The digital revolution has basically transformed our lives. The ubiquity of smartphones and tablets has extremely fixed the internet into our day-day routine – we text our friends through WhatsApp, we upload our vacation pictures on Facebook, and also, we stream our favorite music and films online. However, the emergence of digital and social media doesn't just transform us, it transforms our children as well and how we train them. In a nutshell, it transforms parenthood.

How much exposure to digital media is suitable for a kid? How do we protect our kids from violence-glorifying or sexually explicit content? Also, what can we do when our kids are bullied on Facebook?

In these book chapters, you'll discover the dangers that child-rearing in the digital era involves and, importantly, how to defend your children well from cyber risks.

Chapter 1 - Extreme exposure to digital media disrupts a child's growth.

If you've ever used a chat room before, a social media site or message board, you've most likely been abused by someone you do not know. These digital communications aren't worthless: they have an effect on our socialization, particularly children's.

Kids build empathy by mingling with other people. As stated by Dan Siegel a psychiatrist, kids aren't born with empathy: they build it as they grow. They form social abilities and learn to know one another feelings as they play, quarrel and make friends.

Using much time online interrupts this process. Also, if children use a lot of time in the digital world, it can really reduce their empathy.

A group of Stanford researchers conducted more than 70 studies on this situation with college students. They conducted a systematic review of their research based on standard empathy tests and discovered that, between the years 1979 and 2009, empathy among US college students dropped by 40%.

The drop was mainly strong in the last ten years of that period of time, and technology was identified as one of the actual reasons.

Overexposure to digital media doesn't just make individuals less empathetic. Also, the fast pace of the digital world makes it difficult for kids to focus.

The Kaiser Family Foundation did a survey of teenagers in the year 2016 and discovered that the teenagers who did their assignments on the computer were far less concentrated on their work. As a matter of fact, they used a minimum of two-thirds of their time doing a totally different thing.

Digital media has a huge effect on a child's growth. It's making it difficult for kids to concentrate in school, and the vulgar remarks you've noticed online probably come from young people whose empathy has been diminutive.

Chapter 2 - Toddlers suffer when their parents are distracted by their gadgets.

Anyone that is a new parent can say to you how magical it is to look into the eyes of their baby eyes or hear their babies' voice for the first time ever. Therefore, what occurs when parents are really distracted by their smartphones to use adequate time with their babies? It could have terrible impacts on their growth.

Babies require so much sensory concentration from their parents. Nevertheless, that's how babies grow, both emotionally and intellectually.

Sensory communication is essentially about mirroring, which is the process where a parent looks at baby, laughs, and smiles, letting the baby copy what she is doing and learn what she implies.

At the University of California, a team of researchers discovered that when a parent completely interacts with her child, it arouses the areas of the child's brain-related with language and abstract thought.

Babies don't receive the exact advantages of educational TV shows. Digital media provides babies and young children so many visual stimulations; however, it doesn't stimulate the entire neurological parts needed to improve speaking and reading skills.

Also, children suffer when their parents use lots of time on their devices.

A researcher known as Patricia Kuhl from the University of Washington discovered that babies suffer lots of distress when they notice an emotionless look on the faces of their parents. Formerly, babies would read that kind of expression as an indication of depression; nowadays, it occurs to be the exact same face someone has when they're looking at a screen. Therefore, toddlers who usually see their parents with such face growing up in an emotionally insecure surrounding.

Also, when they're ultimately set for preschool after their first few years of staying at home, new technology issues is waiting for them

Chapter 3 - Preschoolers have to play with one another to form critical social abilities.

What was your best game in childhood? Playing dress-up? Hide and seek? Computer games might let kids dress up avatars with clothes and accessories; however, is it ever the same?

Most likely not. As a matter of fact, digital gaming appears to make preschoolers less artistic and playful generally.

Many preschool teachers report that kids now only wait to get instruction or copy deeds from online games rather than interacting with one other. They've observed two main trends: now, kids are less creative now, and they're less concerned about playing.

Kids are beginning to choose easier and more repetitive games, such as crashing objects into each other repeatedly. They use less time on more difficult, imaginative games such as having tea parties or looking for treasure that is hidden.

Preschoolers are less determined about playing as well. Games such as building ways for marbles with towers, bridges, and chutes aren't that common again, as kids don't have the attention span for them anymore.

It's destructive to kids when they play less since they need to mingle with one another to form critical social abilities.

Educator Chip Wood presented various studies in his book Yardsticks showing that the most significant aspect for a young child's success and joy is a positive relationship with his teacher as well are classmates.

When kids are drilled in reading and writing and discouraged from socializing, they're worse off in the long run. They don't do as well in primary school as do children who were told to play and build their emotional intelligence in preschool.

Children's social abilities can only be built by socializing: games can't substitute play in the real world. The kids who are offered time to play are much at an advantage in the long run.

Chapter 4 - As children become older, they need protection from destructive media.

You most likely recall a few occurrences from your childhood where you were shown pictures you weren't that old enough for yet. Probably, Freddy Krueger or the clown from It gave you nightmares or made it difficult for you to sleep off for a while.

Nowadays, kids are at higher risk of this occurring. Technology makes it very easy for creepy monsters or people to come into their world.

For instance, kids can be disturbed by harmful or abusive online communications. The author had a ten-year-old client named Trevor, who once begun getting weird e-mails from an address he wasn't conversant with. The e-mails complete sexualized insults he didn't have knowledge of.

An investigation showed that the perpetrator was a ten-year-old girl Trevor had made a jest of one time. She opened an e-mail address just to bother him as payback, and Trevor experienced anxiety and depression for months.

Also, kids have to be safe from media content that supports sexist and racist stereotypes.

In the author's 2006 book, titled Full of Ourselves, she shows studies demonstrating that computer games, as well as TV, make kids as little as three years to have negative views of anybody who's overweight. Also, the majority of the online media that aims at girls concentrate on fashion and beauty, strengthening the notion that beauty offers them their worth.

Researchers Nicole Martins and Kristen Harrison conducted research in the year 2007 on the impacts of racist and sexist stereotypes in video games. They discovered that, after playing the game, white boys have more self-esteem, while girls, as well as non-white boys, felt worse after playing the game as a result of the negative means women and non-white men are portrayed.

Chapter 5 - Adolescence can get more difficult with social media and the internet.

When you were still a child, did you ever have nightmares of being naked at school? All thanks to social media, that nightmare can turn into a real thing now. Social media can worsen a child's emotional vulnerability by publicly revealing them in manners they have no control over.

An example of such a situation, three girls that are 11 years of age had lunch with three boys of 11 years old, and one of those boys took a picture of them. At that point, the girls didn't complain; however, the boy ended up cropping their heads onto a different image of three

naked women and spreading the new photo online. It went viral around their school, which was embarrassing for the young girls.

Also, the internet makes sexual problems harder for teens and preteens. According to a Pew Internet survey that was conducted in 2012, teenagers usually play age-inappropriate video games online. As a matter of fact, 50% of boys and 14% of the girls called a mature or adult-only game as their personal preference.

Therefore, teenagers are shown extremely sexualized content during a period when they're still really vulnerable, which might make them assume that unusual acts such as violent fetishes are okay.

The internet has other means of making sexuality harder. For instance, consider the story of a 13-year-old called Alexa, who once randomly called a forgotten acquaintance and then had a tense discussion with him.

Immediately after that, Alexa starting getting sexualized text messages. The acquaintance had put her number on Craigslist as payback, together with a suggestive image and text. The trial made Alexa get a new number in the long run.

Also, the issues don't stop when children grow out of their preteen years, either. As preteens grow into teenagers, the internet can skew their notions about sex even more.

Chapter 6 - Digital technology makes it difficult for some teens to have healthy relationships and personas.

When you were still young, did you ever tell a lie about your sexual encounter just to fit in? Teenagers need approval from their mates, and now, social media now gives them the opportunity to overdo their identities.

Online, it is very simple to form a different identity for yourself online; however, digital identities can be destructive to people that are young.

Think of the illustration of three high school friends who kept contact with each other online. One of them called Jill, liked to text when talking about anything that is really personal.

For two years, Jill had an unstable relationship with a boy she'd encountered during a summer camp and usually asked for advice from her two friends, who helped her. But, after Jill uploaded an image of her boyfriend on Facebook, her friends immediately discovered that the boyfriend didn't actually exist. Jill had lied about the entire thing.

The lie eventually cost Jill two of her dearest friendships. After they found out that she had .lied to them for a long time, they didn't want to be her friends again.

Also, chatting as well as texting make relationships difficult for young people. We've realized that, usually, online communications don't have empathy, and when we talk about online interactions between hormonal teenagers, that can make them decrease each other to their sexuality.

Nora, a fifteen-year-old teenager had a terrible experience with this when she got engaged in a classmate known as mine Mike. During a text, Mike questioned her if she would be his girlfriend in order for him to make her do oral sex on him.

When teenagers are exposed to belittling remarks like these, it obstructs their ability to form healthy relationships. Digital media rises their exposure to relationships lacking in empathy.

Chapter 7 - Parents need to earn the trust of their kids so that their kids can come to them with their media issues.

Recall how humiliating your parents were when you were still a teenager? Perhaps, they had a conflict with your teacher or attempted to make friends with your secret crush. Regardless of the reason, children usually want to keep their issues to themselves.

However, it's significant that parents earn the trust of their kids, which is vital in defending them from online risk. The only time children discuss with their parents about their online issue is if they feel they can depend on their parents.

Therefore, how do you develop that type of confidence? You need to respect the exact rules you wish them to respect.

Let's consider an illustration of a father who drives his two daughters to school daily. He usually goes above the speed limit and texts while he is driving most times. Also, whenever the scared daughter's protest, he snaps at them to keep quiet.

That kind of action just destabilizes trust. If the father doesn't abide by the rules about driving and texting, he shouldn't his daughters to obey those rules too. They'll most likely just copy what he does.

Also, parents need to avoid reacting excessively when their children come to them with media-related issues. Children recede from their parents if they're scared that their parents will become angry or punish them. Worst-case scenario, that could make hinder them from voicing out about bullying, pornography or online stalkers.

For instance, the author had a 15-year-old client who didn't want to reveal to his father the email conversation between him and his teacher about their lessons. He was aware that if his father saw that the teacher didn't usually reply immediately, the father would make a call to the teacher himself.

When parents get assertive like this, it makes their children less likely to confide in them. Hence, be open with children. The key thing you can do is be calm, approachable and trustworthy.

The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age by Catherine Steiner-Adair Book Review

Children are at an advantage without digital media until they get to at least five years of age. It's in their best interest to concentrate on socializing and playing, in order for them to build critical emotional skills. While growing up, parents have to keep them from online bullying and age-inappropriate pictures by keeping a healthy relationship with them in order for their kids to feel comfortable speaking up about their issues. Technology gives children many great opportunities; however, it is significant to use it well and wisely.

When you go into nature, drop your devices at home.

At times, take breaks from technology. Go with your children to a camp or on a trip to the sea. Leave your smartphones and laptops for a little time– it'll be beneficial for you all.

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