Administrator:

(silence).

Administrator:

Hi everyone. I'm, Administrator. We're just waiting for our clinician and our project manager to join the call. Very quickly, this is just for those who didn't get the chance to do it. I'm going to be sending the link to the focus group, the Zoom conversation. We'll just need you guys to fill that out and then we will get...

Parent 1:

Is this the consent?

Administrator:

Yes, so if you weren't able to complete the consent form, just fill it out right now.

Administrator:

(silence).

Moderator 2:

Hi, sorry about that. Oh, I can't hear anything.

Parent 1:

Hello.

Moderator 2:

Hey, how are you?

Parent 1:

Good, how are you?

Moderator 2:

I'm good, thank you. Hi, I'm Moderator 2. I'm the project director for Healthy Brain Network. How is everyone doing today?

Parent 1:

Good.

Parent 2:

Good, thanks, Moderator 2.

Parent 4:

Good.

Moderator 2:

Great. We can get started. I think everyone is here, Administrator, correct?

Administrator:

Yes.

Moderator 2:

Okay. You were selected to be part of a focus group, as I'm sure you saw the email. We're looking at people who had responded to the crisis survey and where... technology use during the pandemic. But I wanted to get us started. We can go around the room and share our names. And I don't know, the best TV show you have binged lately.

Parent 2:

I can start. Hi, everyone, my name is [Parent 2 00:10:10] and I just finished binging The Good Place.

Moderator 2:

Oh, that was a great show.

Parent 2:

Yeah, I really enjoyed it.

Parent 3:

I can go next. My name is [Parent 3 00:10:25] and the most recent, I don't know that we've binged it because we watched it as it came out, but Falcon and the Winter Soldier, it was very big in our house. The final episode was Friday.

Moderator 2:

Oh, nice.

Parent 4:

Hi, I'm Parent 4. Let's see, I've been binging a lot of stuff, but I guess the one that's been pretty cool lately is Raised By Wolves.

Moderator 2:

Oh, wow. Okay.

Parent 5:

[inaudible 00:10:56] I'm Parent 5 and I don't really watch TV, so don't binge that much.

Moderator 2:

A good book, then?

Parent 5:

No, I've been, watching on, I think it's Netflix, Castle, with my son.

Moderator 2:

Okay.

Parent 1:

My name is [Parent 1 Sing 00:11:14] and I also don't unfortunately have the time to watch a lot of TV. But I don't know, I guess something I recently watched was The College Admissions Scandal documentary on Netflix. That was recent.

Moderator 2:

Great. All right, so in thinking about technology and its use, I want to try to get as many opinions today as possible and get feedback. We don't need to all agree with each other, I like it when we don't or we have differing views. But I like to try and exercise where we talk about, or you think about some of the ways technology has been useful during the pandemic and some of the ways it has been problematic during the pandemic.

Moderator 2:

If you just take a minute, write down three of the positives, three of the negatives, and then let's circle one from each group that was the most important. And then overall, which one wins over it. For example, if I had to think about technology use with my children during the pandemic, some of the positives where they've developed better skills, technologically they use it to call family a lot. And it also gave me time to work because it kept them busy.

Moderator 2:

Some of the problematic parts were the endless playing of games, hard to manage bedtimes and the whining when it wasn't technology time. I would probably say the whining was the worst of the problematic side and the letting me work was the best of the positive side. But overall, I would say positive had to win. We'll just take a two minutes and do that part.

Moderator 2:

(silence).

Moderator 2:

If you're done, just raise your hand so I know everyone's sort of finishing.

Moderator 2:

(silence).

Moderator 2:

All right, who wants to go first?

Parent 4:

I can go first. I think I had similar challenges to yours. I think I had similar challenges to yours but I said it helps us stay connected. Even though we're going through this pandemic, we were able to stay connected with our friends, our families. We can continue to do our work, whether it be schoolwork or our own adult work and just helped us be more creative about it.

Parent 4:

And for myself, my kids are pretty tech savvy, but for me, I feel like I wasn't. And I think this gave me an opportunity to really kind of expand on my small tech skills, so those were my three pros.

Parent 4:

And then, the cons were, yes, the endless playing of games. I'm just constantly finding myself, asking them to please try doing other things, read a book, take a break, something. But if I let them, there'll be on video games all day and it's been difficult to monitor also because, even though we have like a policy that everybody has to give up their devices at a certain time, they still found ways around it, you know? And the other thing is that I just find myself, it's just a point of contention now. We're just negotiating, constantly renegotiating and negotiating those things. Those were my cons.

Moderator 2:

Okay. Anybody else want to share?

Parent 3:

I can share. We have Similar issues. I have an 11 year old and a 16 year old. I would say, the overwhelming negative for everybody in the house is just way, way, way too much screen time and just really hard to... and I've never been good at managing the screen time. The only way I was ever able to do it was to just say like, "No screen time during the week on a school night and screen time as much as you want on the weekends."

Parent 3:

Now, because they need screens to do their homework, like trying to keep them from not, if you walk out of the room and you walk back in and like, they're playing my Minecraft or if not, it's on a hidden screen or whatever. You're like, oh, so my coping mechanism, of just saying all or nothing is kind of taken away now. Yeah, way too much screen time for everybody, me included.

Parent 3:

I'd say the biggest plus has been so many artists have found new ways of getting their art out to people, whether that's book illustrators or musical concerts. There's one band we would love to see become, maybe once a year, once every two years. And he's been doing a weekly concert every Saturday. That's a really nice thing that normally an artist we would only get to see once a year, we get to see every Saturday. And artists like Oliver Jeffers or Mo Willems or things like that, you know, doing really fun art related things has been fun.

Moderator 2:

Okay. Does anybody else want to share?

Parent 2:

I can go. For the negatives on us, there's definitely been, it's the exact same thing just way too much screen time for everybody in the family, not just for the kids. You just kind of find yourself kind of, especially at certain points of the year when locked down was stricter, just bored. And so, all of us are on our phones or in front of the TV or on the computer.

Parent 2:

And my two are 14 and 10, so for the 14 year old, he's already kind of going through those teenage mood swings. And I have found that the extra screen time hasn't helped, like on days when he has less screen time, he's in a better mood overall. When he goes over a certain amount and he's just kind of a dick. And then, it's also been like disrupted sleep and trying to figure out what the best time to cut it off is so that they're not staying up too late and they're able to fall asleep without being all edgy.

Parent 2:

On the positives, both of my boys have ADHD and while they're both really smart, like getting them to focus in class has always been an issue. While they've been home and everything is laid out on the computer, their grades have skyrocketed, they're both currently on principal's list. Both of them have had nothing but nineties throughout the year. And I know a lot of parents have struggled with that transition to working from home.

Parent 2:

But for us, it actually worked really well because I was able to be like, "Hey, let's put you in a quiet environment and there's no distractions at the moment and you sit there and I'll sit here and do my work and you sit there and you do yours. And if you need help, you let me know." And because it's quiet and there's nothing else going around, they've been able to focus, so that's really been great for them as far as just grades.

Parent 2:

And then, the other one as a family that we've enjoyed is because we're not going out as much, the one time that I really do enjoy the screen time is when I'm like, "Hey, let's do family movie night." And our pod was us and then my mom and my aunt. We'd do like a whole thing. We'd bring down the screen, we'd make popcorn and it would just feel really great to sit there as a family and have our own little moment where we were all connecting.

Moderator 2:

That's good. Thank you. Does anyone else want to share now? Or should we go ahead with questions?

Parent 1:

I can just add a little bit.

Moderator 2:

Sure.

Parent 1:

I guess a couple other things is to add what to people have already said is the positive has been things like I've been able to go to PTA meetings and stuff, which I wasn't able to always attend in the past. And keeping in touch with, well, when the pandemic started, it seemed like we were making more of an effort to FaceTime with family in India, and have all the cousins together.

Parent 1:

And now, obviously a year into it, that's lessening a little bit. But in the beginning, there was this wanting to get together and actually FaceTiming people, which we hadn't done in a long time. And then, the negative is obviously the endless addiction that people have talked about, but also this concern that, are they going to be able to function as like normal humans like you and I function? Or do the only way they know how to communicate with their friends is when they have a phone in their hands? There's this fear that this kind of alternative way of communication has seeped in.

Moderator 2:

Thank you, that's all great insight, actually. In terms of some of the questions we wanted to talk through today, I want to start with in terms of your children and their use of technology for education, the first question we're focusing mostly on prior to the pandemic, what was that like?

Parent 2:

Sure, for us, prior to the pandemic, most of their technology use for school was at school. They didn't bring, like they have their Chromebooks, they didn't bring their Chromebooks home, generally. They use pen and paper for their things. Sometimes they'd have to look things up on the computer, but it wasn't the larger part of their schoolwork at home. But now, it's the complete opposite. If he's writing, if either one of them is writing anything down, it's actually surprising more than anything.

Moderator 2:

Okay.

Parent 3:

Both of my sons have an IEP with assistive technology. My 16 year old is actually very adept at using a computer beforehand and his school was already using Classroom about a year ahead of time. For him, it was a pretty seamless transition and like Parent 2 said as well, with ADHD, for him, for my 16 year old, it's been an improvement being at home. Sometimes, being in an ICT classroom is great for kids with ADHD, but sometimes it can be tricky because sometimes you have more disruptive kids in there and makes it a little harder for him to concentrate. On that aspect, it's been better. And my 11 year old had been given assistive technology, but had never really been shown how to use it. He didn't really use it at home at all. But now, he could probably run a small tech company. They've gotten very good at it.

Moderator 2:

That's great.

Parent 4:

My high schooler was already using the technology, so he's using it even more now. Whereas, I think it was with my middle schoolers, it's like Parent 2, it was like more pen and paper for him. And now, yeah, he, I barely see him using pen and paper, he's mostly on some device for his schoolwork.

Parent 1:

Yeah, the same for me, the pen and paper has disappeared. And personally, I consider that a loss because I just feel like their going to forget how to write.

Moderator 2:

So true.

Parent 1:

Yeah.

Parent 5:

With my son, it was a natural transition. There wasn't much of a transition cause he was already using the computer to write all his reports and even well, the math is of course still pencil and paper. I don't think he's doing that. I see him doing that on paper still and then he takes snapshots of it and sends it to the teacher. But otherwise, it wasn't much of a transition at all. He is doing very well in school, too, but no real transition.

Moderator 2:

Okay, and in terms of using technology during the pandemic, what was that like for your family?

Parent 1:

Well, they were on screens pretty much all day, like they logged on at 8:00 or whatever, then whatever school ended 3:00 and then they just stayed on doing homework or God knows what else. But they were just in front of the screen from 8:00 to, you have to like sort of drag them away for dinner. But it was just all encompassing.

Parent 5:

It just seems like they're on the computer all the time. And you don't really know if they're goofing off or not, as long as grades are okay, I guess he's doing what he has to be doing. We kind of let him do his own thing.

Moderator 2:

Okay. Anybody else?

Parent 2:

I'd say for us, the experience is just pretty Similar. I mean, the little one is in class starting in at 8:30. Really, we get them up and we start, they have Zoom classes certain times throughout the day. And then, during the rest of the day while he's not in Zoom classes, he has assignments that have to be completed and turned in preferably by 4:00. We'll get them up as early as 7:30 so he can start getting the work out of the way. And once he's done with that he's like, "Hey, can I go watch this?" Or, "Hey, can I go play a video game?" I'm like, "How about you try to read for a half hour first and then, you know, give your brain a break from the computer?" But it's essentially the same for both of them is they jump on first thing and then it's pretty much straight through the day unless you rip them away from it.

Parent 4:

My middle schooler has a regular day, so it's just all online. He starts at 9:00 and ends at 3:00. He's basically, with the exception of the lunch break that he gets, he's in front of the screen most of the day. And I think just like Parent 1 said, it kind of evolves from one thing to the next, because then even after school, he's still in front of the screen, whether it's doing homework, chatting with his friends or playing video games. I find myself having to come in and make him take breaks away from the screen, whether it's just go eat something or just go to the bathroom. I don't know because yeah, he'll just sit in there while my high schooler, his schedule is different. But I feel like he manages his time better because he has to go from his regular high school classes and his College Now classes. He has two different schedules to follow. But I think for my middle school, it's just been harder to kind of get him away from the screen.

Parent 3:

Yeah. We have I'd say a Similar thing. Our high schooler has kind of figured it out and manages his time well. And the tricky thing for our older one, our kids first got phones in sixth grade and we had one computer in the living room that everyone could use. We haven't been able to do that with our current sixth grader. He's gotten a lot more screen time a lot more quickly. He got his first phone starting in sixth grade, but he certainly has much more access to screens than his brother did at the same age. All the sort of safeguards and things we had in place for our now 16 year old are out the window with the 11 year old.

Parent 3:

And he starts class at 9:00, but he'll get up at 7:30 in the morning to play Minecraft or Subnautica or whatever before school starts. And so, okay, he's getting up in the morning, he does that. But it's a lot of computer time during the day.

Moderator 2:

I'm sure. Does anyone else want to share around that?

Parent 6:

I find that it's harder for me to control what they're doing, especially those well, I have a four year old and I have a 10 year old. One is in fifth grade, the fifth grader is a little more responsible as the kindergarten, pre-K say, my four year old son. My four year old son would not stay still. He would not want to be in the sessions and he would cry, whine and we're having a difficult time sitting him down for more than what? Maybe they meet like an hour. That's been tough.

Moderator 2:

Okay. And what challenges do you all anticipate in your children going back to school full-time?

Parent 2:

For me, I worry about because they were both ADHD, they both already kind of struggled with connecting with their peers. And so, there's been almost a full year now where they really haven't connected with kids in their own age. They just recently started going back to Taekwondo for in-person classes, so they're starting to see their peers and stuff, but I worry about their relationships and making friends.

Parent 2:

Especially for my oldest, he started, this was his first year of high school, so when he goes back in September, he'll be going into the 10th grade. But he was already going in without knowing anybody, so I worry that he will especially struggle to make those connections and know how to carry out conversations in person and how to hang out without a screen in their face.

Parent 5:

I have the same concern with Parent 5, Child 1 right now. I know he's struggling with that at school. He goes to a boarding school, but they have the option to stay home and do Zoom also. And he actually, for the first time, he's very... He used to, well, he's always been very sociable, but this is his first year in high school, too, so he changed from schools, too. He went into a school where he knew nobody and then just half the school is actually there in person.

Parent 5:

And about a month ago, he asked to come home and I said to my husband, I go, "This is the first time he's ever asked to come home. He's always loved being in a boarding student." And I found that very strange. He wasn't talking to us very much. I found that he was isolating himself a lot, but he's going through that teenage period. You're like, "Okay, is he just going through a phase?" And it finally did come out that it was the social aspect of the school that he was just feeling very lonely and very isolated. And I think because everybody is on their screens everywhere and they're not socializing. I think it's going to be an issue, I think, with the kids overall, whether they have problems or not.

Moderator 2:

Very hard. I want to shift into talking a little bit about your child's use of social media. And we'll start with a Similar set of questions. What was your child's use of social media like prior to the pandemic? Did you find it beneficial? Did you find it problematic? What were your thoughts around that?

Administrator:

Sorry, just to interject, I know for some parents or some kids your children may not use social media. If that's the case, you can also talk about just any media use such as like YouTube or like watching and things like that.

Parent 3:

We don't let our kids do traditional social media, no Facebook, no Instagram, no anything like that. Again, I did find it a lot easier to do this with my older son. My younger son is on YouTube a lot. As much as you try to monitor it, they will always find a way around it. There's just no, there's just no way. And the worst is Discord. We've found discord to be incredibly problematic and really, really hard to monitor. And the tricky part about it is, it is, I think at least for my sons, it's like the main way kids were communicating with each other, because you can be on a group chat with your class with your advisory, with different things, so it has functional uses. You can't just say, "No Discord," which is what I would like to do.

Parent 3:

But, having to constantly monitor all the different threads on Discord and trying to figure out Discord because I'm not a big social media user myself, so trying to figure out that stuff and what's okay to use and what's not. And my son also struggles being social, so I didn't want to cut off a social avenue. But I really, really dislike Discord.

Parent 2:

I would say I'm very Similar to Parent 3 in that sense. I didn't let the boys get phones. The little one got a phone now because of everything going on. But Parent 2, Child 1, my oldest didn't get his phone until his his 14th birthday this past summer because it was like, well, we gave it to him as an early graduation gift because he was going to be going to high school and the high school was so much further from our home than where his middle school was.

Parent 2:

His middle school was a 15 minute walk from our place, the high school, he's actually going to, when he goes in, person is actually like a train ride and a bus ride away. At that point, we gave him the phone so he could get like phone numbers for all his friends that he wanted to stay in contact with from middle school and that kind of thing. But we had a strict no classic social media, no Facebook, no Instagram, no Snapchat, none of that.

Parent 2:

And we told the older one that when he got his phone, if he was interested in Instagram, because I felt like, okay, it's a little bit easier to monitor Instagram than it is some of the other social media you can get and he wasn't interested. But now, as this time has gone on, they've been interested in Discord and it actually started with group play on things like Roblox and stuff like that. That's how it started for them. But it is a lot harder to monitor. And the little one, not so much that he's 10, so there's a lot of YouTube, which I'm not crazy about, but at least I can sit in the room and kind of keep an eye on the YouTube with them and see what he's watching.

Parent 2:

But the Discord is really, really hard to keep track of and is kind of a concern for me because like, "Who are you talking to? Who are you?" You know what I mean? Like you're meeting all these people in these rooms and you're communicating and he's like, "Oh, I made a friend and you know, wherever, and they're my age." And I'm like, "That stranger danger talk of internet stuff is like consistent." Like, "Hey, remember they're saying they're your age, but you're not seeing them in person. Anybody can say anything. You know? It's also, be careful about what you're putting out there. You know, just because somebody asks for X, Y, and Z doesn't mean you have to whatever. Don't give pictures of yourselves, don't give locations of yourselves, that kind of stuff." There's a lot of whole new world for me, stepping into this because it pushed it forward so fast.

Moderator 2:

That's a great point.

Parent 4:

Yeah, I feel like we're having a Similar experience, too. And I feel like my younger son has had just way more access to social media in comparison to my older childs now with the pandemic and they're big video, big PlayStation gamers, so they have a lot more access than I'm comfortable with, but we've also had to go over the not giving out your personal information, not giving, putting your business out there with these people because you really don't know them.

Parent 4:

And also, just talking about just being caring, being careful, being cautious, not everybody's your friends type thing, but yeah, there's a lot of access with the YouTube, with the gaming. They're not on Facebook, thankfully, but they're on other things, they're on Instagram, they're on TikTok so it's just, I'm very concerned about the younger one because I feel like he's still trying to figure things out while at least the older one didn't, wasn't exposed to these things until more recently. But he wants to do everything has big brother's doing, the younger one, so that's been a challenge for me.

Parent 1:

Yeah, just chiming in, the Discord is an issue for us, as well. It seems to have taken over and he seems to be communicating kind of nonstop to this universe out there. And again, can't really monitor what threads, what rooms or whatever that he's in, but he seems to be almost, I mean, tied to the hip to this, to this Discord. Like he seems to be responding every couple of minutes to some kind of message board or something. And I've never seen anything like that before. And that's really, really concerning, like it seems to have taken over his life.

Moderator 2:

I'm sure. And you've addressed sort of prior to the pandemic and during the pandemic, what are your thoughts on as we return to in-person school and in-person activities, what your children's use of either social media or things like YouTube and Discord and other things on their devices will be like?

Parent 2:

For us, I figure we're probably going to have a little bit of a fight on our hands. I'm already trying to push them more towards like so for like the summer I got my older one to apply to and enroll in two different activities. And they're both going to be Zoom, but it's Zoom with like people, you know what I mean? One is almost like a book group that he's gonna join. And the other one is a coding camp type of thing. And it means less time on things like Discord and stuff like that. I figure while it's not in-person, at least it's, it's interacting. It's more like this setup versus just typing in a chat room and being in front of the computer screen by yourself. And I've already been pushing him to do that now.

Parent 2:

I made him join a book group that he goes to twice a month and it's always like a fight because he's always like, "Well, I'm just doing this on the computer." And I'm like, "No, shut it down and go join your Zoom.:" I figure that if I'm having that much trouble with a 45 minute thing once a week, I can't imagine what it's going to be like when I'm like, "Hey, go hang out with people." Which is funny because like, when I was growing up, it was my mom going, "Stop hanging out so much." And now I'm like, "Go outside, go meet someone, like take the train or something." And I worry a little bit because it has engulfed him so much, he is so comfortable and settled in that I know it's going to be difficult to pull him away from that.

Parent 4:

I agree with that. I give you a small example, like if it was my son's birthday, this is the younger one on Saturday. And I was like, "Okay, so why don't we go out, go eat." He loves hamburgers, so I said, "Let's go, let's go to a burger place."

Parent 4:

And he was like, "No, I just want to stay home and play with my friends online." And I was like, "Oh, my God, that broke my heart." I was like, "Dude, we need to go outside, get some fresh air." I had to force him just to take an hour outside, get some air, eat because like he's just breathing internet. I just feel like going back to school, that that transition is going to pretty intense, pretty difficult because they just want to be online all the time now.

Parent 5:

Yep, they're not very physical anymore. It's very, very hard. You have to bribe them, trick them guilt them into it. It's a challenge. It's a constant challenge every day, trying to get them to be physical and go outside and look at the sun, sit out there and get some vitamin D. It's very hard.

Moderator 2:

That's true. What are some other thoughts on their use of social media, YouTube devices, and around the more in-person activities? Because the struggle is really challenging. It's hard because I think a lot of kids have gotten very used to some of these things. Switching back, I think will be a challenge.

Parent 5:

I think it will be a challenge. I know Parent 5, Child 1, I was kind of surprised, he actually verbalized, "Mom, it's not the same talking to someone through social media as it is to talk to someone in person." He knows it's not like a true human interaction. There's some kind of falsehood to it. A lot of pretend going and there's not as much work in that relationship through social media, as there is through a real face-to-face relationship with somebody.

Parent 5:

That was good that he actually is knowledgeable of that difference. How he'll interact and face-to-face is a big question because like I said before, he wanted to come home. I don't know whether the kids that he's socializing with are having the same issue, that nobody is socializing with them or is he having the issue, socializing with others? That's my question. Maybe it's a little bit of both from both sides.

Moderator 2:

It might be, have you been to him about those challenges?

Parent 5:

I have. I've asked about his friends, like who was he hanging out with? What do they do? What are their interests? Like I said, he just moved from the middle school to the high school, so all the kids are different. I mean, there was not one kid that's going to the same high school as he is. It's a whole new school to begin with, but everybody's starting in the ninth grade, so they're all coming from different areas of the country and going to that school.

Parent 5:

They're basically all in the same boat together, but it seems like social media did, has done something to, I don't know. It's very difficult for these kids to interact, to really interact. I go, "What do you all do in the evenings?" He's like, "Oh, well, you know, like his roommate gets on the computer." He's a big techie guy and Parent 5, Child 1 tries not to, but it does, it's really hard not to when everybody else is in their rooms doing something on their social media.

Parent 3:

We have a Similar issue with our sixth grader. He started a new school this year, middle school, and he was the only one from his elementary school to go to that middle school. And there were a number of students that have come sort of in large, larger groups from other schools, so there are kids that do know each other, even though everyone is starting sixth grade.

Parent 3:

But, and I do find that that's often used as a, I would say a point of manipulation if you try to limit Discord or screen time, like, "Those are my only friends, it's the only contact I have with people and you want to take it away from me." And, and there's, I've done a lot of defensiveness around any kind of discussion that the internet may not be God given gift to humanity.

Parent 3:

We tried to watch a movie about, or there was a TV, like a 20/20 or 60 minutes or something about like screen time in America. And I was like, "Well, why don't we watch this together? And you guys can tell me what you think." And they're like, "Oh, you just want to take away our screen time." They were just like, wouldn't hear it, wouldn't even listen to it. Totally, this was like, "You're old, you just don't get it." And how important it is to us."

Moderator 2:

It really is so challenging, you know? What gains or what positives do you think you hope to see continue?

Parent 1:

The only positive I see is this ability to keep in touch with people. But in my opinion, and I guess these skills that they're learning are kind of necessary for their future. But in my opinion, I think the negatives outweigh the positives.

Parent 3:

Totally agree.

Speaker:

I'm going to have to agree with that, as well.

Parent 5:

Yeah, I agree.

Moderator 2:

Okay.

Parent 1:

And I'm going to ask you a question. Maybe we're the dinosaurs here, maybe the moms in the group were the dinosaurs, and this is gonna be the new pParent 3digm and this is going to be how their brains kind of transform and I don't know, societal habits transform and work this fighting it. I don't know. I'm unclear about that. But I just, I know that I don't like the direction in which it's going.

Moderator 2:

I mean, I think it is very challenging. I have three children and they have, or I have struggled with their use of technology during the pandemic, as well. I mentioned it earlier and switching to, my children are 13 and almost 10 and almost eight. They're all, they're younger. My son who's seven, barely remembers even going to regular school because he started first grade and then was in school until March and then they switched to Zoom only, which, I mean, he got nothing less, like literally nothing less than nothing, maybe. I don't know.

Moderator 2:

Because, I work and they are in, doing their thing and I can't necessarily police him all day. And as I think a lot of parents are struggling with what their children get out of a Zoom class at seven years old and keeping someone on Zoom for, he goes to a private school. Hours and hours a day, even with breaks, even with schedules and everything else, it was a negotiation process. And I cannot tell you how many times I busted both of my sons not on their Zoom class, but watching YouTube instead. And it's funny because something I struggle with is not necessarily the social media, but this endless watching of other people playing a game. I don't understand-

Parent 2:

What is that?

Parent 3:

I don't understand that, either.

Parent 1:

What is that?

Moderator 2:

I don't know, I'm fascinated [crosstalk 00:51:48].

Parent 2:

It's the worst. It's almost worst than the playing.

Parent 3:

The worst. Yeah, just play. It is worse.

Parent 2:

I'm like, "Do something, like you're not doing anything, you're sitting there watching somebody play a game." It drives me crazy.

Parent 5:

Me, too. Me, too.

Moderator 2:

And then, they-

Parent 2:

And then, of course, they're like, "Mom, you just don't understand." And I'm like, "You're right. I don't understand [crosstalk 00:52:07]."

Moderator 2:

There's nothing to understand, I don't think. I don't think there is. Maybe I'm too old, also, but there's nothing to understand. It's watching someone else play a game. I don't know. I can't figure out what is fascinating about that. It would drive me to literal insanity.

Parent 2:

My 10 year old is here and he overheard that and he's just looking at me like... Get out of here, God away.

Parent 2, Child 1:

Never. I will stay.

Parent 2:

Go.

Moderator 2:

My ten-year-old very much, though. I ask them constantly why? And there is no answer or none that [crosstalk 00:52:44].

Parent 2, Child 1:

It's just for fun. Some games you can't play.

Parent 2:

He's like, "It's just because it's fun." I don't, I don't, put your earphones back on and watch your movie.

Moderator 2:

Take your word for it. I have this conversation with my kids and then I'm like, "You know what, fine, forget it. I'll take your word for it." But, it's kind of a fascinating thing I think to watch this development. Because I'm like, "You're not even playing, like at least play the game," but they'll watch Minecraft or Roblox, someone playing another game. And I'm like, I don't even know what you're doing.

Parent 2:

And they'll watch for hours, if you let them.

Moderator 2:

True.

Moderator 2:

And then, the funniest was my seven and nine-year-old both. I did not allow them to have YouTube channels or an account, but without my noticing, the school posts some of their classes. And so, they have a school email address and were able to create an account on YouTube using their school email addresses. And then, they created these, I can only call them idiotic videos of a attempt at them playing a game. And they were like all disappointed they have no views. And I was like, "Because it's terrible, like who would watch this? It's not funny. It's nothing, you're just watching someone like a screen."

Moderator 2:

And then, they've figured it out. And so, they watch my nephews and my nephew watches theirs now until I found out about all the accounts and now they're all done. Look, I think it's a struggle. I think a lot of everyone struggles with this because if you were trying to control device time prior to the pandemic, I think a huge struggle is that there wasn't really an option to necessarily control it during and going back to it, I think is, it was really hard.

Moderator 2:

I think trying to say like, "Oh, so we were allowed to use devices every day of the week, you used to be allowed to use them on weekends, so then it turned into seven days a week and oh, by the way, school, you're back in school now, give me your iPad." And you can't even say it now because I don't know, I don't know about your experiences, but my children are back in school and over the last couple of months, I can't even tell you how many times, like a teacher was exposed, a kid in another class was exposed to it, a sibling in their class.

Moderator 2:

And so, they shut down each grade for two weeks constantly and so it's not like I could take away the iPads and say, "Well, no more iPads now." It's just a constant battle, I wonder, I think as we return to a greater sense of normalcy it'll be challenging at best to limit children's use of devices. The way I think about it is, I was, I don't know, not even at my second job, probably my third before I got a smartphone and most of us I'm assuming on this call have a smartphone, an iPhone, a Galaxy something. And if someone said to you, you had to go back to a flip phone tomorrow or you had to go back to a beeper, what would your response be?

Parent 3:

I would love it.

Moderator 2:

I know, right? Part of you would-

Parent 3:

I'm so sick of it. They're days I leave my phone by accident and I'm like, "Oh, it's so nice, like, this is what it used to be like and no one could reach you."

Moderator 2:

But if you think about it, if you are out shopping and your child finds an item in a store, in a Target and hands it, says, "I want it," and it's actually decent and your first instinct is to reach for your phone, search it on Amazon. Is it cheaper? Am I going to save money on...? If you had no... like we use devices for so many different things, a text, a call someone reaching out to you, seeing a post on Facebook, all of those things are, become part of our just general schema. And so, it's hard to just tell kids like, "Oh, it's fine for me, but it's not fine for you." You know?

Parent 3:

Well, what's interesting is I'm just now reading The Scaffold Effect, I was recommended because right. You guys were sending that out. And it's on the chapter on like screen use and it's like, "Kids should only be you know, using the screens two hours a day," and I'm like, "Okay, Mr. Koplewicz, that's not happening." I'm like, "Who is managing two hours a day?"

Parent 2:

I would love, I would love to manage three or four hours a day, right?

Parent 3:

I know, I know. Every time that like your average daily screen use, I'm like, I don't want to see it. I don't want to see it. I don't want to see my kids. I just, I don't need to see they're all averaging like 10 hours a day.

Moderator 2:

Definitely is pretty funny.

Parent 2:

One thing that we did for us that has been sort of working is at least one weekend day now that the weather is starting to warm up for the last two or three weekends, we've gone out for the day. And all they hate it. They hate it so much until they don't. But I'm like, "Hey, we're going to go for a walk and we're going to go to this bookstore and we're going to maybe we'll grab lunch somewhere and let's go to the park. And even if we just sit on a bench and you know," and so for a few hours, depending on how long, this past weekend, we ended up staying out much longer than we expected. And we were all exhausted, but it also kind of felt so good because we were outside and not in front of a screen.

Parent 2:

And at first they were like, "When are we going back? I was hoping to get on a game with my," and I'm like, "I don't know. I don't know if we're going back anytime soon." But it's helped.

Moderator 2:

[crosstalk 00:58:57] go back.

Parent 2:

Yeah, I don't know. Like, I don't know if we're returning, it's never, we're never going back, but it kind of by the end of it, they were talking and, "Oh, look at this and hey, you know, can we go here?" And I was like, "Yeah, absolutely. You want to go to Barnes & Noble? Yeah. I'll take you to Barnes & Noble. You want to look at a book? Sure." You know? I'm like anything to like, keep you from being in front of a screen and to have you physically moving. And so, that helped.

Parent 2:

And I was like, "Hey, maybe next weekend we can find someplace with like an easy hike, because like we're all like stiff and unused to moving and have like an extra 15, 20 pounds. Like all of us like from the littlest to the oldest, we're all just like round now." And I'm like, "Maybe we can start walking and get some of that roundness out." And they're like, "Yeah. Okay. I guess." But at least I can get them to try it. They're not crazy about it, but they'll do it, so it gives us something that's not sitting in front of the screen.

Moderator 2:

That's great. It's a great idea. Does anyone have any closing thoughts before we wrap up for today?

Parent 3:

I have to say I'm looking forward to them going back to school full-time. Just because I think that will naturally on its own decrease the screen time. As long as they were not just Zooming in class, which is so frustrating. But yeah, I'm definitely looking forward to them going back.

Parent 4:

I agree. Right now, my son goes to school in person one day a week and I'm always grateful for that day. Not only is it a break for me because I don't have to be on edge and feel like I have to keep checking in to make sure he's on the right screen, not kind of being distracted by other things. But I think it makes, it forces him to kind of be around the other kids and talk. Because he really has no interest in doing that.

Parent 4:

I think back to when he was younger and getting speech services, how they'd always talk about things like pragmatics, that, that reciprocal conversation, the eye contact and like that's gone with all the devices and everything. It's something that kids are going to have to almost relearn once they're face to face, on a more consistent basis.

Parent 3:

Yeah, I mean, I think so many of the kids with the IEPs, all those services are just out the window. I mean, my son had his first year after years and years of trying to get them OT finally got it. And then, it was cut off last March and nothing since then. He was supposed to be an ICT class, that's not happening. And that's the other part is being in a position of being parent, teacher, screen monitor. It has not been good for our relationship. Having to sit there in his, and do my work in the same room that he's in, because if I walk out, he's not, he doesn't know what's going on in class. He doesn't, so I have to stay in the same room to make sure that he's at least in the Zoom classroom of the class that he's in.

Parent 3:

And so, like any independence that he would have gained this year has just gone. And now that he is going back hybrid, like when he's in school, nothing gets done. They've tried to do it so all work gets done during the school day and they don't have extra homework after school. But they said he's in school now, nothing gets done because he just, he doesn't have somebody sitting there again, "Are you in the class? Are you on the right Zoom? Are you opening the right files?"

Parent 3:

Complete learned helplessness at home, which is entirely my fault, but I don't, I haven't managed to figure out that bridge of making sure he gets the information and understands what's going on, but is independent and can do stuff on his own. We decided on making sure he knows the information so that if they have to build on that information next year, but yeah, the independence, non-existent.

Moderator 2:

I totally get it. All right, we have to wrap up for today. Administrator, you want to update everyone on compensation and where to go from here?

Administrator:

Yeah, so first, thank you guys so... Oh, sorry, it froze from my end by thank you guys so much for your participation today in the focus group. All of the information that you guys gave us today was really helpful. Especially, about Discord. This is the first group. I don't know, Moderator 2, if you can agree-

Moderator 2:

Yeah, I haven't heard it before.

Administrator:

This is the first group that we've heard about Discord. We usually hear about like Roblox, YouTube, Minecraft, things like that, Instagram. We should definitely look more into Discord, so thank you guys so much for that information.

Administrator:

In regards to compensation, you guys should get it no later than Wednesday. As soon as this is over, I'm going to send our administrator your information and you should expect to receive the $50 Amazon gift card through email. By Wednesday, if you don't receive it, please do not hesitate to either email me or give me a phone call and we can work that out.

Moderator 2:

All right. Great. Thank you so much, everyone.

Parent 1:

Thank you.

Parent 3:

Thank you.

Moderator 2:

[crosstalk 01:04:56] everyone.

Parent 2:

Thank you.

Moderator 2:

Bye-bye.

Parent 5:

Take care, everyone.

Parent 3:

Administrator, can I ask you a question?

Administrator:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Parent 3:

This is sort of a sepParent 3te question from this. I don't know if you could answer it. It's sort of a general question after doing the thing last year with my son doing the study, do you know for like looking for a referral for a not extremely an expensive available therapist that would deal with like learning disabilities, ADHD, particularly?

Administrator:

If we have-

Parent 3:

Like a referral or something?

Administrator:

[inaudible 01:05:43] you said it's for learning?

Parent 3:

Like when he like specifically, ADHD.

Administrator:

Got it. I can reach out to the clinician who, I'm so sorry about outside.

Parent 3:

No worries.

Administrator:

Out to clinician who worked on your report, because might have, we have like a referral bank where all clinicians pull from.

Parent 3:

All right.

Administrator:

I'll reach out to your clinician because they would have a better scope of just [crosstalk 01:06:19].

Parent 3:

Sense of, right.

Administrator:

And they'll be able to kind of help with referrals. What I will suggest is I'm gonna reach out to them right now. By Friday, if you don't hear from me, definitely email me about it so that I can keep on top of that.

Parent 3:

Awesome. Thank you so much.

Administrator:

Of course. No problem.

Parent 3:

Appreciate it. Oh, yeah. And definitely look into Discord. It's evil.

Administrator:

Yeah, this is so interesting. I feel like every new group we hear about something new, but this is literally the first time we've heard about Discord, so this is definitely [crosstalk 01:06:57] we should, you know-

Parent 3:

It's a problem.

Administrator:

Right.

Parent 3:

Because the thing is, like any of the old, old five years ago, things that you could do, like there were programs 360, whatever, like various things that you could like, it would literally give you a report at the end of the day or the end of the week and would basically give you all the information that went out of your kids' phones.

Administrator:

Right.

Parent 3:

It could tell you like every text, every email, every whatever. And because Discord is web-based, you can't do that. And it's also voice and it's meant to be a room, it's meant to be a digital room where you could play a game together or you could watch a movie together and there are great social uses for it. And a lot of classes are using it. A lot of artists are using it.

Parent 3:

But I mean, trying to figure it out, as a parent, trying to keep up with all the different apps. And I feel like my husband and I have done a pretty good job of staying on top of all those things. But Discord has me stumped. I mean, I don't know if you've ever seen it, but like you open it up and there are just rooms and rooms and rooms and to try to click in and follow some of the conversations and everybody has screen names. Even if like you know, this is made up of his classmates, you don't know which one is which.

Administrator:

Right.

Parent 3:

If there's bullying or something going on, like it's just really hard to stay on top of. But it's also hard to say like absolute no to.

Administrator:

Right.

Parent 3:

Different classes are using.

Administrator:

But the schools are using it. Yeah.

Parent 3:

Kids are using it to stay in touch with classmates. And in my older son's class, they have a whole, their section, their class section uses Discord because it's a very easy way to chat with each other and talk with each other in real time. It's bad.

Administrator:

No, but thank you for this. I just wrote down everything that you told me. I'm going to bring it to our team so that we can, I guess learn about it some more. And this might be some good information that we might be able to provide you guys when we have the town hall meeting in May or June.

Parent 3:

Right.

Administrator:

Maybe there is a way to kind of like figure out how to navigate it as a parent. I've never heard of it, so I'm definitely going to look into it myself just to see how it works.

Parent 3:

Yeah, and a lot of my friends use it and they like it for certain things. Yeah. If you're following a band and you're listening to a concert together and you're all texting each other it's kind of like a way to be together. But it's very easy to be abused.

Administrator:

Right.

Parent 3:

All right. Well, thank you so much.

Administrator:

Thank you. Yeah, if you don't hear back from me by Friday, definitely do not hesitate to email me or give me a call.

Parent 3:

I'll keep working on my scaffold.

Administrator:

It's so crazy because I haven't even started reading the book yet, so when you mentioned it, I just looked right across from me at where the book is.

Parent 3:

I got to tell you, I got the book. I pre-ordered it, so I got it when it first came out and it's been sitting on my desk and sitting on my desk and finally I just ordered it on Audible because I get a year subscription. And I was like, "You know what? I am just going to get it on Audible." And I listened to it on like one and a half speed, so it's been a good way to do it. I'm like on, on Chapter seven now, or Chapter six. But yeah, it's definitely gotten to the internet chapter. And I'm like, this was very much written pre-pandemic and not edited for the pandemic because a lot of this stuff is out the window right now.

Administrator:

Yeah.

Parent 3:

And there's a lot of it that's like, "Well, my kids are 11 and 16, so I think I've already screwed up the scaffold." I'm beyond, I'm starting the scaffold in the middle of the building.

Administrator:

In the middle of a global pandemic, as well.

Parent 3:

A pandemic, I know. Oh, man. I'm like, oops, nope, missed that one. Nope, didn't do that one, either.

Administrator:

Oh, my gosh.

Parent 3:

The first chapter was like, oh, maybe I shouldn't even read this because I'm so far behind. Some things I feel like we've done, but other things I'm like, "Yeah, what about like, let's get to the part where your kids are not in the four to seven, four to 12 year old bracket."

Administrator:

Right.

Parent 3:

And like what you can do now.

Administrator:

Yeah, definitely.

Parent 3:

All right. Thank you so much.

Administrator:

No problem. Thank you for your time today.

Parent 3:

All right. Take care.

Administrator:

Okay. Bye-bye.