Digital Technologies and Parenting Education

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In Iroquois society, leaders are encouraged to remember seven generations in the past and consider seven generations in the future when making decisions that affect the people.

(Wilma Mankiller)
Looking the future

On one hand...

• Greater convenience & efficiencies (‘tele-everything’, "smart’ devices, AI boom)
• Opportunities for personal expression, creativity.
• Work as more flexible, less bounded by time or place
  • Adaptable worker skills valued

Yet, on the other....

• Growing social and racial inequality, worsening security and privacy and further spread of misinformation
• Peoples’ mental health will be challenged
• Job insecurities due to employment shifts to automation, on-demand work

THE PRIMAL SCREAM

Working Moms Are Struggling. Here’s What Would Help.

What government, employers and the rest of us can do.
The ultimate effects of technology will be determined by technical capabilities and by how technology is used, how individuals, organizations, and policy makers prepare for/respond to shifts in economic/social landscape.

- Jonas Salk, polio vaccine pioneer

National Academies of Science (2017): IT and the US Workforce: Where do we go from here?
Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological perspective on human development

- Development as influenced by interactions of the person - in process and context – over time.
- Systems that the individual interacts with directly and indirectly influence development.

Credit: Hchokr at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0
Internet access and use varies around the world. Although approximately 77% have internet access, this ranges from developed economies (e.g., US, EU) 98% to less developed economies (e.g., Africa, India), 13%.

European children (6-16) in households that cannot afford a computer (left); that cannot afford an internet connection

Figure 2a: Percentage of school-aged children (6-16) who live in a household that cannot afford a computer, Europe, 2019

Figure 2b: Percentage of school-aged children (6-16) who live in a household that cannot afford an internet connection, Europe, 2019

Policy 1: internet access as a basic human right.

Policy 2: Online spaces that protect digital rights.

Ensuring internet access addresses SDG targets in goal areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 & 10.
Some Human Development Concerns:

- Sleep
- Distraction from learning, socialization
- Possible addiction (e.g., internet gaming disorder)
- Obesity
- Bullying, damage to mental health
- Exposure to harmful images
- Exposure to online predators
- Security and privacy breeches
- ...

UN DESA May 14, 2021
Opportunities for learning and engagement.

Creativity, collaboration, connectivity, and identity development.

Personal expression

Cultivating skills to use in adulthood
Parenting & Family Support

### TABLE 1 The universe of possible outcomes of family support and parenting support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET</th>
<th>SHORT TERM</th>
<th>LONG TERM</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child focused</td>
<td>Emotional and behavioural development</td>
<td>Reduced rates of child poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement in education and health monitoring</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Parent focused</td>
<td>Improved skill levels</td>
<td>Improved emotional and mental health (stress, well-being)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved attitudes and feelings, coping and confidence</td>
<td>Increased involvement of fathers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved knowledge and understanding of child development</td>
<td>Continuous involvement in the child's life (when in the child's best interest)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improved knowledge of resources and support services available</td>
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<td>Parent-child focused</td>
<td>Parent–child relationship</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relations</td>
<td>Strengthened relationships</td>
<td>Reduced poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family condition and family functioning</td>
<td>Less social isolation</td>
<td>Reduced rates of family conflict</td>
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<td>Increased care role and support by other family members</td>
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Daly et al, 2015
PEDAGOGY

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"No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship."

James P. Comer, MD, MPH
Internet equity, safety & digital rights

Parenting education as a family support

family
“Parents should also be encouraged by providers and educators to help frame a child’s relationship to digital media, discussing online etiquette, empathy, ethics, internet safety, personal boundaries, and how to regulate their own media habits. (Coyne, et al, 2017; S115).”

What matters is not only what advice is provided for parents but also how it is provided. ... it should be timely, ..it should reach parents from all walks of life, in the languages that they and their children speak at home. Relatedly, it should be transparent to parents how digital services engage with their children, ..and what parents can do if they consider there’s a problem or injustice. (Livingstone, 2021)

General Comment 25 by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: “..parental mediation is more effective if it prioritises “mutual empathy and respect, over prohibition or control” (para 86).
Parenting Children in the Age of Screens

Two-thirds of parents in the U.S. say parenting is harder today than it was 20 years ago, with many citing technologies – like social media or smartphones – as a reason.

By Brooke Ainsley, Monica Anderson, Andrew Perrin and Erica Turner

Pew Research, July 2020
Technology embedded as a content area in parenting education can be integrated within many outcomes. It can be visited, revisited, and an area of problem-solving within the peer community.

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Change in local or national values and practices  
Reduced rates of children's exposure to violence in the community and/or locality |
Sample content aids on media literacy

Chile Ministry of Education, Center for Education & Technology

2020 Council of Europe Easy steps to help your child become a Digital Citizen

Singapore Media Literacy Council
Technology-Integrated Parenting Education

Relationships

TECHNOLOGY

PEDAGOGY

Content

Mandatory On-line Parenting Education Class

Center for Divorce Education’s CHILDREN IN BETWEEN
(Formerly: Children in the Middle Online)

A Co-Parenting Program for Divorcing Parents

UN DESA May 14, 2021
Internet equity, safety & digital rights

Parenting education w/ Tech Integration

family
Trouble in paradise: Challenges to parenting educator preparation & support

• Globally, parenting education is highly fragmented and decentralized.
• Parenting education programs may adhere to individualized standards of preparation and of practice. (US, NPEN.org)
• Many of those offering parenting education are trained to the specific curriculum or model.
• Unlike more unified professions (e.g., social work, teachers, therapists) there are no guidelines or work requirements specific to technology competence in parenting education.
• The majority (75%) of family educators report that their knowledge about technology and use of tech is learned ‘on their own.’ (Walker, 2019). Many report using their own devices for work.
MN Board of Teaching

Tech requirements of all educators:
• Student learning (personalized learning, learning differences)
• Technology-enriched learning environments
• Diverse learning
• Assessment (using technology in student assessment)
• Discrimination (equity issues and technology)
• Technological knowledge
• Digital citizenship
• Contribution to the teaching profession
• Broadening student knowledge about technology
• Variety of technologies
Challenges to practice in the workplace

COVID-19 adaptations (Spring, 2020) – quotes from parenting and early educators.

“With so little planning time, and support for the technology available through the district, it really felt like the train left the station without [me].

“At one moment, I would feel ineffective, as though I was working in a vacuum, putting material for families out into a void where it wasn’t doing anyone any good. And I felt selfish for wishing I would hear from families, knowing that they were likely stressed and overwhelmed. I struggled to know that there was anything that I was doing – to meet any real needs.”

“I wish that all students were able to connect and not just those that can afford to buy devices.
1. Ensure internet access (equity), safety and promote digital rights.
2. Include parenting education as a family support strategy and when addressing the range of children’s outcomes.
3. Integrate technology in parenting education – as content, pedagogy and in maintaining relationships.
4. Provide a system of supports and standards that empower parenting educator ability and confidence.

Working across this policy ecology will heighten the achievement of targets in the SDGs.
And it will make us ‘good ancestors.’
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