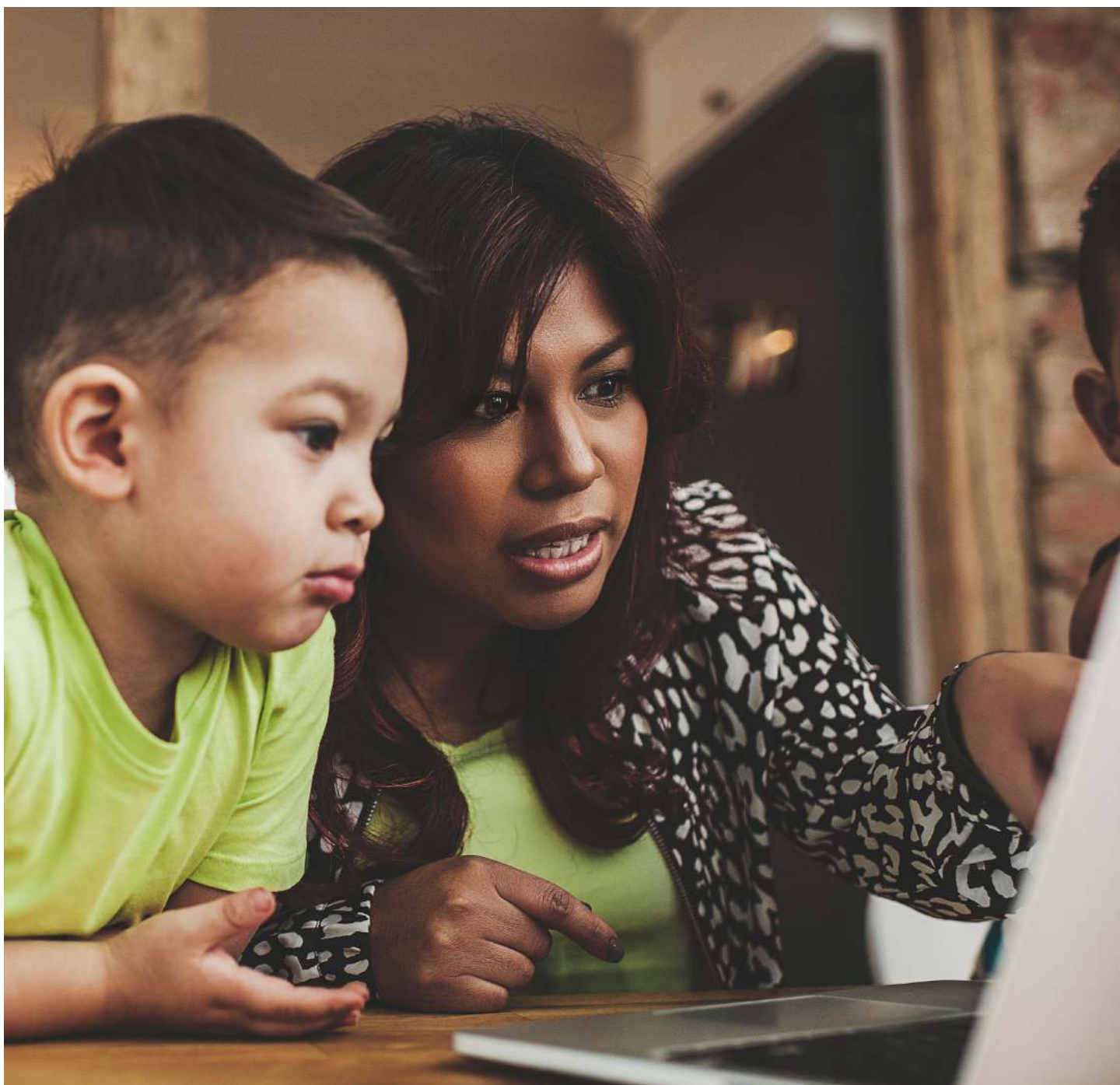
Research conducted by:

HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Priorities, Benefits, and Concerns

Children's technology use is not at the top of parents' list of day-to-day concerns. In fact, they believe that technology positively affects their child's life in many ways, with the notable exception of their child's physical fitness. Parents make distinctions between different devices and platforms when weighing the benefits vs. the harms.

- Among various worries that parents might have for their child, they express more concern about their child's personal safety (75% a lot or fair amount) and privacy (67%) than any of the others tested, including their child's performance in school (55%), social relationships (54%), physical health (51%), technology use (48%), and behavior (47%). Overall, 16% worry a lot about their child's technology use, 32% worry a fair amount, 33% worry only a little, and 19% do not worry at all.

- Parents believe that technology use has a positive effect on many areas of their child's life, most notably on their child's technology skills (92% positive effect), their child's ability to do research (89%), and his or her future, career, and life skills (78%), and to a lesser degree they think the impact on their child's performance in school and communication skills has been largely positive. The only area in which parents think their child's technology use has a more

negative than positive effect is their child's level of physical fitness (27% positive effect, 44% negative effect).

- Parents weigh the benefits and the harms of their child using devices differently, depending on the device. They are more optimistic about the benefits that will come from their child using feature phones (43% benefits outweigh, 19% harms outweigh) and smartphones (37% benefits outweigh, 31% harms outweigh) than social media (26% benefits outweigh, 47% harms outweigh).

Knowledge and Confidence

The majority of parents are highly confident in their ability to manage their child's technology use, and most feel they know a lot about what their children do when using technology; yet they admit to knowing more about their child's activity on some platforms than on others. Additionally, while many parents believe that they know more than their child does about technology, some parents acknowledge that they have learned something from their child about using a device or platform.

- Today, 59% of parents have a high level of confidence in their ability to keep track of their child's technology use, with parents of younger children (69%) more confident than those with teens (54%).

- Fully 81% of parents think they know a lot or most of what their children do when using technology or going online, and the more parents think they know, the more confident they feel about their ability to manage their child's technology use. Just as parents of younger children tend to register higher levels of confidence in their ability to manage their kids' technology use, they are also more likely to say they know most of what their child does online:
  - ◆ 70% among those with children age six to nine,

78%

of parents believe that technology use has a positive effect on their child's future, career, and life skills.

54%

have learned something from their child about using their smartphone or tablet.

◆ 44% among those with children age 10 to 13, and

◆ 34% among those with children age 14 to 17.

- Parents profess different levels of knowledge about what their children do when using a variety of platforms, and are the least likely to proclaim a high level of knowledge about what their children do while texting/messaging or using social media such as Twitter or Snapchat. They are more likely to think they know what is going on when their child is using social networking sites such as Facebook than when he or she is using Twitter and Snapchat.

- Parents believe they know more about technology and online activities than their child does: 65% I know more, 20% my child knows more. Nonetheless, many parents say they have learned something from their child about using a device or platform. More than half say they have learned something from their child about using their smartphone or tablet (54%), and just under two in five have learned something about using online social networks (39%) and texting (38%).

Parental Controls

Thirty-six percent (36%) of parents say they have used parental controls (a tool, program, or app) to limit or monitor their child's Internet use. Their top reason for not using them is that they think these controls are unnecessary, either because they trust their child or they already have rules in place to limit their child's Internet use. It is notable that another 37% of parents indicate that they have done other things to limit or oversee their child's use of mobile devices and social media.

- The main reasons parents indicate they do not use parental controls are because they think they are unnecessary because they trust their child to be safe and act appropriately (41% among parents who have not used parental controls) and because they have rules and limits in place for Internet use (39%). Fewer parents doubt the effectiveness of controls (12%) or think their child will just get around them (11%). On the other hand, some parents simply are not sure how to use them (18%) or did not know they existed (8%).

- Parents have done some other things to monitor or limit their child's technology use—even if they say they are not using parental controls—including requiring their child to accept them as a friend or follower, b) disabling in-app purchases on their child's smartphone or tablet, c) turning off the location function on their child's mobile device, and d) turning off the data on their child's cell phone.

Technology Rules

Most parents have rules for their child's technology use, and their rules relate to what, when, and how their children can get online. Additionally, the large majority of parents have limited their child's access to technology as a punishment for his or her undesirable behavior, whether online or off.

87%

of parents say they have rules for their child's technology use.

3 in 4

parents have taken away or limited their child's access to technology, social media, or the Internet as a consequence for the child's behavior.

- Fully 87% of parents say they have rules for their child's technology use. These rules include what sites the child can access (79%), what online accounts the child can have (77%), and what the child can post online (75%), among others.

- When it comes to rules on the amount of time parents say their child can spend per week using electronics or going online, 35% of parents say they have no such rules, 19% allow their child five hours or less, 21% allow six to 10 hours, and 25% allow more than 10 hours. Whereas 17% of parents of six- to nine-year-olds say they have no time limits, fully 54% of parents with children age 14 to 17 do not limit their child's amount of time online.

- Three in four parents have taken away or limited their child's access to technology, social media, or the Internet as a consequence for the child's behavior. About half (49%) have done so because the child broke a household rule, 41% who have done so because their child was spending too much time online, 32% have because of poor grades that the child received in school, and 16% did so because their child did something inappropriate online.

Parents as Role Models

Most parents believe they are doing a good job in modeling good technology behavior to their children, and many say that they go online together with their children. One in five parents admits to some missteps, however.

- More than nine in 10 parents give themselves an "A" or a "B" grade for the job they are doing in being a good role model for their child when it comes to online behavior and use of technology.

- Fifty-five percent (55%) of parents go online and use technology with their children often, and the proportions are even higher for parents of younger children and parents who are younger themselves.

- Yet some parents admit to oversharing about their child: 19% say they have posted something online about their child that the child has found embarrassing, has asked the parent to take down, or may find embarrassing in the future.

19%

of parents say they have posted something online about their child that the child has found embarrassing, has asked the parent to take down, or may find embarrassing in the future.

Methodology

In the fall of 2015, Hart Research Associates conducted qualitative and quantitative research among parents on behalf of the Family Online Safety Institute.

On September 9, 2015, Hart Research convened three focus groups in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, among parents whose children access the Internet. The groups were divided by age of child, with one group among parents of six- to nine-year-old children, one group among parents of 10- to 13-year-olds, and one group among parents of 14- to 17-year-olds.

From October 5 to 8, 2015, Hart Research conducted an online national survey of 589 parents of six- to 17-year-olds who access the Internet. To simplify survey administration, parents of multiple children in the age bracket were asked to answer questions about their child who had the most recent birthday.

The research's objective is to explore how parents view the role that technology plays in their child's life, how informed they feel about what their children do online, and how they oversee their child's use of online technology. This report details the research's key findings.
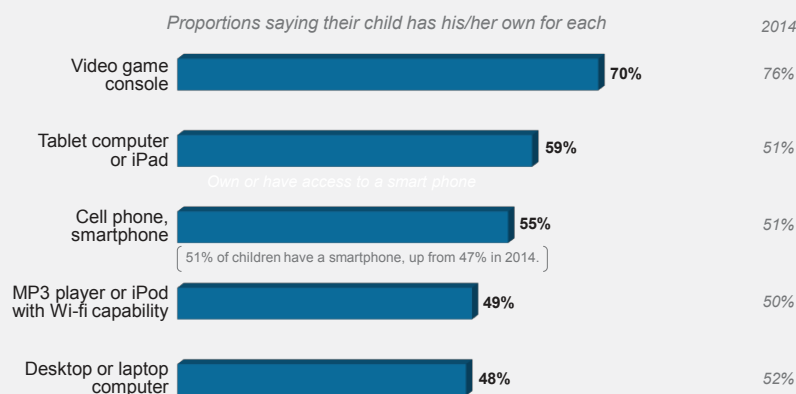
KEY FINDINGS

1. Children today are incredibly plugged in, and their mobile technology use is on the rise.

- Parents indicate that most children today have access to multiple electronic devices, including a computer (97%), a video game console (91%), a cell phone (91%), and a tablet (84%). The 91% whose child has access to a cell phone includes 67% who have access to a smartphone and 24% who have access to a feature phone.

- The past year has seen increases in the proportion of parents who say their child has his or her own tablet (up from 51% in 2014 to 59% today) and his or her own cell phone (up from 51% to 55%).

  - ◆ The proportion indicating that their child has his or her own smartphone has increased from 47% a year ago to 51% today. This group comprises 31% whose kids had a feature phone before they got a smartphone and 20% who have only had a smartphone. (Just 4% of parents say their child currently has his or her own feature phone.)

  - ◆ The older their children are the more likely parents are to say their child has his or her own smartphone: this includes 85% of 14- to 17-year-olds, 51% of 10- to 13-year-olds, and 21% of six- to nine-year-olds. On the other hand, parents indicate that older teens are less likely than younger ones to have their own tablet: 54% of 14- to 17-year-olds have a tablet, while 62% of 10- to 13-year-olds and 61% of six- to nine-year-olds have one.

Kids' adoption of mobile technology continues to rise.

Proportions saying their child has his/her own for each

		2014
Video game console	70%	76%
Tablet computer or iPad	59%	51%
Cell phone, smartphone	55%	51%
MP3 player or iPod with Wi-fi capability	49%	50%
Desktop or laptop computer	48%	52%

Own or have access to a smart phone

51% of children have a smartphone, up from 47% in 2014.

55%

55% of parents whose child has a social media account allowed their child to get one when he or she was 12 or younger.
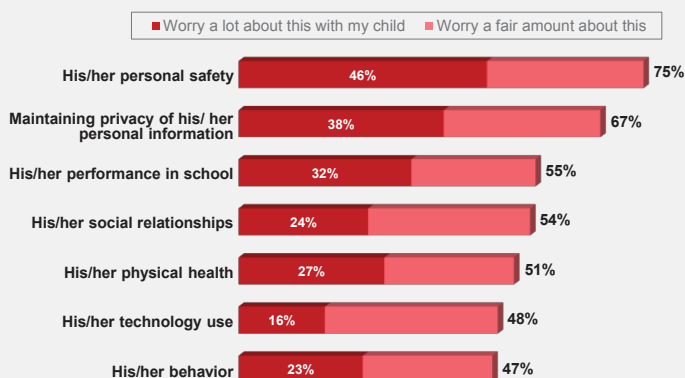
- The average age at which parents say their child got his or her own smartphone is 11.9, with 51% saying their child got a smartphone when he or she was 12 or younger.

- Parents whose child has his or her own feature phone or had one previously say that, on average, their child got it at age 10.8, including 72% who got their own feature phone when he or she was 12 or younger.

  - ◆ Parents whose child does NOT have his or her own feature phone say that they will allow their child to get a cell phone, on average, at the age of 13.4, and only 6% say their child will not be allowed to get one at all. The average age at which parents report they will allow their child to get a smartphone is only slightly higher, at 13.9, but 15% of parents whose child does not have a smartphone say their child will not be allowed to get one at all.

- Fifty-seven percent of parents report that their child has a social networking account – including a Facebook account (47%), Instagram account (30%), Twitter account (26%), or Snapchat account (24%). Most parents with children age 14 to 17 (92%) report that child has a social networking account, whereas half (59%) of parents of children age 10 to 13 say this and just 20% of parents say their child age 6 to 9 has one.

  - ◆ Parents whose child has a social networking account say that, on average, their child was first allowed to have one at age 11.7, including 55% who allowed their child to get one when he or she was 12 or younger.

  - ◆ Parents whose children do not have a social networking account say that, on average, they will allow him or her to get one at age 14.2

2. Among day-to-day worries, parents are most concerned about their child's personal safety and privacy. Their child's technology use is a less acute, though still present, concern.

- When asked to indicate the degree to which they worry about various aspects of their child's life, parents express the greatest concern about their child's personal safety (75% worry a lot or a fair amount) and maintaining the privacy of their child's personal information (67%). They worry a little less about their child's performance in school (55%), social relationships (54%), and physical health (51%). Just fewer than half of parents express the same level of concern about their child's technology use (48%) and behavior in general (47%).

- Thus, when it comes to their child's technology use, parents are fairly divided between worrying at least a fair amount (48%) and worrying only a little or not at all (52%). Parents' level of concern about maintaining the privacy of their child's personal information increases somewhat with the age of the child: 61% among those with six- to nine-year-olds, 68% among parents of 10- to 13-year-olds, and 72% among parents of 14- to 17-year-olds. On the other hand, there is not a similar increase in concern when it comes to their child's technology use: 47% among parents with six- to nine-year-olds, 53% among parents of 10- to 13-year-olds, and 43% among 14- to 17-year-olds. Parents with a college education (54%) are slightly more worried than are those with a lower level of education (44%).

Among parents' day-to-day worries about their children, technology use is a lower-tier (but still present) concern. Safety and privacy top the list.

Understanding that a parent's concerns can vary depending of their child's situation, personality, age, etc, how much do you worry about this with your child?

	Worry a lot about this with my child	Worry a fair amount about this
His/her personal safety	46%	75%
Maintaining privacy of his/ her personal information	38%	67%
His/her performance in school	32%	55%
His/her social relationships	24%	54%
His/her physical health	27%	51%
His/her technology use	16%	48%
His/her behavior	23%	47%

54% *Parents with a college education (54%) are slightly more worried **about technology use** than are those with a lower level of education (44%).*

3. Parents believe that their children's use of technology positively affects their children in many ways. They have some concerns, however, particularly when it comes to the impact it has on their child's physical fitness.

- When asked in an open-ended question to describe how they feel about the role that technology plays in their child's life, parents' positive comments outnumber their negative ones by 46% to 33%.
  - ◆ On the positive side, they are most likely to volunteer that it helps with school and their child's education (22%).
  - ◆ On the other hand, their top criticism is that their children use technology too much (19%). Fewer parents express top-of-mind concerns about inappropriate content (5%) or stranger danger (5%).

- In the focus groups, parents express a variety of feelings about the role that technology plays in their child's life:

> *"I feel like the push into IT and STEM is really big. I feel like my kids have such a big advantage compared to what I had because you only got exposure to math and science those 169 days you were at school, but this summer my son was chosen to be in a math program and then the summer before he got into Google science camp to learn how to write code." —Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child*

> *"I like the fact that he doesn't have to physically go to another country just to be immersed in that language." —Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child*

> *"[My daughter is] very creative. She's really good at drawing, she can sing, and for her to go on there and find things that interest her and can improve her talents, I think it's a good thing but I'm also a little cautious." —Parent of a 10- to 13-year-old child*

> *"I've taught my kids how to use design software. My one daughter is into making those little Claymation videos and we got her some software last Christmas where she can film her own little Claymation things and play with that online. She posts them for family to see." —Parent of a 10- to 13-year-old child*

> *"My 17-year-old, he's a senior now but once he goes to college…he wants to make video games. So it's sort of like although they are on these games and they're on the phone and stuff like that, for it to be sort of an inspiration for them to do other things, it's like a stepping stone … to greater things because who knows, my son or anybody's son could sit there and make a game for children's education." —Parent of a 14- to 17-year-old child*

> *"I see them do things creatively on cell phones and computers that I never would have attempted when I was growing up. Making video birthday messages for their friends, when all of my kids do projects, they're amazing and they can do them on their phones." —Parent of a 14- to 17-year-old child*

78%

More than three in four (78%) believe that their child's technology use has a positive impact on his or her future, career, and life skills, and 64% think it positively affects his or her creativity.

"Even when you tell them to go to bed you see the lights [of the device] glowing in the room." – Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child

"They just spend too much time doing things online that they could be doing for real outside." – Parent of a 10- to 13-year-old child

"Did I play [video games]? Yeah, I loved them! I get it. But there were so many other things we did." – Parent of 14- to 17-year-old child

● Parents think that their child's use of technology has a positive impact in many areas, but they are in greatest agreement that it has a beneficial effect on their child's technology skills (92%) and his or her ability to research and find information (89%). More than three in four (78%) believe that their child's technology use has a positive impact on his or her future, career, and life skills, and 64% think it positively affects his or her creativity. Majorities also are optimistic about the impact it has on their child's performance in school (58%) and communication skills (55%).

Impact of Child's Technology Use on Selected Areas of Their Life		
	Total Positive Effect %	**Total Negative Effect %**
Your child's technology skills	92	2
Your child's ability to research and find information	89	3
Your child's future, career, and life skills	78	6
Your child's creativity	64	11
Your child's performance in school	58	12
Your child's communication skills	55	18
Your child's social relationships with friends	51	16
Your child's ability to make new friends	47	14
Your child's relationships with grandparents and other older family members	46	18
Your relationship with your child	44	14
Your child's ability to interact and engage with people in person	41	28
Your child's behavior	37	20
Your child's attention span	36	30
Your child's level of physical activity and fitness	27	44

- Parents are somewhat less positive about the impact that their child's technology use has on his or her relationships and ability to interact with others, and they are mixed in their impressions about the impact it has on their child's behavior and attention span.

  "[Technology] decreases social interactions. I have an only child, so I want him to be able to talk to other kids and communicate when there's a problem. I don't want him to have something happen and he just starts crying and punches somebody, I want him to say, 'hey let's talk about it.' The best way that kids can do. So I feel like having that online capability, if they spend too much time on that, it takes away from social interaction." — Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child

  "I worry that if something isn't working they're not going to have the street smarts to really know how to navigate anything. I don't want them Googling how to handle a bully. Some things you just have to go out there and experience in life." — Parent of a 10- to 13-year-old child

  "Kids these days don't even know how to pick up a phone and ask a girl out. They're missing that sensation, that feeling of being with another person." — Parent of 14- to 17-year-old child

- The only area in which parents perceive their child's technology use as having a more negative than positive impact is on his or her level of physical activity and fitness.

  "A lot of kids are just staying static. They're coming home and jumping right on that iPad. What's going to be the detriment down the road to the country with health issues?" — Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child
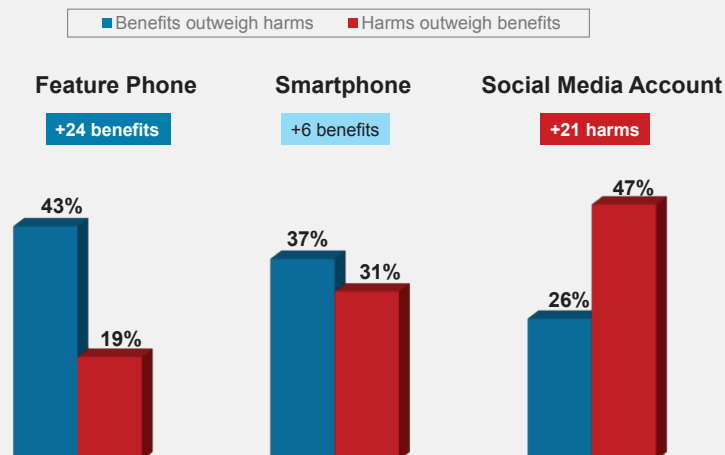
  "When I raised my kids they were outside playing sports, very active. My granddaughter is active as well, but sometimes she's on the iPad doing this, that, and the other, so it's kind of a struggle. I kind of reward her with iPad time or games—she needs to be active, needs to be outside." — Grandparent/Guardian of a 10- to 13-year-old child

4. When weighing the benefits and the harms of their child using various devices and platforms, parents are more optimistic that the benefits will outweigh the harms when it comes to feature phones and smartphones than social media accounts.

- Parents are more optimistic than pessimistic about their child having a feature phone (43% benefits outweigh; 19% harms outweigh), while they are more divided about the benefits vs. the harms of their child having a smartphone (37% benefits outweigh; 31% harms outweigh). Notably, parents whose children have their own smartphones are more positive: 54% benefits outweigh, 21% harms outweigh.

- Parents are much less sanguine about their child having a social media account: 26% say the benefits outweigh the harms, 47% say the harms outweigh the benefits, and 27% say they are about equal. Parents who say their child has a social media account are divided about its net impact (35% benefits outweigh; 32% harms outweigh), whereas parents of children who do NOT have a social media account are much more pessimistic (14% benefits outweigh; 67% harms outweigh). It follows then that parents of younger children (who are less likely to have social media accounts) are much less optimistic about social media than are parents of teenagers (who are more likely to have them). Mothers (23% benefits outweigh; 54% harms outweigh) are more skeptical of social media's impact than are fathers (30% benefits outweigh; 40% harms outweigh).

Parents draw some distinctions between more beneficial and more harmful technologies.

How would you weigh the potential benefits and harms of your child having these?

Legend: ■ Benefits outweigh harms   ■ Harms outweigh benefits

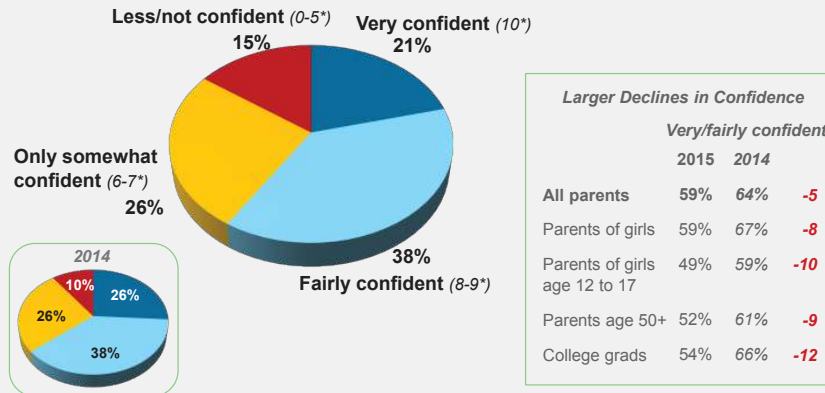| Feature Phone	Smartphone	Social Media Account
+24 benefits	+6 benefits	+21 harms
43% / 19%	37% / 31%	26% / 47%

5. The large majority of parents remain confident in their ability to manage their child's technology use, but confidence has dipped slightly since last year.

- Today, 59% of parents express a high level of confidence (rating of eight, nine, or 10 on a 10-point scale) in their ability to keep track of their child's technology use. This is down from 64% who registered this level of confidence one year ago. More than one in seven (15%) indicates a low level of confidence, up from 10% last year.

- Parents of six- to nine-year-olds (69% high confidence) are more confident than those with older children (54%). Less-educated parents (67%) are more confident than those who have a post-graduate education (53%). The biggest declines in confidence since last year have been among college-educated parents, older parents, and parents of girls, especially 12- to 17-year-old girls.

Parents' confidence in managing their kids' tech use has dipped in the past years, but still very few feel helpless.

How confident do you feel in your ability to keep track of and manage your child's use of technology, including electronic devices and being online?*

Less/not confident *(0-5*)*
15%

Very confident *(10*)*
21%

Only somewhat confident *(6-7*)*
26%

38%
Fairly confident *(8-9*)*

2014
10% 26%
26%
38%

Larger Declines in Confidence			
	Very/fairly confident		
	2015	2014	
All parents	59%	64%	-5
Parents of girls	59%	67%	-8
Parents of girls age 12 to 17	49%	59%	-10
Parents age 50+	52%	61%	-9
College grads	54%	66%	-12

* Ratings on a zero-to-ten scale: 10 = feel very confident, 0 = feel not at all confident
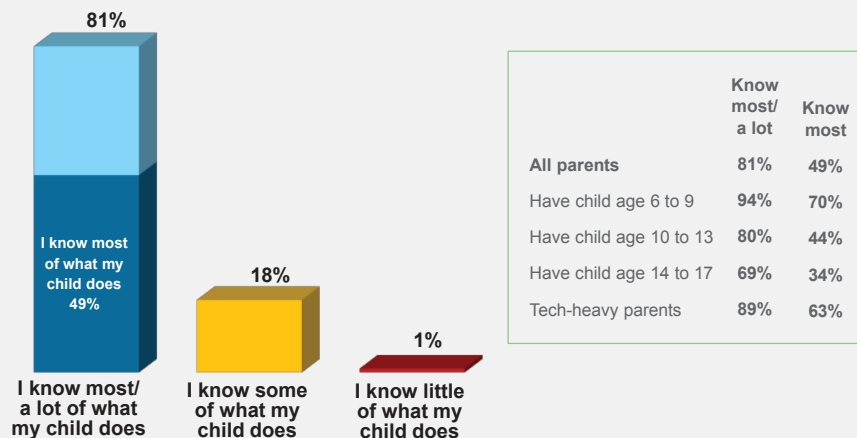
When it comes to managing their children's technology use, parents of six- to nine-year-olds (69% high confidence) are more confident than those with older children (54%).

6. Parents' high level of confidence in their ability to manage their child's technology use is linked to their belief that they know a lot about what their child does when using technology. Parents feel that they know more about what their children do on some platforms than on others, however.

- More than four in five parents say they know a lot or most of what their children do when using technology or going online. This includes about half (49%) who think they know most of what their kids do.

- Parents of six- to nine-year-olds are most optimistic about their level of knowledge of what their child does online: 70% think they know most of what their child does online. This is compared with 44% of parents of 10- to 13-year-olds and just 34% of parents of 14- to 17-year-olds who think they are as informed. Younger parents, who also are more likely to have children in the youngest age group, are notably more likely to say they know most of what their child is doing online. Tech-heavy parents also feel particularly on the ball with their child's online activity (63% think they know most of what their child does).

High confidence is related to parents' belief that they are on the ball with their kids' tech use.

How much do you know about what your child does when (he/she) uses technology, including using electronic devices, using social medial, and being online?

	Know most/ a lot	Know most
All parents	81%	49%
Have child age 6 to 9	94%	70%
Have child age 10 to 13	80%	44%
Have child age 14 to 17	69%	34%
Tech-heavy parents	89%	63%

81%

I know most of what my child does 49%

18%

1%

I know most/ a lot of what my child does

I know some of what my child does

I know little of what my child does

Younger parents, who also are more likely to have children in the youngest age group, are notably more likely to say they know most of what their child is doing online.

- Parents profess different levels of knowledge about what their child does when using a variety of platforms, and are the least likely to proclaim a high level of knowledge about what their child does while texting/messaging or using social media.

- As illustrated in the corresponding graph, most parents who say their child posts videos to YouTube[1], plays online games[2], or uses social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram[3] think they know a lot or more about what their child does on these platforms. Smaller majorities say they know as much about what their child is doing when texting or using messaging apps (61%) or when using social networking sites such as Twitter or Snapchat (60%)[4]. The gap in parents' belief that they know what their child is doing on Facebook vs. what their child is doing on Twitter and Snapchat is most notable among mothers, parents of teen boys, and parents who use tech three hours or less per day.

Parents are on less sure footing about kids' texting and use of some social media platforms.

How much do you know about what your child does when (he/she) is engaged with technology in these ways?

■ I know most/a lot of what my child does   ■ I know some/less of what my child does

(Among parents who say their child does each)

Posting videos to YouTube	81%	
	19%	
Playing video games online	79%	
	21%	
Using social networking sites like Facebook	76%	
	24%	
Texting or using messaging apps like Kik and What's App	61%	
	39%	
Using social networking sites like Twitter and Snapchat	60%	
	40%	
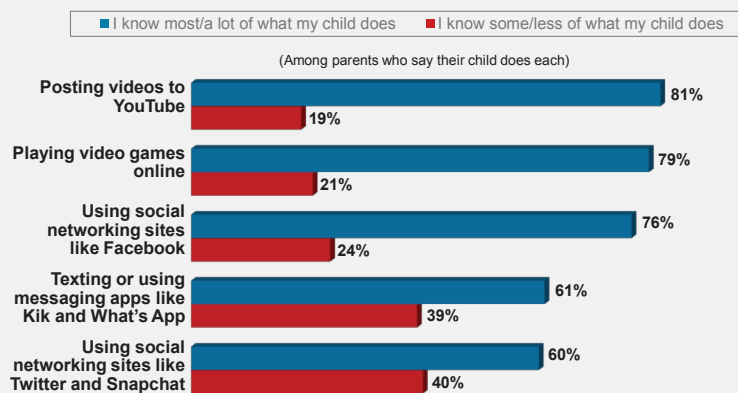
[1] 22% of parents say their child posts videos on YouTube.

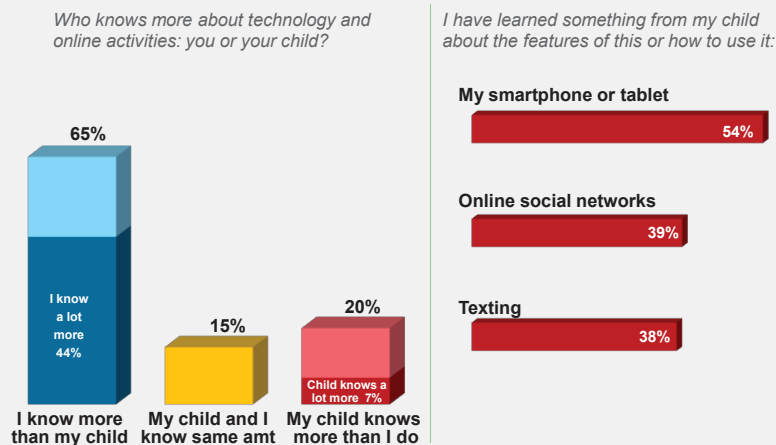[2] 86% of parents say their child plays games online.

[3] 54% of parents say their child has a Facebook and/or Instagram account.

[4] 35% of parents say their child has a Twitter and/or Snapchat account.

7. While two in three parents believe that they know more than their child does about technology and online activities, notable proportions of parents say they have learned something from their child about using a device or platform.

- The large majority of parents think that they know more about technology and online activities than their child does (65% say they know more, 20% say their child knows more, 15% say they know about same amount as their child). Those with children under 10 (86% say they know more) are much more likely than parents of older teens (46% "I know more") to think they know more than their child does about technology and online activities. Parents with the highest level of confidence in their ability to manage their child's online activity (77% I know more) also are among those most likely to think they know more than their child does about technology.

Who is teaching whom?

Who knows more about technology and online activities: you or your child?

65%

I know a lot more 44%

I know more than my child

15%

My child and I know same amt

20%

Child knows a lot more 7%

My child knows more than I do

I have learned something from my child about the features of this or how to use it:

My smartphone or tablet

54%

Online social networks

39%

Texting

38%

- This does not mean that parents have nothing to learn from their children about technology. More than half say they have learned something from their child about using their smartphone or tablet (54%), and just fewer than two in five have learned something about using online social networks (39%) and texting (38%). Overall, one in three parents thinks they know more than their child but also say they have learned something from their child. Parents of older teens are the most likely to acknowledge learning something about technology from their child.
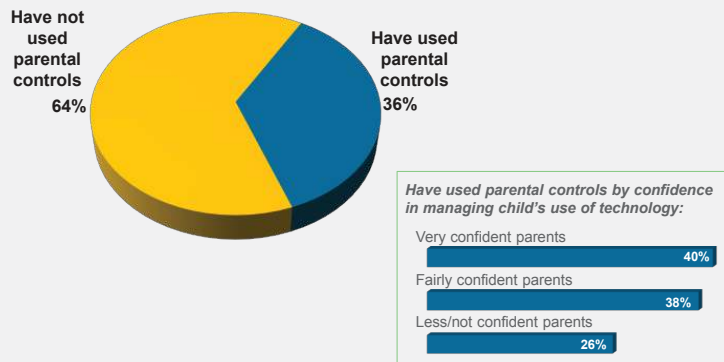
Parents of older teens are the most likely to acknowledge learning something about technology from their child.

8. Just over one-third of parents say they have used parental controls to limit or monitor their child's Internet use, and parents' top reason for not using them is that they do not feel that the controls are necessary.

- Thirty-six percent (36%) of parents report using a tool, program, or app to assist them in limiting or monitoring their child's Internet use. Those most likely to say they have used them are tech-heavy parents (52%) and those with a post-graduate education (49%). Parents who are the least confident in their ability to manage their child's technology use (26%) are less likely to say they have used parental controls than are parents who feel more confident (39%).

One in three parents reports having used parental controls.

Have you ever used a tool, program, or app to assist you in limiting or monitoring your child's Internet usage? These are often called parental controls.

Have not used parental controls **64%**

Have used parental controls **36%**

Have used parental controls by confidence in managing child's use of technology:

Very confident parents **40%**

Fairly confident parents **38%**

Less/not confident parents **26%**

- Parents who say they do not use parental controls tend to not see the need for them, either because they trust their child to be safe and act appropriately online (41%) or because they already have rules and limits in place regarding Internet use (39%). Notably smaller proportions have doubts about the effectiveness of such controls (12%) or think their child will just get around any controls (11%).

26% *Parents who are the least confident in their ability to manage their child's technology use (26%) are less likely to say they have used parental controls.*

● Yet, there is room to educate some parents about parental controls: nearly one in five (18%) is not sure how to use them and 8% say they did not know such controls existed. Parents who are less confident about managing their child's technology use are more likely than other parents to say that they do not use parental controls because they are not sure how to use them and that their child will just get around whatever controls they set.

Parents who do not use parental controls in most cases simply do not see the need.

Which one or two of these reasons best describe why you have not used a parental control tool, program, or app to assist you in limiting or monitoring your child's Internet usage?

	All parents	Parents less/not confident about managing their child's technology use
Not necessary because I trust my child to be safe and act appropriately online	41%	34%
Not necessary because I have rules and limits in place with my child regarding Internet use	39%	28%
I am not sure how to use them	18%	**32%**
I respect my child's privacy	17%	15%
I have doubts about their effectiveness	12%	10%
My child will just get around whatever controls I set	11%	**22%**
I am concerned about their cost	9%	11%
I did not know these existed	8%	10%

* Among parents who say they have not used parental controls

18%

Nearly one in five (18%) is not sure how to use parental controls and 8% say they did not know such controls existed.

9. Parents, including some who say they have not used parental controls, indicate that they are taking some steps to limit or monitor their child's use of devices or social media.

- When asked about other things that they could do to limit or monitor their child's technology use and online activity, parents indicate that they have done some things that could fall into the category of parental controls.

  - ◆ Among those whose children have a social media account (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat), 62% say they have required their child to accept them as a friend or follower (this represents 35% of all parents).

  - ◆ Among those whose children have a tablet or smartphone, 46% have disabled in-app purchases (this represents 43% of parents overall) and 40% have turned off the location function on their child's smartphone or tablet (this represents 37% of all parents).

  - ◆ Additionally, 37% of those whose child has a smartphone say they have turned off their child's smartphone data at some point (this represents 25% of all parents).

- Taken together, 37% of parents overall indicate that they have taken at least one of these four actions to limit their child's use of technology, but say in the previous question that they have not used parental controls.
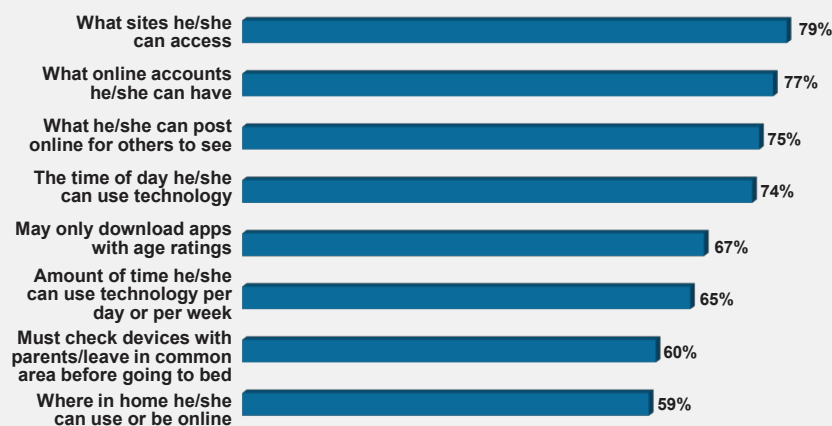
62%

Among those whose children have a social media account, 62% say they have required their child to accept them as a friend or follower (this represents 35% of all parents).

10. Most parents say they have rules for their child's technology use, and they are most likely to have rules about the websites they can access and the online accounts they can have.

● Fully 87% of parents say they have rules for their child's technology use.

Most parents have rules for their child's technology use.

87% of parents say they have rules for their child's technology use, including the following:

What sites he/she can access	79%
What online accounts he/she can have	77%
What he/she can post online for others to see	75%
The time of day he/she can use technology	74%
May only download apps with age ratings	67%
Amount of time he/she can use technology per day or per week	65%
Must check devices with parents/leave in common area before going to bed	60%
Where in home he/she can use or be online	59%

● When asked whether they have rules in eight specific areas, majorities of parents say they have rules in each one. The most common rules that parents have for their child include what sites he or she can visit (79%), what online accounts their child can have (77%), what their child can post online for others to see (75%), and the time of day their child can use technology (74%). More than two in three (67%) say their child is only allowed to download apps with specific age ratings, and nearly as many (65%) have rules for the amount of time their child can use technology. In all cases except for what they can post online for others to see, parents of 14- to 17-year-olds are less likely to have each of these rules than are parents with younger children.

87%
Fully 87% of parents say they have rules for their child's technology use.

35%

When it comes to rules on the amount of time parents say their child can spend per week using electronics or going online, 35% of parents say they have no such rules

- When it comes to rules on the amount of time parents say their child can spend per week using electronics or going online, 35% of parents say they have no such rules, 19% allow their child five hours or less, 21% allow six to 10 hours, and 25% allow more than 10 hours. Whereas 17% of parents of six- to nine-year-olds say they have no time limits, fully 54% of parents with children age 14 to 17 do not limit their child's amount of time online. Parents without a college education (38%) are more likely to say they do not have any time limits for their child's technology use than are college-educated parents (28%).

> *"On both the tablet and the phone, I have kids mode... There are apps I put on there, or if he wants another app I can always add it for him, and it limits games he can play and what he can look at, so if he tries to Google anything I can see his whole history. So I know what he's looking into." - Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child*

> *"My daughter wants to post videos on YouTube and I say no every time. Maybe I'm trying to shelter her too much, but there are rude and awful people... She has a good voice, she can really sing, but I don't want her to put up a video of her singing and somebody make fun of something she's doing or make her feel self-conscious about her body image. I don't want any of that and I don't feel she's ready for that type of criticism." - Parent of a 10- to 13-year-old child*

> *"She's restricted on a lot of what she can do. She's only 14 so she has parental restrictions on what she can watch on TV, on her phone, there are websites she can't go to, and my wife's tied into her phone so my wife can go in and see who she's chatting with, what they're talking about, and [my child] has two choices—she can either live with those consequences or she cannot have a phone at all."
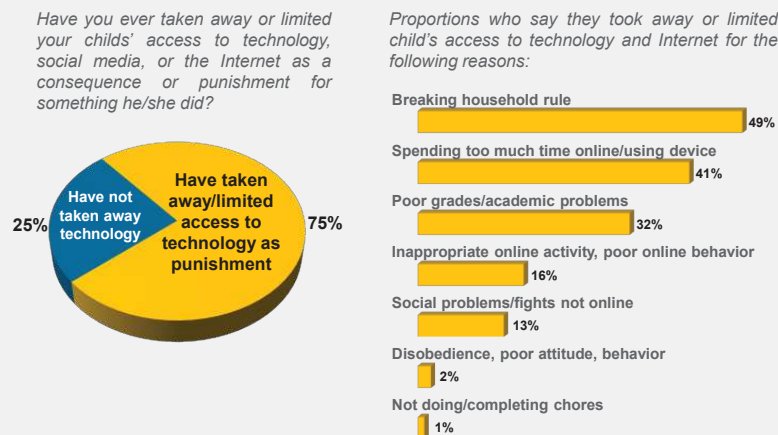> - Parent of a 14- to 17-year-old child*

54%

54% of parents with children age 14 to 17 do not limit their child's amount of time online.

11. Three in four parents have taken away or limited their child's access to technology, social media, or the Internet as a consequence or punishment for their child's behavior. Parents use this punishment for both online and offline behavior.

● Seventy-five percent (75%) of parents say they have taken away or limited their child's access to technology as a punishment for some behavior. Parents with younger children (80%) are more likely to say they have done this than are parents with older teens (60%). Parents who are less confident about managing their child's technology use (80%) are slightly more likely to have done so than are parents who are very confident (70%), but large majorities of both groups have used this as a form of punishment.

Three in four parents have limited their child's access to technology as a consequence for their behavior.

Have you ever taken away or limited your childs' access to technology, social media, or the Internet as a consequence or punishment for something he/she did?

Proportions who say they took away or limited child's access to technology and Internet for the following reasons:

Have not taken away technology — 25%

Have taken away/limited access to technology as punishment — 75%

Breaking household rule — **49%**
Spending too much time online/using device — **41%**
Poor grades/academic problems — **32%**
Inappropriate online activity, poor online behavior — **16%**
Social problems/fights not online — **13%**
Disobedience, poor attitude, behavior — **2%**
Not doing/completing chores — **1%**

● There are myriad reasons why parents have limited their child's technology use, including for transgressions both online and offline. About half (49%) of parents have done so because their child broke a household rule, and about one in three (32%) limited their child's access to technology because of poor grades or academic problems. The second most common reason is because their child spent too much time online (41%). Indeed, parents are more likely to say they have limited their child's access to technology because he or she spent too much time online than to say because he or she did something inappropriate online, such as oversharing, posting something inappropriate, or engaging in social drama online (16%).

12. Most parents give themselves high marks for modeling good technology behavior to their children, though they also admit to some missteps.

- Fully 38% of parents give themselves an "A" for setting a good example and being a good role model in showing their child the kind of online behavior they expect from their child, and another 53% of parents give themselves a "B." Overall, parents assign to themselves a 3.3 GPA.

- Parents give themselves similar grades regardless of the age of their child, or their age as parents. Parents who are very confident in their ability to manage their child's technology use give themselves the highest grades (61% "A"), while those who are the least confident are more likely to give themselves a "B" (17% "A," 60% "B").

- The focus groups reveal, however, that many parents recognize that they have room to set a better example than they currently do.

  "I say I hate Facebook but I'm on it all the time, and my kids see me surfing." — Parent of 6- to 9-year-old child

  "When I get home I gotta cook, I gotta get into your books, so I'm looking over y'all's books, their homework, and they're playing the game and then it's like, alright give me this tablet and you gotta do this. So it does tend to be a little hard to say put the tablet down, this is what you need to be doing, and then still manage the whole entire household and the rest of the kids." — Parent of a 6- to 9-year-old child

  "I will look at things [on my phone] at a red light, I'm trying to even get away from that not because I feel like I'm putting myself at risk but because I know people are watching, like my son." — Parent of a 14- to 17-year-old child

  "I won't text and drive—I made my kids sign that pledge—but sometimes at a red light when I don't always finish reading as I'm moving down the road, and my kids go, "Dad, put the phone down!" — Parent of 14- to 17-year-old child

- Parents also admit to some specific missteps related to sharing about their children online. Among parents who have a social networking account, one in five (19%) acknowledges posting something online about his or her child that the child may find embarrassing in the future, 13% say their child was embarrassed by something the parent posted about the child online, and 10% say their child asked them to take down something they posted about the child. Only 7% admit that they posted something negative or critical about their child online, such as posting about disappointing grades or bad behavior. One in five (19%) parents indicates that they have overshared about their child in at least one of these ways.

19%

Among parents who have a social networking account, one in five (19%) acknowledges posting something online about his or her child that the child may find embarrassing in the future.

13. More than half of parents often use technology together with their children.

- Fifty-five percent (55%) of parents say they often use technology together with their child, including going to websites, playing video games, or looking at social media posts together. This includes just 17% who say they do so very often and 38% who say they do so fairly often. Another 34% say they do it occasionally, while only 11% indicate that they rarely or never do it.

- Parents of younger children and younger parents (who are more likely to have younger children) report using technology with their children to a larger degree than do older parents and those with older children. Tech-heavy parents and those with tech-heavy children also are more likely to say they use technology with their child.

- Parents who often use technology with their child (66% highly confident) are more confident that they can manage their child's technology use than are those who do so less frequently (51% highly confident).

Parents who often use technology with their child are more confident that they can manage their child's technology use than are those who do so less frequently.

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