

GROWING UP DIGITAL

Deputy Principals of Selective and Partially Selective
Secondary Schools 22nd Annual Conference

“Leading Creatively: Leading Together”

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1 What is Growing Up Digital?

2 Teacher perspective

3 Parent perspective

4 More play as a solution

Q1: Do children come to school ready to learn?

What is Growing Up Digital?

Enhancing
vs.
Distracting

Connecting
vs.
Disconnecting

Safety
vs.
Risks

Tool
vs.
Treat



The aim of Growing Up Digital *is to better understand the scope of physical, mental and social consequences of digital media and technologies on children and youth.*



Boston Children's Hospital | Digital Wellness Lab

Where the world comes for answers



HARVARD
MEDICAL SCHOOL

2020

Phase 2:
Parent and Grandparent Perspectives

Growing Up Digital



Digital Technology



Learning



Health



Wellbeing



2019

Phase 1:
Teacher and Principal Perspectives

2021

Phase 3:
Young People's Perspectives

Teacher perspective

Phase 1 in Australia in 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

Key findings:

“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**.



Key findings:

“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.

Key findings:

“...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.**

Key findings:

“Students come to school with many challenges”

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%



Behaviour problems
have increased
93%

Cognitive challenges
have increased
84%

Key findings:

“Students are not ready to learn”



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

Source: Growing Up Digital Australia (2020)

Key findings:

“There is a digital divide”

83%

believe that students' socio-economic circumstances has at least some impact on their access to technology they need for learning in school.



34%

have observed that children living in poverty have had less access to technology than their more well-resourced peers.



43% believe the impact is considerable.

“ *The students I work with have disabilities, so often have little understanding. Technology helps keep them focused, as it interests them.* ”

Source: Growing Up Digital Australia (2020)

Key findings:

“Digital technologies are affecting teachers as well”

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)

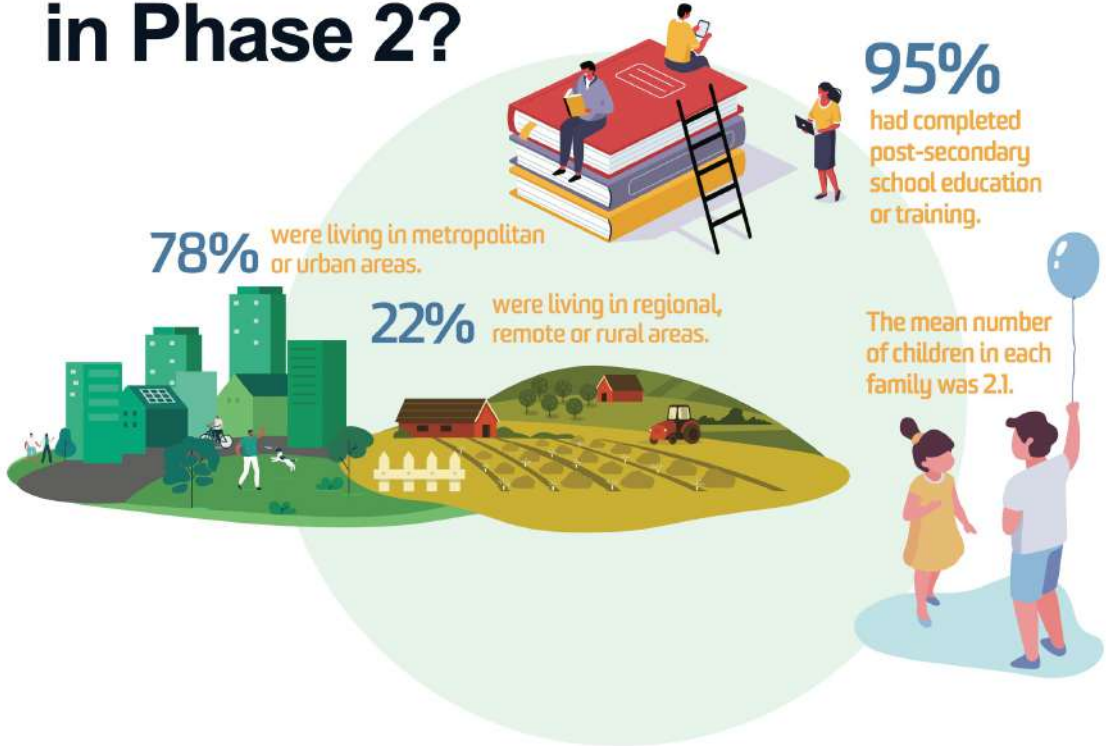
What do you think?

Parent perspective

Phase 2 in Australia in 2020



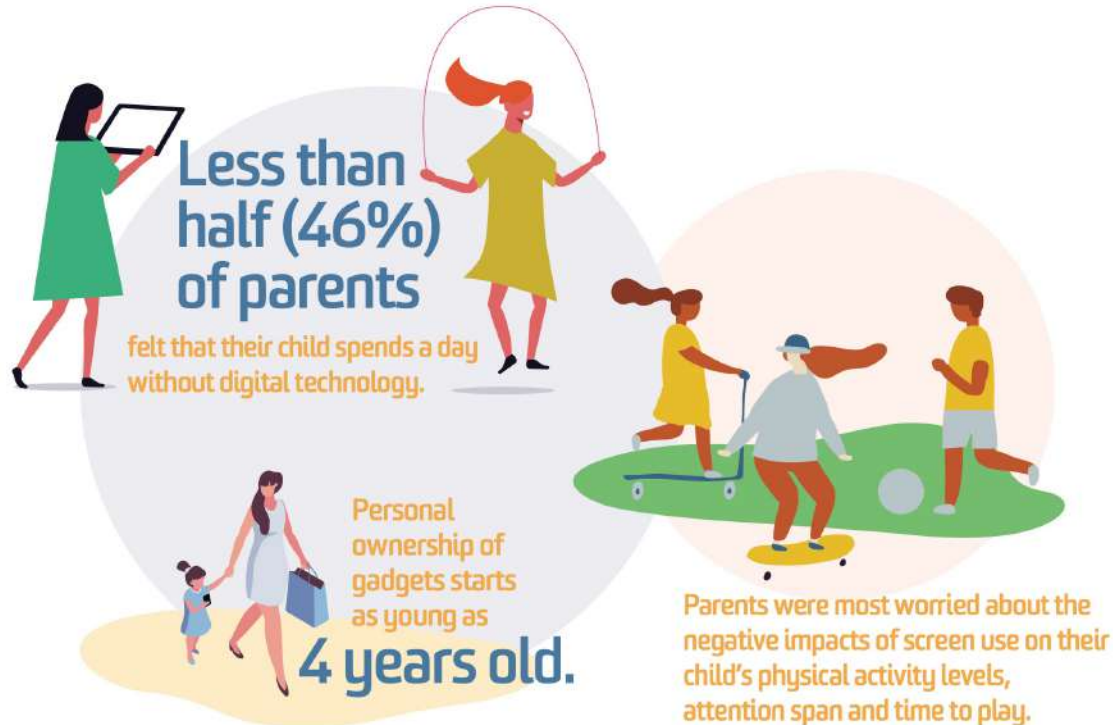
Who participated in Phase 2?



2450 parents and grandparents

Key findings:

Childhood has changed.



Key findings:

Parenting is harder than it used to be.

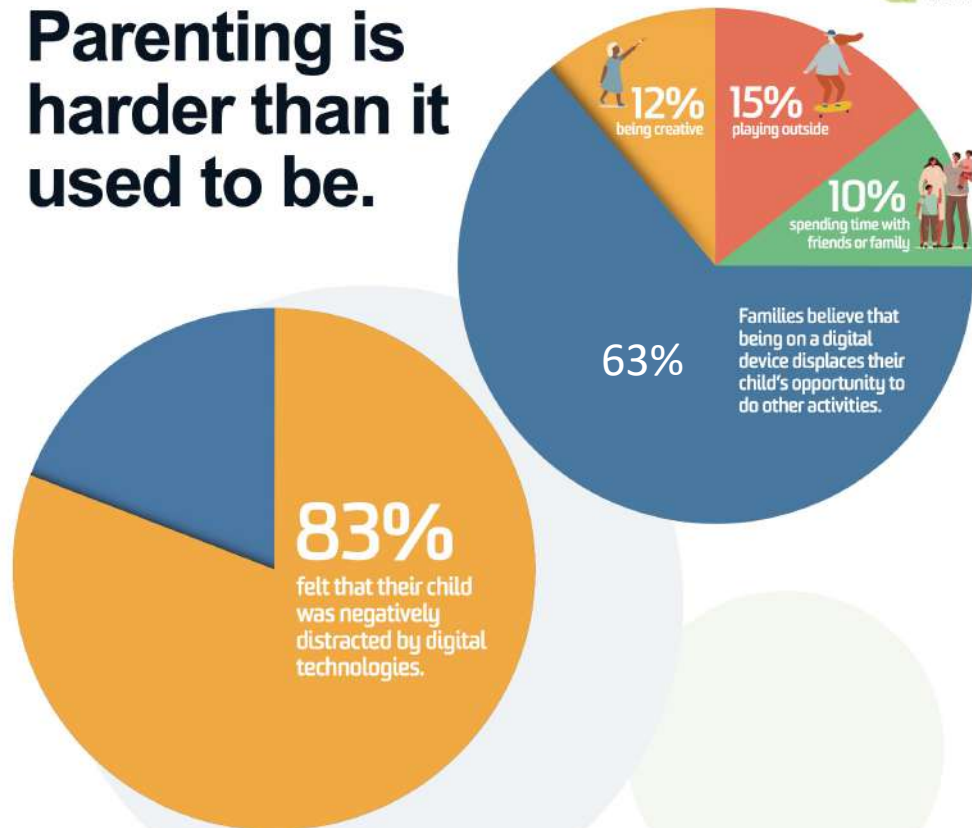


3 of 4 parents

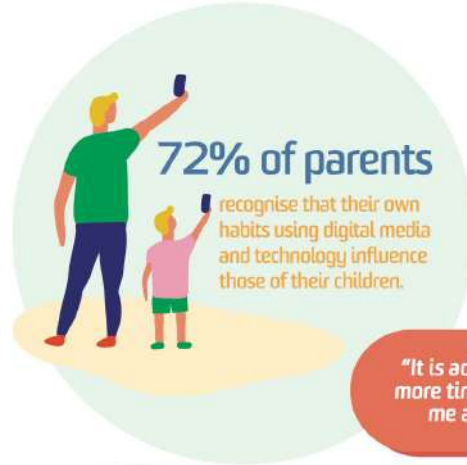
think it is harder to control their child's digital habits since they have got their own screen-based device.

Key findings:

Parenting is harder than it used to be.



Key findings: Parents know they are role models but are distracted.



"It is addictive, I yearn for more time away from it for me and my family".

"As a parent I need to know how to work the programs and site the kids access to be able to protect them. I do not assume they are safe".

Over 90%

of parents felt that they themselves were negatively distracted, at least to some extent, by digital technologies.

Three in four believed that this distraction is growing.

Key findings: COVID-19 changed everything.

More than half (53%) of parents indicated that their attitudes towards digital media and technology have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

57%

This was higher in the lowest-income families than any other income bracket.

49%

This was lower in respondents from regional, rural and remote areas.



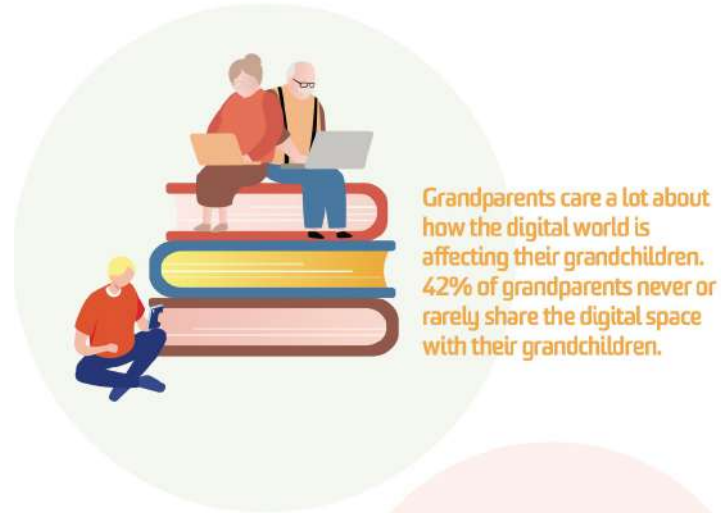
57% of grandparents

felt that their attitudes had not changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"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".

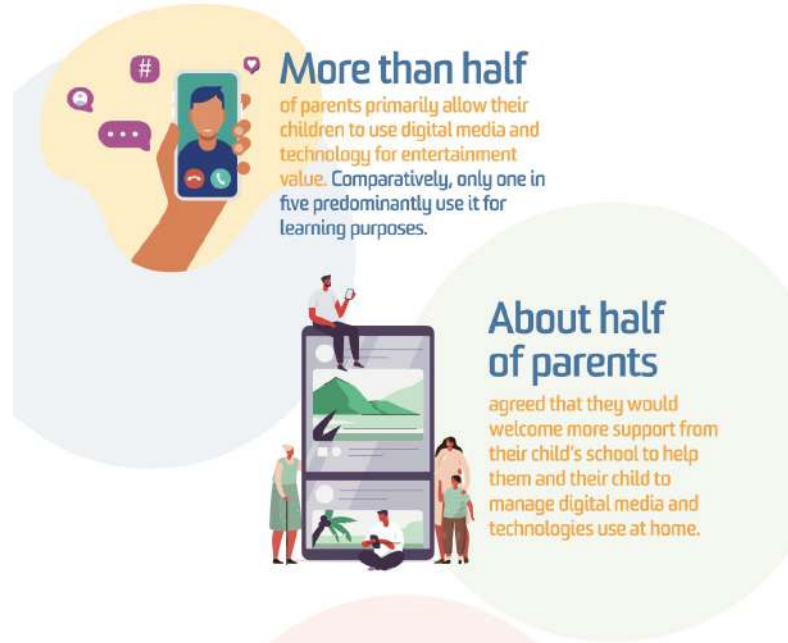
Key findings: Digi-grandparents.



Grandparents care a lot about how the digital world is affecting their grandchildren. 42% of grandparents never or rarely share the digital space with their grandchildren.

"With all of my 9 grandchildren, ages 3 to 17, I see very negative effects on their behaviour when using devices, they become moody, argumentative, throw tantrums, they can't self-regulate their time and have to be told to stop. The ability to complete schoolwork on devices at home is positive, the ones of primary school age do that well, however their handwriting skills are not great and their ability to spell check makes them lazy and doesn't help with their spelling abilities".

Key findings: The thin line between leisure and learning.



"Our dependence on technology for connection and schoolwork has increased, therefore the requirement for screen time after school has increased. It has forced us to have more conversations about striking the right balance between technology and off-line schoolwork".

Key findings: Digital inequity and how it affects young people.

The proportion of parents who felt that their personal use of digital media and technologies had no impact.

23%

Families with a household income LESS THAN \$100,000 pa

16%

Families with a household income MORE THAN \$100,000 pa

Parents who provided their children a mobile phone was significantly higher in the lowest income bracket than any other group, and lowest in high achieving children.

Lowest income bracket

62%

High achieving children

45%



3 in 5 children who are struggling at school go to bed with their devices.

30% of families allow their children to use their devices in their bedrooms after bedtime every single day.



Nearly half (47%) of lower-income parents allow their children to sleep with their smartphones every single night.



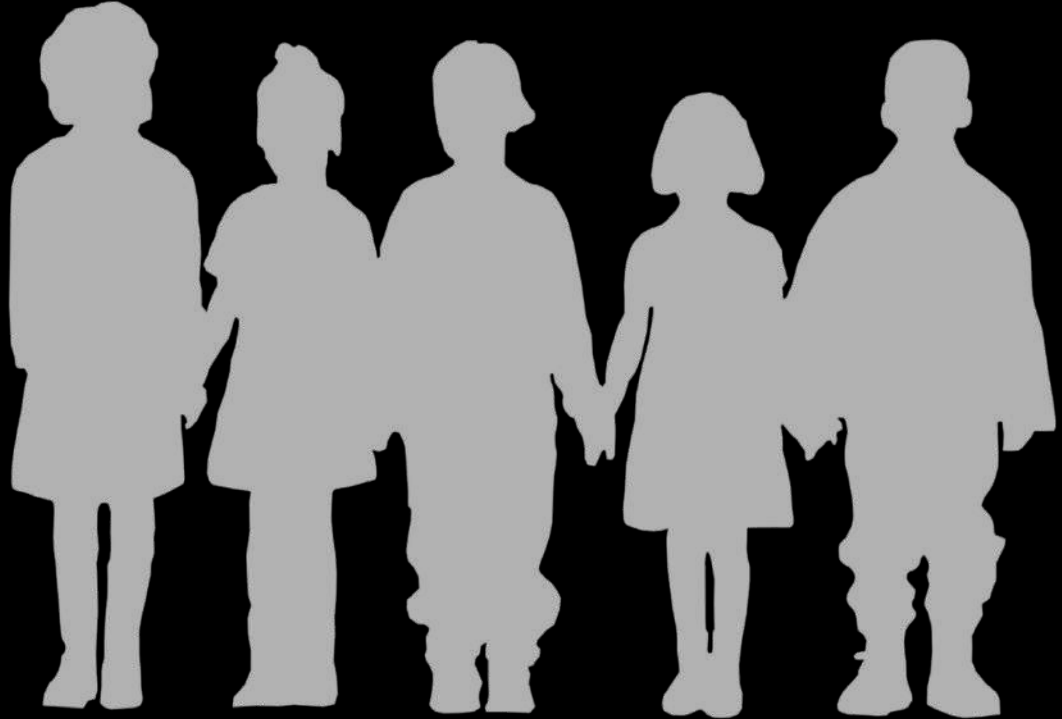
Lower-income parents and lower-achieving students are most at risk of problematic interactive media use.

Q2: Are digital gadgets reason behind declining wellbeing?

The declaration of hope

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

- Margaret Wheatley



1

Avoid simple binary solutions to complex problems.

2

Help children to learn how to self-regulate their behaviour with digital gadgets.

3

Be a role model: Change your own habits first!

More play as a solution

What can we do?

Make time for play

Talk about the power of play

Encourage learning through play

More:

Growing Up Digital Australia: Phase 1 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>

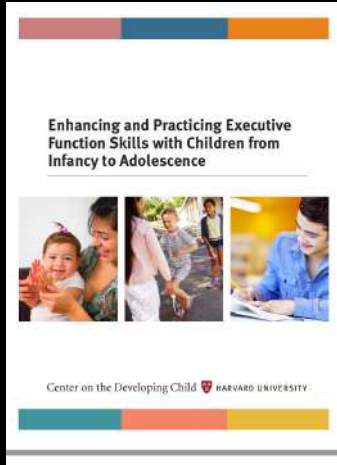
Sahlberg, P. & Graham, A. (2020). Teaching changing children in the changing times. Journal of Professional Learning, Semester 2. <https://cpl.asn.au/journal/semester-2-2020/teaching-changing-children-in-the-changing-times>

Sahlberg, P. & Graham, A. (2021). Children own around 3 digital devices on average, and few can spend a day without them. The Conversation, April 28. <https://theconversation.com/children-own-around-3-digital-devices-on-average-and-few-can-spend-a-day-without-them-159546>

Growing Up Digital Australia: Phase 2 Technical Report. UNSW Gonski Institute, 2021.

https://www.gie.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/GONS5000%20Growing%20Up%20Digital%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Some useful open access readings:



Sahlberg, P. (2021). Power of Play. School Administrator, 1-2021.

Gonski Institute (2020). An Hour of Play.

McNamara, L. & Sahlberg, P. (2020). Kids will need recess more than ever when returning to school post-coronavirus. The Conversation, June 1.

THANK YOU!

