Chapter V
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1.0 SUMMARY

As much as today's children are digital natives, parents are often classified as digital immigrants. Parents often describe themselves as overwhelmed by the role that media plays in everyday activities of youth.

They question the value of the time children spend playing with video games, listening to iPods, and browsing the Internet. Many parents have fears and anxieties about new technologies that were not a part of their own childhood and that they do not fully understand. Technology and associated gadgets now play a significant role in leisure time activities at home.

As kids get older, too much screen time can interfere with activities like being physically active, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family. Too much screen time also can contribute to obesity, attention problems, sleep disorders, and problems at school.

For teens, screen time can include things like researching a school project, creating music or art, or interacting with friends via social media. But it also can include less productive activities, like watching inappropriate TV shows, visiting unsafe websites, or playing violent video games.

Some studies show that teens spend almost 9 hours a day online, on the phone, watching TV, or playing games — so what's a parent to do? Parents should continue to set limits on screen time, preview all shows and games to make sure they're OK, and stay aware of what their teens are doing online.

5.1.1 How Much Is Too Much?

Teens 12 to 18 years old place consistent limits on the use of any media. This includes entertainment media (like watching TV and movies), as well as educational media (like creating flash cards on a smartphone app).

Not all screen time is created equal. It's up to parents to decide how (and how often) their teens use screens and whether screen time is positive or negative. For instance, time spent on

homework or other educational activities might not need to be as restricted as time spent playing video games.

For teens (and kids of all ages), screen time should not replace time needed for sleeping, eating, being active, studying, and interacting with family and friends.

5.1.2 Screen Time Tips

The same parenting rules apply to screen time as to anything else — set a good example, establish limits, and talk with ward about it. To make ward's screen time more productive the parents should do the following-

- ➢ Research video and computer games before letting the ward get them.
- ➢ Preview games and even play them with your wards to see what they're like. The game's rating may not match what you feel is appropriate.
- ➢ Make sure ward have a variety of free-time activities, like spending time with friends and playing sports, which can help them develop a healthy body and mind.
- ➢ Turn off all screens during family meals and at bedtime. Also, keep devices with screens out of ward's bedroom after bedtime, and don't allow a TV in the ward bedroom.
- ➢ Treat screen time as a privilege that wards need to earn, not a right that they're entitled to. Tell them that screen time is allowed only after chores and homework are done.
- ➢ Spend screen time together to make sure that what your ward sees is appropriate. Watch TV, play games, go online — use screen time together as a chance to interact and communicate.
- ➢ Use screening tools on the TV, computers, and tablets to block ward's access to inappropriate material.
- ➢ Teach ward about Internet safety and social media smarts, and make sure he or she knows the dangers of sharing private information online.
- ➢ Keep the computer in a common area.

5.1.3 Safety Strategies and Rules

Because of parent's knowledge of the Internet and also protection against it, parents had common safety strategies to protect their child's Internet use. Parents use monitoring software and self-monitoring (e.g., checking history, social media), viewing and talking about content, and common area viewing or nightly device check-ins as safety features. Because mobile devices can be challenging to parents, parents not only had parental controls set up on mobile devices, but they also made children "hand over their devices when they go to bed so we can

important to talk with your child about their social media use and your family rules, including consequences for too much use or inappropriate use and whether you will be monitoring their online activities.

Consider the following suggestions depending on the child's age and maturity:

- ✓ Friending or following your child's social media accounts with an agreement about whether you will or won't post or respond to their posts.
- ✓ "No screen" times such as "no screens at the dinner table," "no screens in bedrooms" after a certain time of day, or "no social media use until homework is done".
- ✓ Ensuring that privacy settings are turned on to limit access to personal information.
- ✓ Instructing wards not to share full names, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers, passwords, and bank or credit card numbers.
- ✓ having location enabled services turned "off".
- ✓ Exploring apps which limit internet access to age appropriate sites.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents should learn to be abreast with new technologies like social media tools so as to enable them educate their ward on how to present themselves each time they are on the social media. Parents should endeavor to create a friendly atmosphere in their homes such that it can enable their ward to open up and freely discuss issues bothering them particularly issues on social media networking.

To safeguard ward from online predators, parents and caregiver should learn to be abreast with online social media tools or measures so as to know how to use them to monitor their ward's activities online.

Rather than stop ward access to social media, parents should allow their wards to participate on the social media so that they will not be left behind among their contemporaries.

5.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Some areas of youth online safety are under-researched. Further research should also look at the interplay between socio-economic class and risk factors. Researchers should also look at the role pervasive digital image and video capture devices play in minor to minor harassment and youth production of problematic content. Finally, because new environments present new risks, there is the need for on-going large-scale national surveys to track these complex dynamics as they unfold.

go through them". Parents also have Internet rules in place for their children. Common themes among participant's rules were preapproved websites, social media, apps, videos, and music; restrictions and time limits; asking permissions and knowledge of which sites are deemed appropriate, no personal information posted or talking to unknown people; and usage can only be after homework and chores are finished. 15 OUT OF 20 parents who allowed their children to access social media sites also reported more rules and safety measure in place. Participants named checking and approving followers; must follow parents; checking all posts, likes, comments, and messages; viewing restrictions in place (e.g. privacy policies); and checking for bullying.

Social media plays a big role in teen culture today. Surveys show that ninety percent of teens ages 12-16 have used social media. 80% report visiting a social media site at least daily. Two thirds of teens have their own mobile devices with internet capabilities. On average, teens are online almost nine hours a day, not including time for homework.

There are positive aspects of social media, but also potential risks. It is important for parents to help their wards use these sites responsibly.

5.1.4. Potential benefits of social media include:
  ➢ Staying connected to friends.
  ➢ Meeting new friends with shared interests.
  ➢ Finding community and support for specific activities.
  ➢ Sharing art work or music.
  ➢ Exploring and expressing themselves.

5.1.5. Potential risks of social media include:
  ➢ Exposure to harmful or inappropriate content.
  ➢ Exposure to dangerous people.
  ➢ Cyber bullying, a risk factor for depression and suicide.
  ➢ Oversharing personal information.
  ➢ Exposure to excessive advertisements.
  ➢ Privacy concerns including the collection of data about ward users.
  ➢ Identity theft or being hacked.
  ➢ Interference with sleep, exercise, homework, or family activities.

Teenagers need support and education to develop the skills to manage their social media use. There are many ways to help your child learn to use social media sites responsibly. It's