Parent 1:

Hello? Let's see.

Parent 2:

Hello.

Parent 1:

Hi. Did that work?

Parent 2:

Yes, I'm just waiting for the meeting to start.

Parent 1:

Okay. Trying it from my phone. I usually do it from my computer. I wasn't sure if it was going to work. Nice. I guess I'll call him back, at 2:15, I think it is. Oh, I was told 2:00 to 3:15.

What does your thing say, 2:00?

Parent 2:

Wait, wait, let me see. Hold on. Stay there.

Parent 1:

Okay.

Parent 2:

It says...

Parent 1:

Oh yeah, 2:00. Oh yeah, you're right. Wow. 2:00 to 3:15.

Parent 2:

Yeah.

Parent 1:

Can you hear me?

Parent 2:

I can hear you fine, yeah.

Parent 1:

All right. Cool. I guess we have to wait for, it says, host is not in the meeting yet.

Parent 2:

All right. I guess we're two minutes early, right?

Parent 1:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Moderator 1:

Everyone, good afternoon. Thank you so much for joining. I think... let's see. We have four people here, so I'm just going to wait to see if we get anyone else. Hopefully we'll get started in a minute or two. While we're waiting, [crosstalk 00:04:02].

Administrator:

I'm so sorry.

Moderator 1:

No, it's all right. While we're waiting to see if anyone else signs on, if you could grab a paper and pen, we're going to be writing something at a certain point.

Okay. I'm not sure if anyone else is signing on, but I think we can get started in the meantime, [Administrator 00:06:05]. Yeah? All right.

First of all, thank you all so much for taking out some time to join us and give us some more information about your experiences during this time. We really appreciated everyone filling out a crisis survey. The purpose of this group is to just go a little bit more in depth and hear about individual experiences. Before we get started, maybe we could just go around, introduce ourselves. Just say your name and maybe the ages of your children. Then we'll go from there.

Hi, my name is [Moderator 1 00:06:51]. I work with the Healthy Brain Network. I'm a neuropsychologist. I'm excited to meet you all. [Parent 3 00:07:00], do you want to go next?

Parent 3:

Sure. Hi, my name is Parent 3. My son is now 16 that was involved with the Healthy Brain Network.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Great. Do you have other kids?

Parent 3:

Oh yeah, I got a whole bunch.

Moderator 1:

Okay.

Parent 3:

My oldest daughter is 35. My twins, they'll be 22. [Terry 00:08:46] is 16 and my grandson is 14.

Moderator 1:

Nice. Okay. So for the purposes of this conversation, feel free to share information about any of them and how they've been affected.

Parent 3:

Okay.

Moderator 1:

Thanks Parent 3.

Parent 3:

Thank you.

Moderator 1:

Okay, who wants to go next? [Parent 1 00:07:48], since you're off mute. You want to introduce yourself?

Parent 1:

Hi, my name is Parent 1. My son is 16 years old, and we went to the Healthy Brain Network back in 2018, I believe, 2019. Yep.

Moderator 1:

Okay. A couple years ago. Well, nice to see you again. Thanks for joining us.

Parent 1:

Thank you. Likewise.

Moderator 1:

[Parent 4 00:08:17], you want to introduce yourself?

Parent 4:

Hi. Yes, I'm Parent 4. I have three kids. [Parent 4, Child 1 00:08:25] is 20 and he's the one who I think is mostly the discussion will be around. I also have a 18 year old and a 15 year old who also did the testing with the Healthy Brain Network. My oldest and youngest did a couple years back.

Moderator 1:

Great. Okay. Thank you. Nice to see you again too. [Parent 2 00:08:46]?

Parent 2:

I have a 17 year old daughter, which is the one that I'm going to start this for, and an almost 14-year-old, two more weeks, son. They both got tested at the Healthy Brain about three years ago.

Moderator 1:

Okay, a while back. Great. Well, thank you everyone for joining us again. In order to focus us and start off with a conversation, I want you to take a couple minutes to try to write down a couple of positive ways that technology has impacted your children since the start of the pandemic, and then a couple of negative ways that technology has impacted your children over the course of the pandemic. Then we'll discuss it.

After you're finished jotting a couple down in each category, I'd like you to think which category has had the biggest overall impact. Have the positive parts of technology had a bigger overall impact on your children, or the negative parts? Circle whichever one has had the bigger overall impact.

Okay. Who from the group circled the negative as having the bigger overall impact? Parent 2, you said the negative side has had the bigger overall impact. Anyone else feel like the negative parts of technology have been the bigger part overall? Who circled the positive side as having the bigger overall impact? Parent 4 you [inaudible 00:11:44] overall more positive. Parent 3, overall more positive. Parent 1, are you somewhere in the middle?

Parent 1:

Somewhere in the middle, yes.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Okay. All right. I'm interested to get into that. For the first part of the conversation I want to just think a little bit about how technology has impacted your children's education. Focusing on the educational aspect. If someone could share how was technology used for education before the pandemic. Did you find it to be helpful? Did you have concerns? Then how did that change once the pandemic hit? How was technology used? Did you find it to be helpful? Did you have concerns? Who wants to start us off?

Parent 2:

I will.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Yeah.

Parent 2:

I don't think it's ever been a... I'm answering this all specific to my daughter. If it was my son [crosstalk 00:12:46] it would be very different.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, yeah. We want to hear your specific experience. We know... I actually meant to say that a lot of times what we're seeing is that people have overlapping experiences and some people have very unique experiences. We really want to hear all of it. Please feel free to chime in if your experience has been different in some way. It's all really...

Parent 2:

I'm just saying... I'm specifying one of my two children, because they couldn't be more different when it comes to this.

For her, even textbooks being online is not a good thing. We still requested paper textbooks for her, because anytime she's on a screen it's never really been positive. Smartboards, and things like that at school aside, because obviously those are technology and I think they're positive. She literally...

Our school went to complete Zoom, like most did... although we went faster than I know some districts did. On Friday school was closed and on Monday school was on Zoom. They the whole time had run it the full day, just exactly like it would be in school, which I know increases the Zoom fatigue, but for her... She shut down. She stopped doing any work. She stopped doing anything. She would sign in to her Zooms, but it was like she wasn't even there. She would have other screens open and other devices open. She'd be on Buzzfeed or something else. She would show up to extracurriculars that were on Zoom, but she'd do the same thing. She was not present. She wasn't present in our family. She wasn't present in anything. She just completely shut down.

Moderator 1:

Wow. Do you think that that was a specific barrier of having difficulty engaging with technology, or did she just shut down overall with all the stress?

Parent 2:

I think that she was scared. I think that she does not like not having that human, true, eye-to-eye contact. She really needs that. She needs people to bring her back, focused, and pay attention to her in a real way that you can't get on Zoom. And I think there are too many distractions. There are too many other tabs that are really, really, enticing.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Yeah. The distractions and not having the human element of [inaudible 00:14:48]. Thank you Parent 2.

Someone else share what role technology played in your child's education before the pandemic. Concerns, benefits, and then, maybe, how that changed...

Parent 3:

I can go [crosstalk 00:15:08].

Moderator 1:

That's all right. Parent 3, go for it.

Parent 3:

I think before Covid, my son learned how to use technology to support him in his work, to fill in the gaps of knowledge. I put... all my answers, I put both positive and negative. That was before Covid. Technology overall allows him to be exposed to things before they're mature enough to handle, anyways. That's a negative. Everything I see has positives and negatives.

Once Covid started... He has ADHD, so being in the classroom with the other kids was an automatic distraction. The teachers were always, "He can't pay attention. He can't sit still." It was always something.

Learning at home, I was able to... That first semester, last spring, I was able to sit right next to him. Oh, okay. We're going to work. I'm the power, you know? I was able to show him better habits of learning and work, which he was more independent this past fall. He did better with the computer. I think being out of the classroom and at home cut some of the distractions. He was able to focus a bit better to see exactly what was impeding his progress in the classroom, and what wasn't. That was a positive.

I think the entertainment systems, like the Xbox and... The Xbox was just entertainment, because you can't go outside. It was a form of entertainment for him. On a positive note, the phone gave him access to his friends so he didn't feel as isolated. [crosstalk 00:17:22] Those were the positive aspects of [crosstalk 00:17:24]. He's a social kid.

Moderator 1:

Right. Having access to that social part was important. I actually want to hear more about that. We're going to talk about social media more in depth later, but that's interesting to hear on the educational side. That you saw both of those sides. That he's at risk of getting exposed to some things that he's not ready for, but also that you see that, for him specifically, it's been less distracting and he's been able to develop some good work skills.

Parent 1 or Parent 4? I know, Parent 4, you were about to speak before.

Parent 4:

Oh, yeah. Sure.

It's interesting because it is different for each of my kids. I'm going to discuss how I feel in terms of the positives for my oldest.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, sure.

Parent 4:

Who is 20. He's at community college. Right before Covid started he was doing... it would have been his second semester of his freshman year. He started having bad anxiety, he sometimes gets... in front of people he gets a lot of anxiety... around new situations... He didn't want to finish school. He wanted to take a semester break. He had a thing about being in front of people he didn't know, and not knowing what he was capable of. So he took a break.

Then in the fall, when it switched to... the only choice was remote, or online learning, he's like, "Okay, I'll give it a shot." He actually was very successful. He did really well. The teachers were... He also only took three classes instead of four or five, to make it easier. The teachers were accommodating, and he was able to go at his own pace. It was better because he didn't even have to... they don't have to show their faces on Zoom. He got a good, positive, outcome. He actually went back again this spring, and he's doing really well. That's where I think, in his case, it was positive to have class online.

I would completely disagree for my other two kids in high school. Absolutely not. They take advantage of being at home and having their devices. But anyway... The positive for Parent 4, Child 1 was that he could actually go back to school and not have to feel intimidated or anxious around other people.

The other positive for him is, in between this, he also got a job through DoorDash, and now Uber Eats, where he is driving part time. Again, doesn't have to really socialize with too much people. A lot of people just have the drop off deliveries. Enough where he's feeling more comfortable when he grabs the food, or says thank you. It's helped him a lot, and the technology is how he takes the orders. It's all through the phone. He has to correspond through the phone, and if he has difficulties he has to go through their help desk online. It's really helped him become very independent, and very self-sufficient. He's grown tremendously in terms of his self esteem, just doing these two things and having the ability to do that just in the last six months. I guess that's the biggest positive I can say that came out of this. Among other things.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. No. That's really interesting to hear. To hear just how it impacted your kids so differently.

Parent 4:

He's already panicked about going back in the fall. He doesn't know if he wants to go back now that it's back in person again, but that's another conversation.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, I know, and I'm going to ask about that, because we're definitely trying to think about trying to anticipate going back, also.

Parent 4:

Yeah.

Moderator 1:

Okay, and Parent 1. What has your experience been? What was your thinking about technology for education before the pandemic? Have you seen concerns or benefits?

Parent 1:

I've seen benefits with my son, Parent 1, Child 1, being that... In 2019/2018 we were both overwhelmed with all the papers that the school were giving and sending home. It was just overwhelming to even look at it. Now that everything is organized on the computer that he has from school, it's just a click away. It's either multiple choice, or fill-in, and he gets it done.

Now he's in high school and I feel that I can help him more. Meaning at the end of the quarter I can see what he's missing, and I can, myself, tell him, "Parent 1, Child 1, get this done. You're missing this, this, and this." I can sit next to him and watch him get it done, and check up on him. Also, I communicate regularly with his teachers to make sure that he'll pass on to the 10th grade.

In the 5th grade, he got left back. Yes, because it was just too much. Too much paper. Too much everything. Too overwhelming. In class, he would fall asleep. Here he has no choice. I'm here. I'm home. I'm going to be barging in his room like, "What are you doing?" I can check up on him.

I also feel like he likes it more. He doesn't... he has not complained at all about him wanting to go back to school. I do have him in hybrid, where he goes twice a week, which is good. He needs to get moving. He's a little bit husky. That's a negative that I find in not going to school. Not being able to mobilize and get your steps in.

Yeah... that's a benefit.

Moderator 1:

[crosstalk 00:22:58] So for the hybrid, when he goes, is he online at school? Or is he have in person instruction?

Parent 1:

He has in person instruction, twice a week.

Moderator 1:

Okay.

Parent 1:

Then another negative is not getting his steps in, and he's husky. Another thing is not socializing. Not making new friends. When he was in the 5th grade, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade, he had so many friends. I would hear him on the phone... or he would be like, "Mom, I'm going to go out to eat with my friends from school." Now that's gone. It bothers me, because now he'd on his PlayStation all the time. All the time. Now you hear him... he's talked to his friends only virtually, never physically, which I believe is important.

That's pretty much it. It's hard to get him out of the house too, on a regular day basis. I try to take him to the gym, or take him outside to get some sun. His vitamin D is very low. It just scares me sometimes. I don't know. It's hard to also make him take a vitamin D pill. Those are my concerns. His health, socializing... I don't want him to have anxiety when he's back in the public and everybody's back in school. The rush... the rat race, the trains, the bus. He takes the bus, by himself, to school. That's pretty much it.

But I like it. I like it because he has a chance to pass his classes, and I can see everything that's happening because it's right there on the computer.

Moderator 1:

Right. It sounds like from the academic perspective, and that education perspective, it's been very good for him. You being able to support him, being organized, and...

Parent 1:

Absolutely.

Moderator 1:

But, you have other concerns, like socially, health, and things like that.

Parent 1:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Moderator 1:

All right. Thank you all for outlining that.

Now, my next question is as we do start to return more in person and as people are starting to go back to school... What concerns do you have? What challenges do you anticipate your children facing as they go back to school for in person instruction?

Parent 1:

You asking me or...

Moderator 1:

Everyone. Everyone. Yes. Parent 1 if you want you can start us off [crosstalk 00:25:36]

Parent 1:

Yes I can say it, because I already have it in my head and I [crosstalk 00:25:38] anxiety of meeting new kids, his new classmates, and the anxiety of making new friends, if they're going to like him. Things that all of us go through as humans, but he's 16. I don't want him to be peer pressured something to just fit in a group. I want it to happen organically, but it hasn't... It's just hard.

Moderator 1:

Yeah, I hear that. The anxiety can be made worse by not being in school for so long and not having to cope with that in a while. I hear what you're saying.

Parent 1:

One more thing is that at his school they're doing the Covid testing, through a [inaudible 00:26:21], which is okay with me. They wear masks. I guess it's all good on my side. As far as Covid [crosstalk 00:26:35]

Moderator 1:

Concerns about Covid. Okay.

Anyone else? Challenges that you're anticipating your children facing?

Parent 2:

I can tell you that my daughter is actually back in school full time. Despite that, she's concerned because more kids keep coming back. First of all, I think they need to learn to be social in the manner that they were before. I think they've lost that skill. They have to re-find their comfort and figure that out.

I also think there's definitely an underlining sense of fear, or nerves, depending on the kid. For a kid like mine, it's fear. Some are just nervous about interacting in a close physical space even though there are masks, and some people are being tested and everything. An extra kid showed up in Math and they put all the seating closer together. Everybody in the Math class was so uneasy. Teacher and kids. They felt too close to each other because now they have this whole mentality that that's potentially dangerous. That's not going to go away in a minute. Next year they're all going to be back in school, and they're going to be closer together. They have to figure out how to navigate all that again, which I think is a definite challenge.

Moderator 1:

Right, yeah. People are uncomfortable with that. They need to get eased back in to it. Both teachers and [crosstalk 00:27:47]. Interesting. Parent 3?

Parent 3:

I think with my son, he's asking... Right now he's in a smaller school, but he's asking when he goes back, can he go to one of the big, huge, schools on Staten Island? I'm worried that if we do put him in a larger school that he'll lose some of the gains that he's made as far as his academics are concerned.

A counter to that, I can see the maturity that he has... I can see his growth over this last year, so I wonder how he's going to handle big school, small school, whatever it is.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. Hopefully he can take some of those skills that he's gained and bring them in when he goes back. It sounds like there are some challenges you're concerned about as well.

I see we have someone new with us. [Parent 5 00:29:03]. Did I say your name correctly? Hi. Thank you for joining. Can you hear us? Oh.

Parent 3:

Gone.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Parent 4, can you talk to us a little bit about any challenges you're anticipating with your kids going back to school?

Parent 4:

Yeah. Again, the younger one I'm not concerned about. He needs to be in school.

The older one that I was talking about that has the anxiety... They all have different forms, but the one who is worried about going back to school in the fall and not even sure if he wants to go back. I don't think it's because of the programming. I think it's because of the social component. He went to a smaller out-of-district private school. He knew everybody there. He felt popular. He felt comfortable being around people. Put him in a bigger environment... he's very nervous about that.

I've been trying to reassure him that now that he's selected his major, and he only has major courses left, it's going to be the same people he knows. He's starting to see that. They did have to go in yesterday, and they had to go in a couple weeks ago... It's a photography major. He even came home and felt comfortable because he had met some of the people in person. He's like, "These people, some of them have all four classes with me this semester." He's finding that some of them are probably going to take the same classes in the fall because they're only offered in the fall... certain ones.

I'm hoping I can coax/urge him, encourage him to go, but I do see he keeps putting it off. He's like, "I don't know. I'm not really sure. I haven't decided what I want to do yet." He's 20. You want to have him make his own choices as an adult, but yet he's an immature 20 year old, an inexperienced 20 year old. I almost feel like I have to push him in the direction... not that I want him to go, necessarily... but where I think he's capable of going but he doesn't quite see that yet. That's the challenges that I have.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Thanks for sharing that, Parent 4.

Parent 5, can you hear us okay? I see you're on mute now.

Parent 5:

Okay, can you hear me?

Moderator 1:

Yes. Hi. Thank you so much for joining.

Parent 5:

Hi, how are you guys? How you doing? Good afternoon everyone.

Moderator 1:

Good afternoon. To catch you up a little bit, we've been discussing how technology has impacted kid's education over the course of the pandemic. Hi [Parent 6 00:31:39], thank you for joining.

Parent 6:

Hi.

Moderator 1:

You and Parent 5 just joined us so I'm just touching back up. We're just talking about how technology has impacted your kid's education over the course of the pandemic. Sharing both some positives and negatives that people have experienced. This is actually perfect timing. If Parent 5, would introduce yourself and the age of your kid. If you could speak a little bit about how you've seen technology affect your kid's education. Concerns...

Parent 5:

Okay. I have three children. One of them just turned two in March. He's not going remote learning, but he does use his technology. He already has a tablet. He already knows how to work everybody's phone. FaceTime. All of that. With him alone we used to get up, "Let's watch channel 13, Sesame Street," educational programs, stuff like that. He's like, "No." He needs his tablet to do his homework, is what he tells us. He needs his tablet to do his homework. What he's doing is mimicking everybody else, because he sees everybody else with a device, and doing something on the device.

My daughter, she's 10. She goes to [Success Academy 00:33:15], but she's been doing remote learning the longest. Success Academy were one of the first charters to go remote, even before the Mayor and everybody else was going to do the remote thing. They stopped the kids from coming in. They already had them going remote. My daughter's 10 and she's being doing remote learning for about a year and a half now.

I feel like it's counter productive, because I have to obsessively stay on her back. Where they give the kids a itinerary that they want... like when you go to college, you get your course itinerary. You got to go on. You got to be responsible for doing your assignments and turning them in on time. Stuff like that. That's how they're running the program. I feel like for self starters... for kids who are on the ball and you can give them directions and they can go follow them without anything... it's good for those types of kids. If your kid guides off for five minutes or gets side tracked, it's counter productive because you got to stay on they back. I have to know exactly what you supposed to be doing so I can know if you're not doing it properly. Stuff like that.

You got these kids staring at a screen all day. They're doing Zoom in class, but they not staying attentive.

Moderator 1:

Okay. Parent 5 what I'm hearing from you is that you have to stay on them for it to be anything. You're finding they're not really so engaged.

Parent 5:

Yeah. For a while she'll be doing whatever they're doing. I feel like adults do this too. You guiding off. Now you're looking at YouTube. You're checking your Facebook. You're looking at Instagram. You're supposed to be doing math.

Moderator 1:

It can be distracting.

Parent 6 can you share with us a little bit about your children's experience in terms of how has the technology impacted their education?

Parent 6:

I have six kids. The one that I did the questionnaire for, she's 11. I don't know if you want to know about everybody, or about just that one.

Moderator 1:

Just share. If it's affected your kids differently, you could talk about that. If you notice general themes or trends.

Parent 6:

My kids were on Zoom full time like everybody else last year from March until June. That was definitely a huge adjustment. They definitely weren't able to attend as well as far as school. Their screen usage rally picked up. It was because now they had a screen. My kids, before then, didn't have access to screens in such a capacity. I don't have that many screens in my house. I only have one TV. Only two of my kids have phones.

There wasn't this intense access and awareness of what they could be doing on a screen until Zoom started. Zoom was incredibly difficult for all of them to keep up, to study, to learn, to know. They didn't know what was flying. Like the mother that just spoke said, I had to be on top of everybody's Zoom. It's six kids. It was impossible for me to remote work when I was supposed to be working.

This year my kids are all in school. They go to private school. They're all in school. Save for a few quarantines that they had to go through, the school did go on Zoom for a short while. The goal waS to get the kids back in the classroom. The screen situation didn't really get much better. They feel more comfortable communicating on a screen, now, with their friends. They need to FaceTime. They need to Zoom. They actually Zoom in groups with their friends now. If they study they can't study on their own. [crosstalk 00:38:12] ROBLOX.

My 11 year old is definitely by far the hardest of all of them. She went from being on a computer and being a watcher to becoming... ROBLOX is the thing that she wants to do all the time. She'll grab my phone and say, "I want to text my friends", but inevitably she ends up doing a gaming. I hate it. Then she says she's gaming with her friends. She'll game and then FaceTime at the same time. No one else plays ROBLOX but her. I don't allow her to direct message anybody or accept anybody's messages on ROBLOX. That became a huge... it's a battle. There's no saving from that. I don't allow social media for my kids. It just... everyday.

There came a point a few weeks ago I actually removed all the computers from my house, because they don't need to be on Zoom. They're not on Zoom... My 11 year old has to deal with it. I don't like... I literally took... We had three laptops, I sent them to my husband's office. I said keep them there. I told him he's not allowed to bring home his laptop unless we really have to do work.

It did help, but... We're ultimate technologically connected we... [crosstalk 00:39:49]

Moderator 1:

It sounds like it's been a source of stress. Even as they return back to school you're still seeing that by [crosstalk 00:40:00] a big...

Parent 6:

Huge. Zoom school really isn't school.

Moderator 1:

Right. [crosstalk 00:40:05]

Okay. Thank you, Parent 6.

Now I'd like to shift the conversation away from a focus on education and focus more on, what you guys have all been touching on, which is social media right Administrator? [crosstalk 00:40:26] Thinking about your children's social media use before the pandemic and what that looked like. Was it something you saw as beneficial? Did you have concerns? How did that shift as it comes to... the pandemic hit? What concerns you have? What benefits have you seen from your children's social media use?

I know we heard from Parent 6 about her child. Does anyone else want to... Parent 3? I'm sorry Parent 3, you're the first one on my screen, so I keep...

Parent 3:

That's okay. [crosstalk 00:41:01]

Moderator 1:

Go for it.

Parent 3:

He's not... Before Covid, and now, he's not so much prone to pick up the computer to do anything, make any transactions, scroll, or anything like that, but the phone... When we gave him the phone, our cell phone carrier has an app that we have on our phones so that we can control what he can access. We still have that in place. It has a bedtime on it when you can't access the internet. You can shut down sites one by one where he can't access. We've still had to do that.

The good thing about social media is that during Covid he could still have access to his friends... that he could talk to and still share life with. I found it to be a positive for him.

Moderator 1:

Thanks Parent 3. Who wants to share their experiences with social media, both before and after?

Parent 5:

Well I would like to say something about that. I believe her name was miss Parent 6, that spoke after me. When she mentioned her 11 year old and the ROBLOX... Oh my goodness. Before Covid, social media for my daughter was a reward. Like, "Oh mommy, I finished doing whatever I have to do. I took care of my responsibilities. Can I use the phone now?" I would give her the phone, and she would be able to, "Can I make a TikTok? Can I do this, can I do that?"

Now, because you have to have a device consistently, to me, it slightly took away a piece of my control level. Now you're on the screen all the time, you can just click and I don't see. I don't see what you're clicking. I don't see what you doing. I don't see what you looking at. I don't see what you watch, because I'm under the presumption that she's sitting at your thing and you're doing your work. You're looking at the screen because you supposed to be doing your work, your homework, your this or your that... but you could be looking at the screen and guiding off. There's been a couple times she was in class guiding off, and the teacher's now texting me, "We're doing math and [Genesis 00:43:55] is trying to get on Instagram."

I feel like it changed the dynamic of what they're doing. Like, what do you mean? I need the phone. I need to be on this, and I got to be on that. I got to check this now. I'm like, none of that is important. What's important is did you do your work? Did you check your work? Did you submit your work? After you've done that, you can have free time to do what you want on the phone. You want to play ROBLOX... they even incorporated that in school.

In school there used to be a little time for them to get a reward, or maybe to play a game, something like that so they could interact with each other. Now they got it on the phone. Now they got ROBLOX club. They got this, and they got that. Now when they give the kids the 20 minutes-30 minutes of free time where the kids could be inter... even though we're on Zoom... I could've done a class, or play a math game. They do that once in a while.

Now everybody's in a breakout room, and you guys got 30 minutes to play ROBLOX together. I feel like it's taken over. [crosstalk 00:45:23] I feel like there's no separation between the time to what you supposed to be doing certain things.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. That's interesting. The comparison that you made from before. That it was a reward, or something extra. It wasn't assumed that it could be this core part of everything, but now it's... it was bound to [crosstalk 00:45:53]

Parent 5:

Just let me pick up the device and do whatever I want to do on it. It's not even about asking permission anymore. I've really noticed the change because now the two year old, the baby... Whenever I put my phone down, he picks my phone up. He don't call it ROBLOX, he says, "I want to play Mario." He has my phone, and mind you, my phone has a password on it and everything. The baby picks my phone up and somehow he gets in to ROBLOX every time. He be playing ROBLOX on my phone.

You learn this behavior from the 10 year old.

Moderator 1:

Right. That's what they're seeing. All right. Thank you, Parent 5.

Can anyone else share what your experience has been with social media? How were they using it before the pandemic? Do you see it as something that's beneficial, or were you concerned from before, and how did that change?

Parent 6:

So [crosstalk 00:47:00] I don't allow my kids to have Instagram, TikTok, or any of that. I also consider WhatsApp social media [crosstalk 00:47:10] They have this intense pressure. I have a 16 year old and a 14 year old. I find that... We all grew up without phones so we understand what it is to be home, and not necessarily have to communicate to the world every little thing we're doing. Every little thing that we're eating. They find this intense pressure to be on all the time. All the time they have to have something relevant, something that's cool, something they're eating, something they're showing, a selfie. I find it endless.

It definitely became worse now, because during Zoom they were spending all that time in their room. Now they're still spending all that time in their room. I'm like, can you come up? My two oldest girls, their rooms in the basement. I'm like, "I need you to come upstairs. Come out of your room, and put your phones down."

I actually started a new policy with them that they need to charge their phones in the kitchen because they're not sleeping. Even with all this screen time boundaries that I put on them, somehow they manage to do something or other. One of my daughters actually... I'm Sabbath observant, so we don't use phones Friday night to Saturday night. We do not touch our phones. We don't turn on our phones. We don't use electric. We don't use television. We don't use anything. It's actually the biggest blessing in the world because it's a religious requirement. We're bound. We don't do it. It's something that... We all are able to release our phones because it's from birth. I don't use my phone on Friday night and Saturday. I find that on those nights, there's so much more... There's just so calm. You can see there's less pressure on them to have to connect. We never connected like this with society when we were kids. We run home we did our homework. We could barely get the phone because our sister was on the phone.

[crosstalk 00:49:24] that negative where we couldn't use the phone. There's lot of battle. It's a lot of battle. The minute that my Sabbath ends, my 11 year old is on some device, coming to me saying, "Can you please unlock this device so I can use it?" I worry about how they're going to turn out, because I think that these devices... you said something about the good about social media. I don't think there's any good in social media, at all.

Moderator 1:

So you've noticed it become a much bigger struggle.

Parent 6:

[crosstalk 00:50:00] much trouble, and I don't even have TikTok. I do not allow them... I will not... That influence just has to stay out. It's enough. They get it on their WhatsApps. They get screen recordings of it. As long as at least they're not connected to another... and they're begging me, "Why not?" I said... for instance Snapchat, I have a friend who's daughter actually wanted to do plastic surgery because the filters make them look so much better [crosstalk 00:50:35]. I don't understand how the whole tech society is okay with doing this to society's children. It's honestly mind boggling. [crosstalk 00:50:48]

Moderator 1:

Right. Thank you Parent 6.

Parent 2:

I also think we've relaxed... or at least I have relaxed some of my rules and time that I've allowed the kids to be on things [crosstalk 00:51:00] at least. At some point, it entertains them instead of me having to entertain them, especially during the beginning of Covid when they couldn't be with their friends. Right?

My neighbor kept making fun of me for how much time I was spending outside playing basketball, doing relay races, collecting golf balls, and doing other things to keep him busy and off his devices. At some point, I have work, I have dishes to wash, I need five minutes not entertaining anyone, so okay, you can use it a little bit more. Then there are those ridiculous streaks that they have on some of these things. Where they have to and a message on Snapchat every day not to break the streak. He'll sit there just on streaks. This is my... the one who uses devices less, watches the Simpsons while he walks up and down the steps, and then has to get on social media to talk to his friends about a particularly funny part. I'm like, "You're going to fall and get killed."

A lot of the fight is not left in me after them being home for over a year. You know what I mean? I'm wondering if it's even going to be possible to pull back to where we were before Covid, when they go back to a more normal life. Have you loosened the restrictions and it's so much harder now to tighten them again? They don't see that it's not good for them. You see it. You know, but sometimes you just don't have the energy to do anything about.

And she is completely uncontrollable. She just [crosstalk 00:52:22] the best therapist in the world is Instagram. She follows every anxiety Instagram page there is, and thinks they're the wisest [crosstalk 00:52:27] come from that. Again, I've locked my phone... or her phone... for screen time and things. She'll sit there for hours trying to figure out [crosstalk 00:52:38]

Moderator 1:

Parent 2, I think you're bringing out an important point that a lot of parents have shared with us. That they've had to loosen the restrictions because there aren't so many activities, and parents need to go get some nap time or their kids can do something independent. That's definitely something we've heard from a lot of parents.

Parent 4, can you share about the impact that social media has had on your kid?

Parent 4:

My older son, for him he uses it as a means to communicate with people [crosstalk 00:53:19] so anxious. [crosstalk 00:53:24] public, or in new places he doesn't feel very easy connecting to people. With social media he has that barrier of not being that face to face. I think he overuses it and it's affecting his sleeping. He sleeps in, then he goes to sleep too late. He's 20, I don't know how much I want to be constantly taking his phone from him. I do try to put restrictions in terms of, you have to get up by a certain time and if you stay up late that's going to be a problem. I can't tell him how and when to sleep, but I can make him get up and be productive in the morning as much as possible, including giving him a couple morning classes when it's time to help them sign up.

For My 15 year old it's really tough because I'm constantly finding him using it during school. They're still remote... for the most part they're remote more often than not. They just shut our school down again because high school has too many cases. I'm working from home. I'll take his phone and I'll tell him he can't have it until between classes, or after class. Then I'll go in there later and see it's in his room again. It's a constant battle. I feel like now I've got to be a control freak which I'm really trying not to do, and allow him to earn my trust, but it's not always happening.

It's sick. My husband says some of these countries have these technology addiction rehab places that [crosstalk 00:54:46] to a drug rehab [crosstalk 00:54:51]. It's scary because I honestly see my kids could be candidates, and I'm sure I'm not alone here.

Parent 5:

I agree.

Parent 4:

It really depends on how and when they're using it. If they're using it to connect to people, that's fine, but you have to be able to put your phone away and not feel deprived. [crosstalk 00:55:13] yourself if you don't have your phone. It's scary. It's an ongoing battle. I fear how it's going to... continue to get older and go less face to face. I see people texting each other when they're sitting across the room from each other.

Parent 5:

Yes miss Parent 4.

I know because I can relate to so much that she's saying. I feel like my daughter is addicted to having the telephone. When I be like, "Give me your phone", she be like, "Why? What happened?"

I found a video in my phone of my daughter crying because she could not find her telephone. She was like, "The baby had my phone, and now I can't find it." She was so utterly distraught. When I was your age I didn't even have a phone. We didn't grow up with cell phones. You're addicted to having the device itself. "Let me take a picture of my food. Let me take a picture of this. Let me make a TikTok right quick. Let me say that we're going over here." Put the phone down. You can't even eat food without the phone in your hand. I tell them no devices at the phone. Like miss Parent 4 said, we in the same house. You texting me from the back room? What is wrong with you?

It's becoming an obsession. I feel like our generation, we didn't grow up having the phone. I remember I used to have to ask permission to even use the house phone at a certain time. That was after you did all your chores, or you did your homework. You know what I'm saying? It wasn't just picking up the phone, using it. I really believe that Covid, the pandemic era, is causing other problems. They're not being foreseen as a problem right now, but it's definitely causing other problems.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. Parent 5 thank you for outlining that. I think that's the main goal of this is to really shed light on those types of experiences that were affecting a lot of people. People are struggling with something like you both said. Sounds like an addiction. [inaudible 00:57:53] Like I said, we're hearing that from a lot of parents and I think it's affecting all kids differently.

I think we're almost out of time, but any other points that we haven't brought up about any benefits or concerns that you've had about social media?

Parent 5:

Only benefit I think social media... it kind of gives you a voice when you don't have one. You can bring light to a problem. Like George Floyd. If we wouldn't have visually saw what happened to George Floyd, the world wouldn't have... the problem has always been underlying, but the fact that we were able to actually see it... In that situation, social media was helpful

There's good and bad in everything. I'm going to sum that up like that. Social media can be a good thing. It can be used for good. It can be used in a positive light. Then again, it can also be a negative. It could turn in to a negative aspect. You have to really control it. Like the other parents are saying. I even agree with miss Parent 2 when she was like, "All right. When I need my five minutes, you can be on phone." Because I know that's going to keep you content enough for me to get my five minutes.

Now if I be like, "Give me the phone." They, "Why. What happened? What did I do? Why are you taking it? I can't look on this? I can't do that" I be like, "No, Genesis, you can't. Put the phone down for 10 minutes. Put it down for five minutes. Let me see you put it down for 15 minutes." This is a struggle for her. She can not.

Moderator 1:

What I'm hearing is the moderation and the control is really the hard part. Yes, sorry Parent 3, I see you. [crosstalk 01:00:14] We have a couple more minutes.

Parent 3:

Just really quickly. Another concern of mine with the social media is that my son is 16, so there's this element of sexuality that's coming in to play that I saw this last year. I know they circulate pictures of young ladies. I've talked to him about... that would be considered trafficking, which is a felony. [crosstalk 01:00:49] tried to warn him about that and called one parent about her daughter. They're sending pictures back and forth which leads to bullying and all kinds of trauma and drama. I just wanted to mention that that's a concern.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. That's an important concern.

Parent 5:

I'm glad you mentioned that. I forgot about that, because this one is 10, but that's definitely... [crosstalk 01:01:20] yes it is.

Parent 2:

I think that's a two part challenge. We have to teach our kids to be careful with their social footprint. To understand that anything they put on social media is never, ever, going away. [crosstalk 01:01:34] Colleges will see it, jobs will see it, friends will see it. It's never going away. You have to be very thoughtful and careful what you share, which is a hard lesson to teach them. And if you discover they already did something not really smart, it's there already. Right? I think it's extra hard because we didn't grow up with any of this. We didn't grow up with the opportunity to ruin our lives when we were kids. [crosstalk 01:01:59]

Parent 3:

Not in this way. [crosstalk 01:02:01]

Parent 2:

We had to do something that could get in the newspaper. They share it all by themselves, so it's an even bigger challenge because we didn't have to deal with these things. Yet we have to teach them to be careful dealing with them.

Parent 6:

[crosstalk 01:02:14] opening you mentioned their sexuality. I'm saying they're really opening themselves up to... A very good friend of mine, her 14 year old daughter... I never heard this term before... but was being cat fished. What's cat fishing, I have no idea. Somebody was trying to lure her. I find the reason I do so much filtering on their phones is because... it's like throwing them in to an open arena where anything goes. My 16 year old... I think she didn't realize what it was. I found it in her trash inbox. Not in her spam, but in her trash. All of these deleted porn email advertisements. She never [crosstalk 01:03:07]. I think she just kept deleting them, but when you opened one up it was blinding because there was no "Click on this, XXX" it was full on male, female nudity in an email. They can either get sucked in to something dangerous, or they could see something that just traumatizes them.

As far as anything... I understand what the woman before me was speaking... she said about having a voice, but they also feel a pressure to have a voice. To have an opinion. To state their feelings. It's a little much. They have to feel like they have to expose their entire lives so that they can fit in. That they said something meaningful.

Moderator 1:

Yeah. Parent 6 thank you. I'm going to cut in here. I appreciate everyone's time. I know there's a lot to say on this topic. I really have to thank all of you for sharing your experiences and your insights. It's really helpful to us. It shines a spotlight on what people are going through. I'm going to let Administrator close [inaudible 01:04:30]. Thank you everyone. It was really nice meeting [crosstalk 01:04:34] I really appreciate all this. Okay.

Administrator:

Hi, can everyone hear me?

[crosstalk 01:04:39]

Awesome. I'm on two different devices. As young as I am, sometimes technology has me boggled too, especially when it comes to Zoom. Like Moderator 1 said, I want to thank you guys so much for your time today. The information that you guys gave us. A lot of the things you guys have said are very [inaudible 01:05:06] what we've been hearing. I really appreciated this group because you gave even more information about having a voice. Things that parents haven't raised were raised within this group. We thank you guys so much for the information you provided us with. We're collecting this information to not only do research, but to give you guys a town-hall-meeting where we basically discuss all the things that we've collected and, hopefully, give you insight on how to navigate what we call problematic internet usage throughout this time. Thank you guys so much for all of the information that you guys have provided us with. In regards to compensation, I'll be sending out your emails to our administrator who sends out the compensation. I would say no later than Thursday should you receive compensation. If you don't receive compensation by Thursday, please to do not hesitate to either email me or give me a call, and we will get that situated for you guys. Once again, thank you guys so much for all of the insight that you have provided us.

Parent 5:

Thank you for asking me to join. [crosstalk 01:06:27]