

GROWING UP DIGITAL AUSTRALIA

- Student wellbeing and use of technology



ACEL Early Childhood Online Conference 2021
27th April 2021

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1 What is Growing Up Digital study?

2 Teachers' perspectives on student wellbeing and use of technology

3 Parents' and grandparents' perspectives on student wellbeing and use of technology

4 What can we do?

What is Growing Up Digital study?

Two sides of the digital coin

Enhancing
vs.
Distracting

Safety
vs.
Fear

Connecting
vs.
Disconnecting

Tool
vs.
Treat



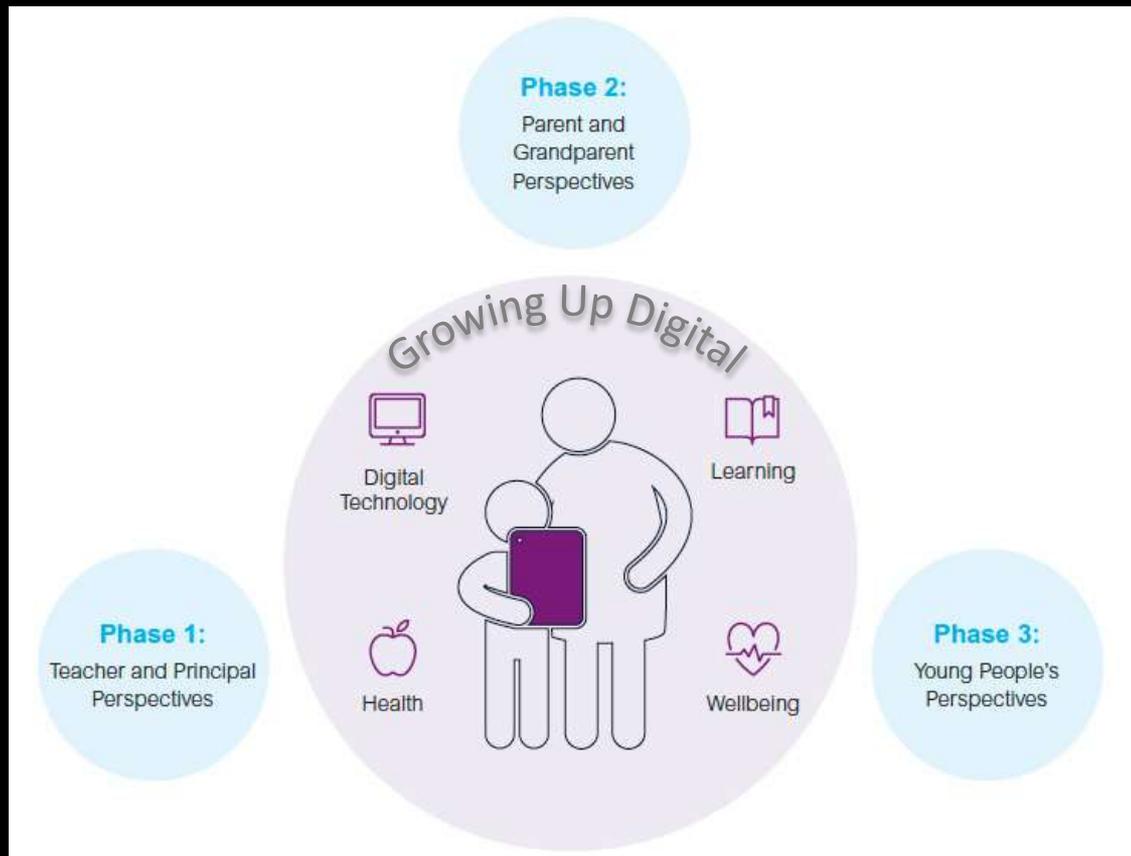


Boston Children's Hospital | Digital Wellness Lab

Where the world comes for answers



HARVARD
MEDICAL SCHOOL



GUD Australia study

Phase 1: Teachers' perspective (2019)



1876
respondents



48%
have more than **20 years**
teaching experience



73%
are female



48%
are teachers



31%
are principals



16%
are administrators



95%
work in primary
and secondary
schools



26%
work in rural,
remote and
regional schools

“Technology is a great tool...”

43%

believe that digital technologies **enhance their teaching and learning activities**, rather than detract.



68%

believe that opportunities to facilitate inquiry-based learning are **enhanced by technology**.



“Technology is a great tool...”

These examples provided by educators were innovative, diverse, inspiring and collaborative.



Recording reading sessions and watching them back to improve reading.

Pre-primary students engaging and skilfully using the Bloxels app to build a game.



Year One students' ability to use the Stop Motion app to create a simple movie after only one demonstration.



A group of students used google slides for a team project at home and during school showing team work and individual accountability.



The students made a podcast using multimedia technology. It was useful for students with learning disabilities.

“...but it’s also a great distraction”

84% of educators in Australia believe that digital technologies are a **growing distraction** in the learning environment.



Educators used terms such as:



when describing their observations of students and reactions to having devices removed.



78% say that students' abilities to focus on educational tasks has decreased.



have noticed a **decrease in student empathy.**



60% have noted declining levels of **physical activity.**

“Students come to school increasingly challenged”

Australian classrooms are becoming more complex places to teach and learn.

In the last 3-5 years, students with:



Emotional challenges
have increased
94%



Social challenges
have increased
93%



Cognitive challenges
have increased
84%

Behaviour problems
have increased
93%

“Students are not ready to learn”



59%

observed a **decline**
in students' overall
readiness to learn.

Source: Growing Up Digital Australia (2020)

Some comments by early childhood educators:

“Children do 'sneak phones'. Parents want children to have phones because parents are so very worried about pedophiles 'grabbing them'. This is quite ironic because I think the phone actually makes young children more vulnerable”.

Even at this young age, some of the social comparisons are beginning to creep in:

“I teach very young children and use the app SeeSaw to communicate with parents. My students are obsessed with how many 'likes' different posts get and I feel I have to hide this information from them”.

The skill level of young children at using these devices is quite high, but their understandings are often out of step:

“Students come to school already knowing how to operate an iPad but with little knowledge of how they operate”.

“Digital technologies distract teachers, too”

2 in 3

say technology is a growing distraction in their life.



89%

aged 25 or younger agreed that digital **technology poses an increasing distraction.**



24%

felt they were addicted to digital technology, and this number increased to **61% aged 25 or younger.**

These results indicate that **younger educators** are most at risk of the **negative effects of technology** overuse.

Source: Growing Up Digital Australia (2020)

GUDOz Phase 2

Who participated in Phase 2?

About three in four respondents had an annual household income over \$100,000.



The data represented more than 5,000 children.



2,450

Australian parents and grandparents participated aged 25-65.



83% were female.



Children as young as 4 have their own smart phone.



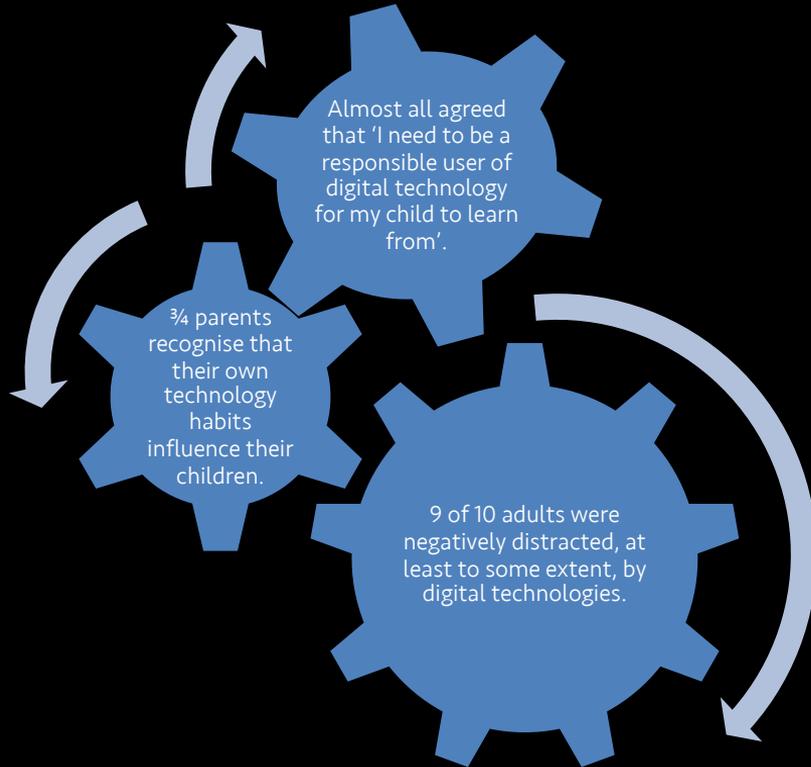
Reasons included:

- ▶ To contact my child when not at home (64%)
- ▶ FOMO (8%)
- ▶ To keep in contact with friends (5%)
- ▶ To do schoolwork (4%)

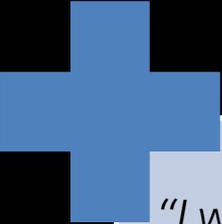
On average, Australian children own 3 screen-based devices.

About half of Australian children own a mobile phone.

“Complex social dynamics”



“Half of parents changed their attitudes to digital media and technologies due to COVID-19.”



“I was anti-technology and wanted less time on devices at school. Now I am pro technology and believe it opens up a wider opportunity for education.”



“My child's screen time during lockdown was difficult to monitor and limit. And this now continues even after lockdown.”

“Vast majority of parents and grandparents think that their children are negatively distracted by digital media and technologies.”

Almost a quarter of families sought or tried to find professional help because of their concerns about their child’s use of digital devices.

Almost half of parents whose children were educationally disadvantaged looked for help in changing their child’s digital habits.

— “Sleeping with digital screens is common”

About one-third of families allow their children to use their devices in their bedrooms after bedtime every single day.

Almost half of lower-income families allow their children to use their devices in their bedrooms after bedtime every single day.





More than half

of parents primarily allow their children to use digital media and technology for entertainment value. Comparatively, only one in five predominantly use it for learning purposes.



About half of parents

agreed that they would welcome more support from their child's school to help them and their child to manage digital media and technologies use at home.

Your thoughts?

Some conversation questions

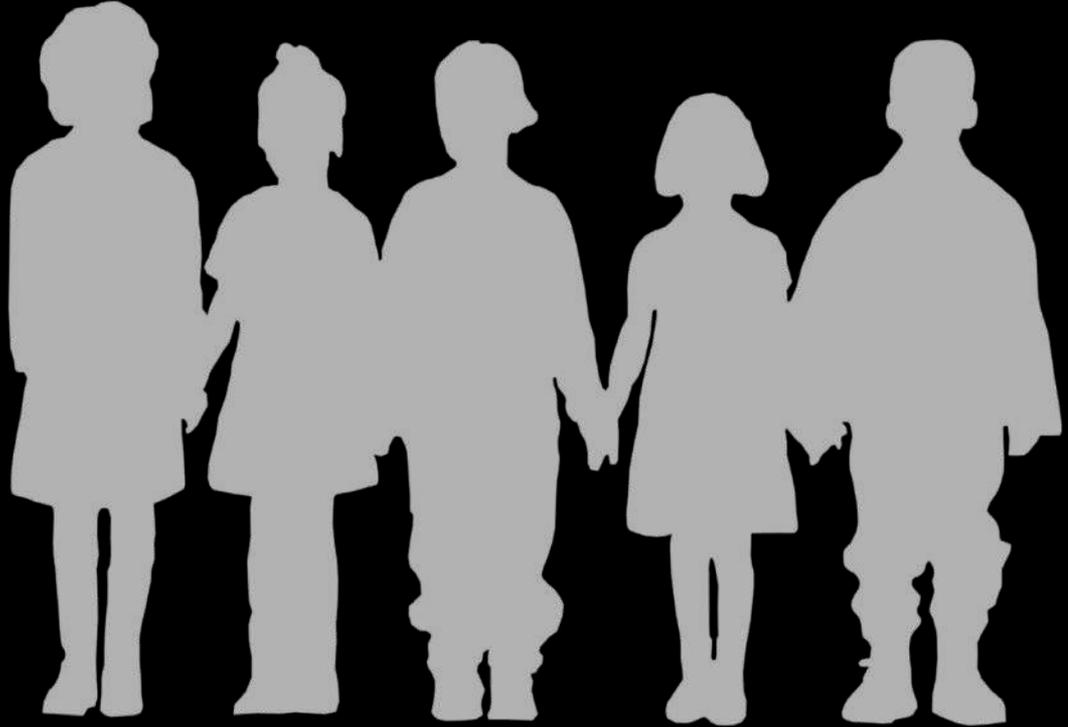
How important role modelling, and controlling our distractions, is to shaping young children's habits?

What do you think about the current guidelines for screen time and use of technology?

What would healthy and responsible use of digital media and technologies look like in early childhood?

Our declaration of hope: The way forward

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”



1

Avoid simple binary solutions to complex problems.

2

Help children to learn to self-regulate their use of digital gadgets.

3

Be a role model: Change your own habits first!

More:

Growing Up Digital Australia: Technical report. UNSW Gonski Institute, 2020.

<https://www.gie.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/UNSW%20GIE%20GUD%20Phase%201%20Technical%20Report%20MAR20%20v2.pdf>

Graham, A. & Sahlberg, P. (2020). Schools are moving online, but not all children start out digitally equal. The Conversation, March 27. <https://theconversation.com/schools-are-moving-online-but-not-all-children-start-out-digitally-equal-134650>.

Sahlberg, P. & Graham, A. (2020). Teaching changing children in the changing times. Journal of Professional Learning, Semester 2. <https://cpl.asn.au/journal/semester-2-2020/teaching-changing-children-in-the-changing-times>

Graham, A., & Sahlberg, P. (2021). Growing Up Digital Australia: Phase 2 technical report. Gonski Institute for Education. UNSW, Sydney.

Sahlberg, P., & Graham, A. (2021). Children these days have several digital devices, and few can spend a day without them. The Conversation, April 28.

THANK YOU!



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GROWING UP DIGITAL
Australia:
PHASE 1 TECHNICAL REPORT

"The addictive nature of technology and the lack of consistent community and parental guidance is seeing this valuable tool get a poor reputation."
PRINCIPAL FROM GROWING UP DIGITAL AUSTRALIA: PHASE 1

 Gonski Institute for Education



GROWING UP DIGITAL
Australia:
PHASE 2 TECHNICAL REPORT

"I feel like this is such a guinea pig generation, and I so hope that in the end the positives outweigh the negatives."
Australian parent.

 UNSW Gonski Institute for Education