

A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. The top-left corner is a horizontal bar extending to the right, and the bottom-right corner is a vertical bar extending upwards. The text is centered within the open space of the frame.

PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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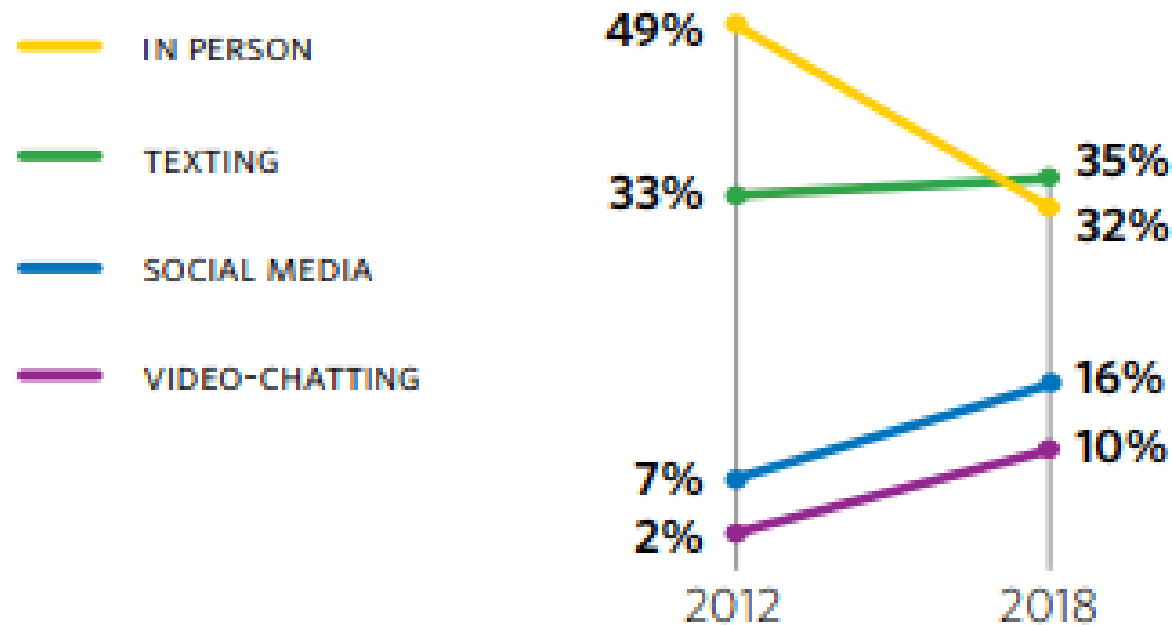
Social Media, Social Life: Teens Reveal Their Experiences

- Children under 18 represent 1/3 of all internet users globally (2017 UNICEF Report)
- New demographic “iGen” those born between 1995 and 2012
- For U. S. Teens:
 - 95% of 13-17 year-olds have a mobile device
 - 89% of 13-17 year-olds have a smart phone
 - 70% check social media several times per day
 - Average adolescent spends 4-6 hours per day with digital media
 - 57% of all teens agree that using social media often distracts them from homework
 - 54% of teen social media users agree that it often distracts them from paying attention to the people they're with
 - 29% of teen smartphone owners say they've been woken up by their phones during the night by a call, text, or notification
 - 42% of teens agree that social media has taken away from time they could spend with friends in person
 - 20% of teens say they check phone notifications while driving
- (Common Sense Media, Fall 2018)

Common Sense Media (Social-life) 2012 vs. 2018

Teens don't value face-to-face communication with friends as much as they used to.

Teens favorite way of communicating, 2012 vs. 2018



Social Media Positives

- Social media is a source of connection, especially with people far away
- Many children/teens say that it makes them feel better about themselves
- Social media can help those who are more introverted develop trust and rapport in a less threatening setting
- Social media can allow kids to communicate with many others at one time
- Social media can allow kids to make plans for face-to-face interactions.
- 55% of Generation Z (15-21) say social media provides them with support
- Online gaming can enhance mental skills by improving memory, navigational ability and attending to details
- Having lots of information at our fingertips can be useful



APA Stress in America Poll

August 2018 Data

- BUT....
- Excessive use of social media has been correlated with increases in depression, anxiety, and being overweight.
- The more teens spend looking at screens, the more likely they report symptoms of depression.
- 45% of Gen Z say they feel judged on social media
- 38% of Gen Z feel bad about themselves as a result of social media
- Those reporting poor or only fair mental health:
 - *Generation Z (15-21): 27%*
 - *Millennials (22-39): 15%*
 - *Generation X (40-53): 13%*
 - *Baby Boomers (54-72): 7%*
 - *Older Adults (73 or older): 5%*

Attentional Issues

- The average human attention span is shrinking from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2015.
- Correlational Research: 2587 LA-area high school students with no evidence of attention problems were followed for two years. Results indicated that those who engaged in more online activities:
 - *social media checking and commenting*
 - *texting*
 - *web browsing*
 - *playing online games*
 - *streaming TV or movies*

reported more symptoms linked to ADHD (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2018). Digital media that is “always on” may not allow the adolescent brain to rest and refresh. The constant notifications may also reduce a child’s ability to stay focused on tasks. Lack of sleep and exercise due to online activities may also be affecting the teen’s attention and executive functioning.

- More older teens and adults are being diagnosed with ADHD without having shown symptoms when younger.
- For some individuals, researchers believe that ADHD symptoms may be brought on or exacerbated by the continual digital offerings available.
- Infants attention spans suffer when parents are interrupted by technology while playing.

The Most Vulnerable to Social Media and What to Look For

- Teens with low social-emotional well-being experience more of the negative effects of social media including:
 - *Feeling left out or excluded when using social media*
 - *Feeling bad about themselves if no one comments on or likes their posts*
 - *Having deleted social media posts because they received too few "likes"*
 - *Having ever been cyberbullied*
 - *Feeling increases in anxiety and depression*
 - *Exhibit increased anxiety when separated from phone*
- Children who have a meltdown when a parent takes away a phone, tablet, or screen
- Kids who miss out on opportunities because of screen times
- Screen time is the only activity a child looks forward to
- Children's aggression increases and they are more prone to violent outbursts



Is My Child Addicted to Video Games? Probably Not

- WHO in 2018 designated compulsive video gaming as a mental health condition. WHO estimates <3% of gamers are addicted.
- DSM-5 does not identify electronic addiction as a diagnosis at this time
- Concerns?
 - *Prioritizing gaming over other activities*
 - *Increasing gaming despite negative consequences*
 - *Gaming significantly impairs life functioning*
 - *Spending all leisure time gaming*
 - *Not socializing with others*
 - *Problematic behavior results when kept from gaming*
 - *Increase in aggression unrelated to the game*



What can parents do?

- Limit screen time, especially for younger children. AAP recommends none for those less than 18 months, no more than one hour for those 2-5 years, and two hours of leisure screen time (not counting school work) for school-age and teenagers.
- Strengthen children's ability to regulate and moderate their device use. This includes scheduling regular media breaks, such as silencing one's phone for 30 minutes.
- Talk about social media early and often. Discuss FOMO.
- Understand the media your child is using, and check your child's browser history to see what sites they visit. Explore software to restrict access to content off-limits.
- Strengthen your child's ability to use social media in ways that boost emotional well-being.
- Encourage social media to enhance offline friendships and not replace them. Help your child develop social skills and nurture real-life relationships.
- For video games, discuss what is being viewed, especially as it relates to violence and portrayals of women.

What can parents do?

- Make sure devices are not being used during sleep times. Children who use a media device before bed are more likely to sleep less, sleep poorly, and be sleepy during the day. Waking and then using is a significant concern.
- Keep devices away during meal times and set-up other device-free zones.
- Identify and call out situations of “absent presence” when one is physically present with others, but paying more attention to a phone or other device.
- Discuss the importance of respecting privacy and protecting personal information in age-appropriate ways.
- Encourage kids to come to you if they witness cyberbullying, unsolicited messages from strangers, or other troubling information online.
- Help children find alternative responses to feeling bored.
- Friend your kids on social media, but give them space and do not over do it.

Parents Can Model Appropriate Media Usage

- Curb your own social media habits and know when to unplug
- Delete social media apps from smartphone
- Model active participation rather than passive scrolling
- Leave phone behind while walking the dog, pushing the stroller, or strolling through the neighborhood
- Make choices about the phone's use
 - *Model how to use paper maps rather than using GPS*
 - *Print and share photos rather than keeping on the phone*
 - *Replace real board and card games for online games*
 - *Wear a watch and set a real alarm clock instead of relying on one's phone for the time*
 - *Write out notes rather than typing them*



Websites

- About-face. (2018). *Learn: Media consumption*. Retrieved from <https://about-face.org/learn/>
- American Psychological Association. (2018). *Stress in America Generation Z*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2018/stress-gen-z.pdf>
- Common Sense Media. (2018). *Social media, social life: Teens reveal their experiences*. Retrieved from <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- Family Online Safety Institute. (2018). *Online safety across the generations*. Retrieved from <https://www.fosi.org/>

Smart Phone Parental Controls

- Apple (iphones) has a screen time function to monitor app use and set limits
- Google for Families and Google Play (android phones) allow parents to monitor and set restrictions

Book

Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy-and completely unprepared for adulthood*. NY: Atria Books.