Parent 1:

(silence)

Hello, good afternoon.

Parent 2:

Hi.

Moderator 1:

Hi Parent 2 and Parent 1 Thank you guys for joining.

Parent 2:

Hi. Good afternoon.

Parent 1:

Good afternoon.

Moderator 1:

So I think we're going to be a group of either five or six parents today so I'm just going to wait for a few more people to sign on.

Parent 1:

Okay.

Parent 2:

Okay.

(silence)

Moderator 1:

Hi, Parent 3. Welcome.

Parent 3:

Hi. Sorry. I had the volume all the way down so I couldn't hear but I-

Moderator 1:

No problem. We're just waiting a few minutes for everyone else to join but we'll hopefully [inaudible 00:07:46] soon.

Parent 3:

As soon as I came into my room, my husband's out there but I can hear my kids start fighting. He was like, "Why do you start fighting the instant your mother goes into the other room?" Better him than me, I suppose.

Moderator 1:

It's nice they're doing something else.

Parent 3:

Right.

Moderator 1:

Hi, Parent 6. Welcome. Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. Hi, Parent 4. Welcome.

Parent 4:

[inaudible 00:08:43]. Hi.

Moderator 1:

Hi, everyone. Hi, Parent 5.

Parent 5:

Yes, yes.

Moderator 1:

Okay, welcome.

Parent 5:

[crosstalk 00:08:56].

Moderator 1:

So we're all here. So thank you so much for taking out some time to [inaudible 00:09:05]. We know that you all filled out our crisis questionnaire already and we really just want to use this to go a little bit more in depth, to hear about your experiences with technology over the past year and a half since the start of the pandemic. So I was thinking we could start by just going around, say your name, maybe the age of your kids, and if you have a good TV or movie recommendation for something that you've watched, maybe share that with us as well. So I can start. My name is Moderator 1. I am a neuropsychologist with the Healthy Brain Network. And a good TV show that I have started to get into during the pandemic is Good Girls. It's about three housewives who end up getting involved in crime. I really like it. So it's nice to meet you all. Thank you for taking some time. So who would like to go next?

Parent 2:

I can go.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. Hi, Parent 2.

Parent 2:

I'm Parent 2. I live in Brooklyn. I'm an academic advisor. I have a 14-year-old son. And a movie that I just saw was Thunderforce, which is cool with two women that are like superheroes. That was funny.

Moderator 1:

Oh, cool. Thanks, Parent 2. Who's next?

Parent 2:

Hi, Parent 5.

Parent 5:

Hi. My name is Parent 5. I'm Andrew's mom. He's 12 years old and we live in Brooklyn as well. We had a chance to go to the theater in February and we saw the new released Tom and Jerry movie and it was amazing. My kids enjoyed it so much. It was funny.

Moderator 1:

Okay. That sounds fun. Thanks, Parent 5. Who's next?

Parent 1:

Hi. My name is [Parent 1 00:11:15]. Hi. Yes. My name is Parent 1. I have a handsome and inquisitive young 10-year-old son. His name is Kal-El, like Superman. And we're originally from New York and we have been enjoying some quality time during this quarantine, although we have a little bit of cabin fever. I'm not too much of a TV watcher, however, I am a book reader and a few of my favorite books thus far is The Science of Getting Rich by Wallace D. Wattles and Opening Your Mind to Prosperity by Catherine Ponder and some of the principles in those books I've been allowing my son to also study. And it's more so about opening your mind and creating your world through the power of thought. So I definitely recommend those books. And thank you for welcoming me and I'm grateful to be a part of this group today.

Moderator 1:

Thank you, Parent 1. Who wants to go next?

Parent 3:

I'll go. I'm Parent 3 and I have three children, they are 15, almost 11, my middle child will be 11 on Tuesday, and five. My oldest two are enrolled in the study. Anyway, I live in Brooklyn. What was the other thing? Oh, the show or something. It's funny, I haven't watched anything really contemporary, but my husband has been binge watching shows like American Horror Story and I've been binge watching period romance and dramas and stuff. I'm the opposite. During the pandemic I've just been looking for total escape, so like Jane Austin, different mini series and Outlander and Pole Dark and stuff like that.

Moderator 1:

I hear that. I hear that, Parent 3. Thank you. Okay. Who's next? Parent 4? Parent 6?

Parent 6:

I guess I'll go. My name is Parent 6. I have three kids, two were enrolled in the study. I have an 11-year-old, I have an eight-year-old, and a four-year-old. They're all boys. I haven't really watched much shows recently, but I do a lot of reading as well. Good book that I really enjoyed recently was The Alchemist is a pretty good book that I've read recently.

Moderator 1:

Thank you. Thank you, Parent 6. And Parent 4? You there, Parent 4? I think you're on mute right now. Parent 4, I think you're on mute but try to see if you can get your audio on. In the meantime, [Administrator 00:14:53], do you want to introduce yourself?

Administrator:

Hi, everyone. Wait, can you all hear me? Awesome. So I'm Administrator. I am a research assistant here at HBN and the person that's been hounding you all. So thank you all so much for being here. Introductions. I forgot what we were doing.

Moderator 1:

If you have a TV show, book, movie-

Administrator:

Yes. Okay. So the TV show would be Lovecraft Country. It's based on a book but it's set in I think the Jim Crow era and basically the protagonist, he's a Pitts family bloodline as a part of magician cult thingy. So he's trying to garner the magic to share to his offspring. And it's an adventure and all that good stuff. It's really, really good. They finished season one and I'm looking forward to season two. It's on HBO Max. I don't know about any other things. Oh, I'm from Brooklyn. Yeah. That's my introduction.

Moderator 1:

Thank you, Administrator. Okay. So Parent 4, if we can help you, you can use the chat and just let us know if there's anything we can help you with. Yeah, definitely pipe up whenever you're audio starts working.

Parent 4:

Hi. Can you hear me okay?

Moderator 1:

Yeah. We can hear you.

Parent 4:

[crosstalk 00:16:29].

Moderator 1:

Yes. Hi, Parent 4.

Parent 4:

Hi. I don't know. I didn't quite hear what part of the introduction. What would you like from us to present in this introduction.

Moderator 1:

Just say hi, the ages of your kids, and if you have a recommendation for us for TV, book, movie. We'd love to hear.

Parent 4:

Oh. I just got to second that Lovecraft one because I totally, totally enjoyed that. My kids, I have four children, two older and two younger. So I would say I have two sets of kids. So my first two, my son is a principal and my daughter is a district manager for a business. And the last two, my daughter is in the third grade, so she's 12 ... No. Wait a minute. And I have a 12-year-old and an eight-year-old. I'm the mom, right? And I have a 12-year-old and an eight-year-old. Those are the last two. And the last two are girls.

Moderator 1:

Very nice. Okay. Thank you, Parent 4. Okay. So again, thank you all for coming. I was thinking that we could start with a little exercise. If you have a paper and pencil nearby, try to jot down a few positive ways that technology has impacted your children during the pandemic and als then a few negative ways that technology has impacted your children during the pandemic. So let's just take a few minutes to do that and then we'll discuss.

Parent 3:

I have to go get a pen and paper for that. [crosstalk 00:18:22].

Moderator 1:

Thanks, Parent 3.

Parent 4:

Hello? Can you hear me okay?

Moderator 1:

Yes. We can hear you, Parent 4.

Parent 4:

Yeah. I'm trying to move where I can get a great wifi signal because I see that's what the problem is. I can get mine too, because I don't have a pen and paper right now.

Moderator 1:

Okay. So I'll ask for them in a minute. But, yeah. When we discuss, just think about them if you don't have a pen and paper.

Parent 4:

Okay.

Moderator 1:

And then as you're jotting them down, I'd also like you to think between the positives and the negatives, which one has had the biggest overall effect? So has the negative parts of technology had a bigger overall impact on your children or have the positive effects had a bigger overall impact? And just circle whichever one.

(silence)

Okay. Does everyone have some things jotted down or in their mind?

Parent 1:

Yes.

Moderator 1:

Okay. So by show of hands or speaking up if you're not on video, how many people circled the negative list as having the bigger overall impact. Okay. Parent 6 circled the negative list, Parent 2, Parent 5. I see Parent 4. Okay. Parent 1, did you circle the negative or the positive list?

Parent 1:

I circled the positive.

Moderator 1:

Okay. And what about you, Parent 3?

Parent 3:

I'm really finding it hard to choose. I still think it's a tossup. And partly too, with the two kids, there are different benefits and challenges for each one. I'm falling right in the middle.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Yeah. Let's definitely go into that. I think it sounds like there are negatives and positives all around. I definitely encourage ... As we go through this discussion, what we've been seeing is that there are a lot of people who are having very overlapping experiences and agree on some things and then there are definitely people who hare having different and more unique experiences. So please feel free to chime in on your individual experience even if it may be different than what you're hearing from other people. So the first question that I want to put out there for discussion is how did your children use technology for educational purposes before the pandemic? And did you have any concerns or what were the benefits of technology for education before the pandemic? And then maybe speak a little bit about now during the pandemic, how that has changed, if that's changed, and if you have more concerns or if it's been beneficial during the pandemic? So who wants to start?

Parent 6:

I'll start.

Parent 2:

I can go first. [crosstalk 00:22:40].

Moderator 1:

Here, how about Parent 6.

Parent 6:

So before the pandemic I feel like, especially with technology, my kids didn't really have much at all that they had to do. My oldest is in sixth grade now, so I think that might have changed going to middle school, however, while they were in elementary school, they really didn't have any assignments that they needed technology for, for the most part. So it was rare. And then, of course, last March school went completely virtual and everything was online. So it was like a night and day change for us. It was a disaster, to be honest.

Moderator 1:

Okay. So what were some of your concerns or what did you find problematic about using technology for education?

Parent 6:

Well, really, they're on all day. They're on all day. Now, one of my children is a really unique learner and one of them did okay. One of them was able to go on. But then one of them is really ... He's unique and his teacher not seeing him in person, it affected him. Even this year, for example, he started fully virtual at the beginning of the school year and his teacher, since she hadn't met him and she hadn't seen him in person, she didn't grasp that if he wasn't doing an assignment, it wasn't because ... He has ADHD and if he wasn't doing the assignment, it wasn't that he was trying not to do it, he was just having a hard time and she wasn't there to be able to intercept and to sit with him and to see how she could help him. She wasn't able to help him because she didn't know what the problem was because he wasn't there.

Moderator 1:

Right. So it sounds like he lost out on that one to one.

Parent 6:

Yeah. Now he's back full time and he is doing a lot better. Still, I feel like they're just online all day long and it's a problem.

Moderator 1:

Thank you, Parent 6. Can someone else share their experience with technology [crosstalk 00:24:57]. Yes, Parent 1?

Parent 1:

I might echo Parent 6 because, similarly, my son too, prior to the pandemic the most time he would spend on any electronic device was either in school for a computer media class and then after school or after homework, he'll have some free time, we call it free time, where he can play on his iPad or his cellphone for a couple of hours before bed. But, I mean, it was a total 180 where now he's fully remote. And actually, it was like a double whammy because I was actually diagnosed with breast cancer in February, so having this diagnosis and having the pandemic and then all of this pressure on my son to make sure that I'm healthy, make sure that he's doing well in school, it did take a negative toll at first.

But, again, through reading affirmative things and helping him along and making sure that he sees me in a not just a healthy state but also in a physically healthy situation, it helped him. But literally, his electronic usage went from pretty much nonexistent to almost 200%, because after school he goes directly to his iPad to play. When that dies, he goes directly to his iPhone and then if that dies, then he'll go to my computer to do classwork. It was like a never ending cycle and I have to break him off of it. I would try to have not just physical exercise but mental exercise as well when he's on break and when I also work remotely, fully remote, we would for lunch just go outside, take a walk, just talk about the sky or talk about the birds chirping. Something that we don't have to focus on where it's a problem or it's worrisome. That seemed to help for the time being. But I think when we come back indoors, it's back to the gadgets.

I would say his learning, his academics actually improved. He has an IEP. He has-

Moderator 1:

Yeah. I'd like to hear about that, because I know that you had said that there was an overall positive effect. So can you speak a little-

Parent 1:

Yes, yes.

Moderator 1:

... on the academic piece. Yeah.

Parent 1:

Right. I mean, as much as he's on these devices, he actually improved academically because it enhanced some of his skills that he already had, his computer skills and navigating. He was able to work independently and actually become a leader in his class where he's in the chatroom trying to troubleshoot those who are even having technical difficulties logging on. It'd be so funny. But-

Moderator 1:

[crosstalk 00:27:58] tech support for the ...

Parent 1:

Right. Well, can you help mommy record this Zoom? But I've seen and his teachers have also seen a very much more confident student and person overall. Not to take up too much time, but my son, he had confidence issues and wanting to be liked by everyone, wanting to be friends with everyone. But this past year especially, he really stepped up to the plate and actually became the leader confidently and was able to excel. So I'm very proud of him. I'm very proud of him.

Moderator 1:

Right. So it sounds like the emphasis on computers skills really brought out some nice strengths for him in those places. Well, good. That's great.

Parent 1:

And I'm cancer free too. So [inaudible 00:28:49].

Moderator 1:

Wow. That is really great to hear.

Parent 1:

Yes. Thank you.

Parent 4:

I just want to say-

Moderator 1:

Who wants to go next talking about-

Parent 4:

Can you hear me okay?

Moderator 1:

... technology for education? Sorry, Parent 4?

Parent 4:

Can you hear me okay because I'm struggling with my technology.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. We can hear you.

Parent 4:

I can either do video or audio but-

Moderator 1:

[crosstalk 00:29:12]-

Parent 4:

Everything at one time is not working for me. So that's why I wanted to go ahead and say what I have to say. So if you can hear me-

Moderator 1:

Yeah.

Parent 4:

You can hear me?

Moderator 1:

We can hear you. We can hear you.

Parent 4:

Okay, great. So it has had a negative impact on my household because it's too much computer time. And I remember those questions when I was filling out one of those questionnaires when I brought my daughter there to be evaluated. It was speaking about the problems in reference to the computers. I'm like, "I don't have those kind of problems. What are they talking about?" Now fast forward to this pandemic, now I understand. I'm having those problems. I'm having problems because now she wants to be on the computer all the time and it's hard for me to take it away because she has to do her schoolwork and she's learning remotely.

It's hard to sanction that because she'll say, "Oh, I need to do my homework, or I need this app or that app." It's just difficult to sanction the time so I have to let her use her computer but I catch her and she's getting in trouble with the computer because now all of these open sites and bringing up conversations that I never thought I would have to have with my 11-year-old daughter because she's on all of these different sites. And here, I'm putting in all these parental controls but she's very savvy so she can overstep those controls and now her and her friend and then teaching her how not to turn over your screen to your friend, I know you think is your friend, but there's so many things that you can get into problems with.

So for me, I'm just devastated by all of this computer time. And I have two children, so even the little one ... I mean, they need some in person. They need to not always have to rely on the computer. And that was my problem even before the pandemic because I saw the teachers were moving into having your children learn more with these apps. And sometimes I have to tell them it's okay for them to use pencil and paper because I feel you learn better, at least until you have the concept, then you can do it on the computer. Yeah. I'm not impressed with all of this, everything on the computer. For me, it's just a negative impact.

Moderator 1:

Right. And it sounds like it was a big switch for your family and that it also, that point that you made, I appreciate that, that the fact that it's needed for school purposes makes it a little bit harder to control it because it's not like you can just say no computers at all. Okay. Thanks, Joanna. So who-

Parent 3:

I'll go.

Moderator 1:

... would like to share on that? Parent 3, yeah?

Parent 3:

Yeah. So before the pandemic, my oldest daughter who was then in eighth grade, she was the primary computer user in terms of schoolwork. But even then, she still had other things that she could use. She had texts that they would send home. She had articles that were printed out already or worksheets or things like that. She has some trouble with writing. She had OT to help her with writing for, I think it's dysgraphia. And it's much, much better now. So the computer, she tended to use it a bit for anything that involved writing and she did a lot of voice to text and things like that anyway, but she did have a lot of alternatives.

My middle daughter who is about to turn 11, she hardly used the computer at all. She used it sometimes for some research things if she was working on a project. But most of her work was either done in school or it was done on paper. It was read a book and write a paragraph or something like that. She was then in fourth grade. Then, of course, this hit and they were 100% learning online.

It was more successful for my fourth grader because her teacher had it organized. She would give them a checklist on Google Classroom so they could see what they needed to do each day. She would give them a preparation for what was coming up, like, "Here's what the week will look like." And she also had live class sessions and she had it broken into ... She did three meetings per day, and one was a morning meeting to talk about the plan for the day, then she would give them an assignment, then she would have them meet back again an hour later to check in about the assignment and do the next thing. And then in the afternoon she did some small group work.

Where it was really challenging is that my daughter is in a French dual language program and so, of course, and we're anglophone, so that just dropped. I mean, that's one reason why her teacher tried to do a lot of small group work to try to help build that up, but that was certainly a challenge for us. We had to try to find ways to help her be exposed to the language so she wouldn't lose her ability then for starting fifth grade and then struggling.

But my eighth grader, some of her teachers were amazing with checking in and having office hours and doing some instruction and tutoring and things like that online and some of them, it was like they just were phoning it in at the end of the semester and she was teaching herself. And that was very difficult. This year, it's changed because now she's in high school and she's at a performing arts school. It's been a real challenge because her art is violin and it's really hard to do instrumental work with groups Zoom. They've done their violin lessons on Zoom but it was just one on one. But her orchestra class, they really haven't done any orchestra all year because you can't really do an orchestra on Zoom. There's a lag between the things. So that's been a little bit of a challenge.

But she's had all live classes online this year, because their school, that's how they set it up. That has been fantastic. Because it's enabled two things to happen. One is that because she does have ADHD and she has a really hard time organizing herself, she doesn't really have to organize herself because she's in the lessons all day. And then she has a little bit of homework to do, but it's not an extreme amount. And they do a lot of breakout rooms and stuff so she's able to do some small group work and it helps her, I think, because she doesn't have to be teaching herself.

It also helps because when I'm home, I'm hearing what she's learning in class. That's been really great. With all my kids, hearing their teachers teaching them online, I've been blown away by the skill of these teachers. They're amazing. And the thoughtfulness that they put into their projects and developing their curriculum, it's just outstanding and I feel like that's been a great gift to have that insight. And it's also helped me when it comes time for me to help them, because I can say, "Oh, no. Remember, Mme Simone was saying that you needed to do this with this project. Yeah. I understand you forgot that, but I heard her say it so let's do that." So that's been helpful. It's been good.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. That's actually a very interesting pro, having that little bit up close view [crosstalk 00:37:48], and it sounds like there's been some helpful parts to address ADHD and organization as well. But I'm hearing some variability in the quality of education.

Parent 3:

Yeah. The challenge that we've had with mostly my middle daughter is that she also has anxiety and OCD and so she, first of all, can go down a rabbit hole when she's just learning online. Secondly, this year she's been doing blended learning so when she's in school, she's doing all right. When she's at home, she gets almost no work done. I mean, she's been working today and as of the time I came in here, I think she had done one math problem. She just has a really hard time. And I have to see her screen at all times. If I can't see her screen, she's not doing what she's supposed to do and that's [crosstalk 00:38:49]-

Moderator 1:

So she's having more of a problem doing it independently?

Parent 3:

And that makes problems because then I have a five-year-old, and if I have to look at the screen all day of her older sister, I can't be doing things with the five-year-old. And my five-year-old then spends a lot of time coloring or playing with magnet tiles or watching videos because I have to keep saying, "I'm sorry it's a beautiful day. We can't go outside. I have to make sure your sister's doing her work."

Moderator 1:

Right. There's only so much resources to support you.

Parent 3:

Yeah, exactly.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Parent 5, can you share?

Parent 5:

Yeah. Well, prior to the pandemic my kids were very exposed to technology. They were using it as well for school. They had a lot of apps for reading. My older son, Andrew, he has a-

Moderator 1:

What were your feelings about it before? Did you find technology to be helpful before the pandemic?

Parent 5:

It was. It was because it was controlled. Whenever I needed to, I was able to put away the devices. But after the pandemic, like another mommy said, I have a problem taking the laptop away because he uses it for school. Now, the negative of it is my older son who has an IEP is becoming more addicted to the screen. If it's not the laptop, it's the iPad, when the iPad goes empty, it goes to my phone. He's just switching from one device to the other. But as far as school goes, he is doing amazing, a lot better than when he was in school. Remote has done wonders for us. He's more focused. He's totally in charge of his school day. I don't get involved. He gets great grades. And it helped us also with the transition.

I was very nervous about Andrew going into sixth grade. It's a new school, new teachers, new system. But that worked out so well for us because now he got to know all his teachers and he's doing great academically. He's doing amazingly. So that was very good. It's just that he's becoming more addicted and less socially involved and that's the part I'm not happy with.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. So I'm curious to hear a little more. What do you think about the way he's learning now has been so good for him? What about it?

Parent 5:

Yeah. Lucky for us, honest to God, I pray for these teachers. They're amazing. I don't know if it's us, we jut are lucky with the teachers he has. They're very dedicated. He has live classes. I don't feel like he's missing anything. And I also get to see how Andrew is like with his teachers and his classmates.

Moderator 1:

Like what Parent 3 was saying. Yeah, yeah.

Parent 5:

And he takes charge also, like another mommy said. It was funny, I was laughing because he does the same thing. He gives everybody advice on technology. He's like the tech person in the class. Even his teachers, they tell me if Andrew's not there, we get nervous. He's enjoying it. I'm happy to see how he's like and he's doing great.

Moderator 1:

Yeah.

Parent 5:

And I feel like when this is all over, when school is over, I can go back to controlling device time, screen time.

Moderator 1:

Right. So it definitely sounds like it's been concerning, the addictive part of it, but you're confident that once they're more back in person that you can take over that part again.

Parent 5:

He's not going to give it up willingly. I'll have to hide devices like I used to before, which is fine. It used to work. So it's good.

Parent 3:

We've had to do that too. We have to lock them in a room. Would it be all right if I just add something to what you ...

Moderator 1:

Yeah, yeah. Add something and then afterwards I'm going to move us to the next question. But, yeah.

Parent 3:

Okay. So there were two things that Parent 5 said that reminded me of stuff with my kids. One of them was that the addiction to the screen time is followed by this ... In the beginning of the pandemic at least, we really had to force them to go outside. One of my kids just had a meltdown yesterday because we had to go to in person violin lesson because her teacher resumed that. She says, "I don't want to go outside. I don't want to go outside." So definitely there's been an element of ... Once they're out, it's okay but it's like leaving the apartment has become a bigger deal. And one of my kids, she had almost lost complete contact with friends until she consciously ... We both, we planned it out. You've got to start contacting your friends because it just slipped away.

The other thing I wanted to say, which Parent 5 was talking about her son's skills with the technology and it's not just the Zoom or the Google Classroom or Google Meet, but my kids have used so many more different types of programs like Flip Grid. They're creating presentations with Google Slides. They're using special effects in their presentations. They're creating videos. The one with the violin, she's working with something called Click Track so that she can coordinate her timing with the timing of someone else's playing so that they can line up their performance videos. They're doing animations for projects.

Moderator 1:

It [crosstalk 00:44:23] into all these new ways to be really creative.

Parent 3:

That's been amazing to see that, because they've then been able to use what appeals to them and what works with their skillset and their abilities to do their assignments, because there's a lot of variability in how they present the information and then they've got this array of options through technology to work with and that's been a real gift as well. So it's definitely been a double edged issue.

Moderator 1:

Okay. All right. So the next question that I want to put out there is now that either some people have gone back in person or you're anticipating going back in person, what are the challenges that you anticipate and are there parts of this that you hope will continue and are there parts of this way of educating kids that you hope will end? So who wants to take that one first? Parent 2?

Parent 2:

I'll go. I guess I'm anticipating ... I would like him to go back to school. He's in ninth grade right now. So hopefully he'll be able to go back in person. He does have asthma so that's what I'm really concerned about, just him being in person. But I like the aspect that they can utilize their computers in the classroom. That's a good benefit. But I do like the teachers teaching live. That's another thing. But he needs that social skills. That interaction is what really ... It's just me and him in the house and I think we're both getting tired of each other talking to each other. He needs that input with other people, other teenagers his own age.

And I like that the teachers are incorporating all this new technology. He's learned how to type and just things he should have known how to do, and even learned life skills within the house, which is great. Just so we could incorporate all those things when they go back into the classroom.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. Keep the good but it sounds like there are parts of going back that you think are really important like the social part. Okay. Anyone else for-

Parent 4:

Hi. This is Parent 4.

Moderator 1:

Hi, Parent 4. Yeah?

Parent 4:

Yeah. I will be very excited when they go back in person. The part that the teachers are doing a fantastic job and I have to say they are going above and beyond during this remote learning. And I know one thing they said, "Oh, my kid is so great. She's so great. She's doing so well. She's leading the class." Yeah. She is doing a lot of that stuff because she's home with me every day and the teachers don't really have to deal so much with those behavioral issues because now all the behavioral issues are home with me so she can shine with them for the most part. But for my youngest one, she loves that in person and she needs that. For me, I'm working every day from home so to work every day from home and try to teach a third grader and a sixth grader, it's very difficult. So I definitely would love for them to be back in school and in person learning and they can use some of this technology and hopefully the teachers will continue to be as great as they've always been.

Moderator 1:

Thanks, Parent 4. Anyone else for challenges you anticipate in going back? Things you'd want to keep, change?

Parent 1:

I ...

Moderator 1:

Hi, Parent 1.

Parent 1:

Hi. I'm looking forward to ... My daughter's about to start five days. She's been going three days, she's been going two or three days, my five and 11-year-old. It's been so exhausting. Well, it's enabled me to see where the problems and challenges are. I've asked for an IEP review because I'm like, "These are some other issues that I didn't realize were going on." It's been so exhausting and I haven't been able to do any of my work. As I think Parent 4 eluded to or said, it's a struggle to do anything you have to do when you've got these kids that you have to teach as well. So I'm looking forward to them being able to go into the classroom and do and have their learning more focused there.

And for my five-year-old, it's so important because of the social stuff and for my 15-year-old, she's just going to be starting back three days. And she's done really well with being fairly connected to people given that she's never stepped foot in her school. She's in ninth grade. But it's going to be great for her to be able to be there and really to connect with her teachers and with her classmates. What I'm worried about is that ... Well, two things. One, is it gets harder for the older one who needs a little bit more ... Who's not as self directed and so she's then more independent, which actually makes it a challenge for me to keep track of what's going on.

But my 11-year-old has so much anxiety, she gets so many physical symptoms of that, that she's had a lot of school refusal in the past. And having it be just two or three days was what kept us going this year, was you can go, you can have that time, but guess what? When she was refusing on a Wednesday, "I'm not going to school. I feel sick. My stomach hurts. My head hurts." We would say, "But it's the last day of the week. Then tomorrow and Friday you're home." So that was what kept us going. I'm not looking forward to those morning challenges again because I feel like it's going to be a lot for her because she's just so anxious.

Moderator 1:

Right. Especially after being out for so long probably.

Parent 1:

Yeah.

Moderator 1:

Anyone else for challenges going back. Parent 5, yeah?

Parent 5:

Well, my kids are not too excited about going back to school and that worries me. Neither am I. I've gotten really very selfish. I enjoy having them home. I love having them home. And the only thing we miss really is the social aspect of being physically in school and the after school programs. I had them registered in chess, soccer, all these activities. But having them home has been awesome. So I think it's going to be difficult for all of us when they start going back to school.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. That separation again. You get used to [crosstalk 00:51:16] keeping them close.

Parent 2:

I could just briefly-

Moderator 1:

[crosstalk 00:51:20]

Parent 2:

Yeah. If I could just briefly piggyback off of what everyone had shared is my son has been fully remote and I think with him graduating fifth grade, entering a new school sixth grade. That's already some pressure right there and whether or not he'll be in blended learning or in in-person learning full time, that's really dependent on the current environment around September. My son as well has asthma so, of course, that's always his health. His safety is always at the forefront. And my son, again, I had JD as an IEP so he's very hands on, visual type of student who requires that physical in person learning. It's not to say that he can do without, but in a physical classroom setting I feel that now that he's matured and has a little more confidence, he can enhance those skills better in in-person learning.

Again, I'm with Parent 5. We all have enjoyed being ... I'm a social butterfly, but I really am recluse as well. And I passed that along to my son. We've been home together during this time, however, it's going to be a change for the both of us. Myself, I'm being called back into work as well. So getting into a new normal, of course, it's going to take some adjusting to, but I'm sure that we can overcome any challenges that we face, especially if we are not only physically prepared but mentally prepared for it as well.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, yeah.

Parent 6:

I just want to add my kids have been full time for a while. My husband and I are both essential workers so we've had no choice other than we had to keep him out of school. They're really happy back in school full time now.

Moderator 1:

Good. Was it hard for them to go back? Did they face any challenges?

Parent 6:

My oldest is now in middle school so he had to wake up early. So he had to get on the bus-

Moderator 1:

That's a challenge regardless probably.

Parent 6:

He had to leave at 7:00, so that's really his only complaint. Other than that, he said that he's really, really happy to be back in school. They're really enjoying being with the other kids.

Moderator 1:

Good to hear. Thank you, Parent 6. So we have about 15 minutes left. I want to be respectful of your time because I really appreciate you taking out some time to talk to us. For the last 10 or 15 minutes, I'd like to just shift the conversation a little bit to talking about social media and media use specifically. Just hearing some experiences about what was the social media and media used, and by media we mean YouTube or any kind of media that they're consuming. What was the use like before the pandemic, how has that changed? Any concerns, any benefits that you're seeing from changes in social media use? So whoever wants to start us off.

Parent 6:

I'll start us off.

Moderator 1:

Okay, [crosstalk 00:54:49].

Parent 6:

So what's changed with the social media, so my kids, as I'm sure all the rest of the year kids do also, they really like Roblox and they want to play with their friends. So before it was more controlling, okay, you have this amount of time to go on YouTube, you have this amount of time to play. But now, when everybody was home, the Roblox playing with friends and talking on the phone at the same time was the only socialization that they had. That was their only option. So it got a little more and a little more and then they said, "Oh, well, I'm playing with my friends so can I keep playing?" So then that time extended a little bit. So it's hard when that is the only way that they could socialize or when they're on FaceTime, when they're going on FaceTime with friends. When that's the only way that they could socialize, that has been really difficult to reign it in and stop them from it. So we've been having a lot of challenges with that.

And then the YouTube videos start and that's when everything they have, like their school issued iPads, and so I could take away their own personal devices, but the school iPads have YouTube on them. So I can't ... It's for school so I can't just take it away. So then-

Moderator 1:

[crosstalk 00:56:16]-

Parent 6:

... they end up sneaking. Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's a lot harder. And sometimes I don't even want to because that's the way that they're able to socialize. They're starting to go to the park with kids and doing more now but it's been a challenge this whole time.

Moderator 1:

Thanks, Parent 6. Who wants to go next?

Parent 3:

I'll go.

Moderator 1:

Thanks, Parent 3.

Parent 3:

So I've had a very similar experience. My then eighth grader was already on social media because I reluctantly let her have an Instagram account because her class at school, her cohort, had a cohort Instagram chat going and they mostly used it for things like, "Hey, I have a doctor's appointment today. Can anyone tell me what I'm going to miss in this class?" For that type of thing. So they mostly used it well. There were some incidents though of kids sharing porn and things like that on it. That was obviously a problem. But this year, yeah, she's used it really ... That, and the other thing was SnapChat that I was like, "You cannot have SnapChat. Absolutely not. It's like a sexual predator's playground."

And then she had a friend, a pen pal in New Zealand, who she found out was on SnapChat. So then it was like, "All right." Kind of like Parent 6 was saying, that's how they connect. I mean, yes, they can write letters but it's so much more immediate and they socialize so much more so I was like, "Fine, okay. You can use SnapChat." So it was creeping up. But I think I have to have my rules. I have to have the passwords. I have to have access because I want to make sure that they're safe online. And so I periodically go in and check.

My 11-year-old doesn't have any of these accounts. What she has is YouTube and she's become obsessed with various YouTubers and it's prompted some discussions about what we value and what we don't. She definitely sneaks it when she's not supposed to. That's definitely been a challenge. And again, same thing, school computer, you can't exactly ... I mean, she does have to do work. It's been great in some respects because she's been able to use it for school, but also I don't really want you looking at these people and following what they're doing because I don't agree with it.

So, yeah. That's been a little bit of an issue. I've worried a lot about body image and things like that with them because I feel like when they're following these people on whether Instagram or YouTube or wherever else, a lot of these people are making tons of money as so called influencers and they have a very different lifestyle. And I feel like sometimes that's hard for them to see. But one of my kids went through a little bit of an issue around food and she was talking about like she wished she could be anorexic because she wanted to be a certain way and we had to have a whole discussion with the psychiatrist around that and talking about positive body image and stuff. And I think she seems like she's on a better path.

But I wanted to say one last thing about it, is that where it has been really good is that my oldest daughter, during this time, she seems to be like a lot of adolescent girls are, I'm reading, she's developed vocal and motor ticks, which is one thing I'm worried about when she goes back to school. At home she can hide it from people to some degree but when she's in person, it's a lot harder. But she's actually connected a lot with people on Instagram who also have some of these struggles and she's starting to talk about herself more as neurodivergent as opposed to having a disorder and things like that, and learning techniques for managing it. She'll say, "Oh, I found out that so and so on Instagram has the same kind of ticks that I do and this is what she does to help herself. That's been fantastic, that it's really enabled her to develop a sense of agency around herself and her managing [crosstalk 01:01:17].

Moderator 1:

Yeah. Just connect with people that she may not have ever had access to.

Parent 3:

Yeah, yeah. So that's been the positive, whereas the rest is like a minefield.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, yeah. Thanks for sharing that. Yeah, Parent 4?

Parent 4:

I have to say that my kids, even the eight-year-old, everyone wants to be a YouTuber. They want to be a YouTube star or they want to be famous or Instagram famous and that's killing me right now. Because with everything that's going on, you're like, "What happened to I wanted to be a doctor or lawyer or teacher?" Everyone want to be a YouTuber and even the eight-year-old. I'll go, "What do you want to do on YouTube?" And she's struggling with, "Maybe I can open toys." I'm just so over it. I just feel like I have to get back to basics. And it's harder with the 12-year-old because she's exposed to so much and she's faster than I am with these computer skills. So if I see something I don't like, she can hit two or three buttons and it's done. So I spend the rest of my time going, "Go back to that page. Go back to that page. I know I saw it."

I just feel like this whole social media, these influencer ... And I didn't even know what an influencer was before the pandemic. I had to learn all of this during the pandemic. And when they see these kids in these beautiful houses and their parents. The YouTubers where the twin girls or whoever, all I can do is watch it and say, "Hey, their house is clean. You see they cleaned their room. Are you cleaning your room? They make their beds every day. Yes." So these people are making tons and tons of money and they have all of these toys and these beautiful houses. Like one young lady said, the body imaging. I'm watching my 12-year-old constantly looking at her body and excited about it or say, "Hey, I want my boobs bigger or maybe my butt should be bigger." I'm so over it.

So even when this pandemic is over and these kids are back in school, this whole social media presence is here to stay. And I have to now navigate it so that I know what my kids are doing. And that whole SnapChat, I had to shut SnapChat down so quick because it's just too much. And the schools don't have SnapChat on their computers so I can say, "Hey, no. We're not having it." But the social media presence, I just have to stay on top of it. And with all that I have to do, I really don't want to be on social media like that but I have to.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. It sounds like it's hard to keep up with, but thank you for highlighting [inaudible 01:04:34]. Those are really important points. We have a couple more minutes. Does anyone have anything to add in terms of social media that we haven't already said. Yeah. Hi, Parent 5. Yeah?

Parent 5:

I actually thank you for this meeting because I thought I was the only one in this world that's having a problem with YouTubers. My son has developed such an addiction to video game YouTubers and I freak out. I just flip. The more I tell him not to be on them, the more addicted he gets. Like I said, after school I'm hiding all devices. Hopefully it'll be under control.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, no. It's a challenge and I think as we're having these meetings, we're hearing that a lot from parents. We really thank you for taking some time to share this and contributing to the research. Part of our goal in this project is to really raise awareness of a lot of the challenges that parents are facing.

Parent 5:

Thank you.

Moderator 1:

Administrator, do you want to close us out?

Administrator:

Yeah. Just like Moderator 1 said, we're seeing the same commonalities with the Roblox, the Instagram, YouTube, SnapChat. In fact, all of the parents have been echoing the same thing that you guys have been saying, so you are not alone in your sentiment. And we just really thank and appreciate you for taking the time out to really help us and giving us just your sentiments and the things that you guys have been going through. Just because sometimes, like in yesterday's group, parents were talking about just how some parents will say that they're doing such an amazing job with their kids and everything. And as a parent, feeling as if you're not doing the best, that you're having a hard time just navigating this new life with your child. So we really appreciate all of your sentiments. Thank you so much for just taking the time out to be here with us today.

In regards to compensation, I'm going to be sending our administrator your contact information so you guys should be receiving compensation either by today or no later than Monday. So I would say if by Monday evening you don't get it, please do not hesitate to give me a call or email me back just to let me know that you guys did receive it.

Parent 5:

Thank you very much for the meeting. It was very beneficial for me personally and it was nice meeting all the other parents.

Parent 3:

Yeah. Thank you.

Moderator 1:

Thank you all. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Parent 1:

Definitely.