

DIGITAL WELLNESS STARK COUNTY NEWSLETTER



Hello Stark County!

Welcome to the third edition of the Digital Wellness Newsletter! Thank you for being part of the Digital Wellness Stark County movement.

We hope you're finding time this summer to step away from screens and enjoy family, exercise, better sleep, and outdoor activities. Looking for a family movie night? Check out Toy Story 5 and visit [Common Sense Media](#) for additional age-appropriate movie recommendations.

As students head back to school, healthy digital habits can help set the stage for a successful year. Balancing screen time with offline activities and practicing safe, respectful online behavior can support children's focus, productivity, and emotional well-being. Be sure to check out our back-to-school digital wellness tips on page 6.

Help us build a healthier digital community. Share this newsletter with family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and community groups. Start a conversation about digital wellness, try one new healthy screen habit at home, and encourage others to do the same. Together, we can create a more balanced and connected Stark County.

Thank you for your support and commitment to digital wellness!

-Patti Fetzner and Kay Conley
Committee Co-Chairs

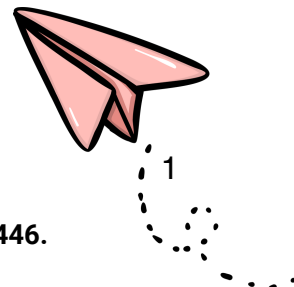
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Local Agency Interacts with Classes and Community about Internet Safety

Submitted by: Stark County Prosecutor's Office



Online technology has become part of everyone's daily lives for both children and adults. Social media and the internet in general allow us to learn, connect, create and stay informed. But just as we all teach our children how to safely cross a street and buckle in their seats, we need to help our young people navigate the digital world.

As our county's juvenile courts have handled cases related to the misuse of technology through youth harassing and threatening each other, to posting negative things on Social Media, to being contacted by online predators, our Community Initiative under Stark County Prosecutor Kyle L. Stone, has taken the task to educate and empower both parents and youth through discussions and interactions with classes and audiences. We believe our young people can be proactive and stay safe online. We also believe that the wall between parents and their children as it relates to talking about how to use Social Media can also be brought down and they can successfully discuss and share about being safe.

Local Agency Interacts with Classes and Community about Internet Safety (Continued)

One of the most important messages we share with students is that their online actions can have real-world consequences. Our goal is not to scare young people, but to educate and empower them. We've heard from school leaders that students sometimes face disciplinary action or even legal consequences for online behavior and respond by saying, "I didn't know that was illegal." That's why digital education matters.

By providing students with accurate information, practical examples, and opportunities for discussion, we help them make informed choices online. We also encourage students to talk with a trusted adult whenever they encounter something concerning online or need help navigating a difficult situation. While asking for help isn't always easy, it's often the most important step they can take.

As of now, we've offered several of these types of presentations to students of various ages all throughout Stark County. It's something we continue to offer for school districts even now. We can present in either an assembly format or with visiting classrooms and spending more time throughout the day with the students. This past year, we've offered:

- 39 presentations
- 915 students reached
- Grades 5 through 12 served

Finally, this is something we can offer to more parents as well. We can teach them how to approach talking to their children as well as how to set up parental controls. We advise parents to have firm rules on how their children utilize social media. However, along with these rules, there must also be space for encouraging their children to come and talk to their parents or trusted adults if they come across something online that troubles them or if they have posted something and ask for help. We encourage open dialogue between parents and children as working together, children can be kept safe.

Interested in Scheduling a Presentation?

Schools, parent groups, and community organizations are encouraged to reach out for student or parent presentations.

Contact Crime Prevention Specialist, Jim Knight

☎ **330-451-7888**

✉ jnknight@starkcountyohio.gov

Together, through education, communication, and community support, we can help young people build safer and healthier digital habits.



Ohio Chapter of *American Academy of Pediatrics* Webinar Explains the Good and Bad of Social Media Use Among Adolescents

Social media is having some negative and some positive impacts on the health and well-being of adolescents.

“I want to change the narrative that it’s not all bad,” said pediatrician Dr. Sarah Adams on a recent webinar from the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Benefits of Social Media Use

Adams explained that adolescents use social media in some developmentally appropriate ways.

- *Social*: Adolescents communicate with friends and build larger networks based on their own interests.
- *Emotional*: They seek support, relieve stress and identify some sense of self.
- *Functional*: Adolescents plan events and engage around school assignments
- *Civic*: Adolescents get involved in topics they may be passionate about such as the environment and gun safety.



Social Media and Mental Health Connection

Not every teen has the same risks or benefits to using social media. Worse life satisfaction predicts more social media use, and more social media tends to lead to worse life satisfaction.

About 2/3 of adolescents “do well” across multiple areas of mental or physical health, Adams explained.

Approximately 1/3 of adolescents have potential health consequences. However, this group of adolescents often has other aspects putting them at increased risk such as an existing mental health concern or a less supportive home environment.

Risks to Watch For With Social Media Use

Adams explained that kids who use social media at age 10 or younger were more likely to be victims of online harassment. Early social media also negatively impacts tweens who have previously struggled with body image.

“What we know is during stressful times in life (when we talk about adolescents), social media might amplify that stress,” Adams said.

Ohio Chapter of *American Academy of Pediatrics* Webinar Explains the Good and Bad of Social Media Use Among Adolescents (Continued)

Warning Signs of Problematic Use

Adams defined problematic social media use as heavy social media use with preoccupation or compulsion despite negative consequences such as lack of sleep, online harassment or family conflict.

It is estimated to occur in 4.5-7% of adolescents and is associated with:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- High stress
- ADHD.

“Just taking the phone away or cutting them off from social media may be helpful, but it is definitely not enough,” Adams said.

What are some signs of Problematic Social Media Use?

- Changes in behavior
- Avoiding offline social connections to be online
- Lower grades due to overuse of technology
- Using technology and digital media as the primary way to calm emotions
- Lacking social connections.

What are some management approaches to media use?

To help your child, Adams advises talking about:

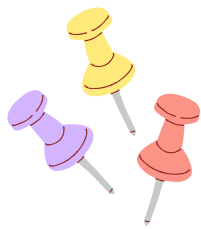
- Your child’s motivations for media use
- Their strengths and challenges that contribute to problematic use
- The design of the media they use

Adams also recommends:

- Setting limits and controls on social media but increase independence as your child grows.
- Developing a plan for social media use as a family, even if your teen may not agree with all of it.
- Setting clear rules and ensure the rules are followed consistently.

View the Full Webinar





Back to School Tips for Parents



Quick Tips for Parents:



Set Healthy Screen-Time Boundaries

Balance school-related device use with offline activities, family time, and physical activity.



Build Self-Regulation Skills

Encourage children to take breaks, manage stress, and develop healthy habits when using technology.



Reduce Distractions During Homework

Create a dedicated study space, silence notifications, and put away unrelated devices during work time.



Establish Consistent Routines

Regular schedules for sleep, homework, activities, and device use can reduce stress and improve organization.



Learn Alongside Your Child

Familiarize yourself with the digital tools and platforms your child's school uses to better support their learning.

By promoting healthy technology habits and staying engaged in your child's education, families can help students start the school year strong!

Learn more: Boston Children's Digital Wellness Lab
[The Digital Wellness lab's family guide to going back to school with technology.](#)



Toy Story 5 Takeaways

For more than three decades, the Toy Story franchise has captured the hearts of audiences by showing the special bond between children and their toys. As each generation has grown up, the films have continued to deliver meaningful lessons that resonate with viewers of all ages. In Toy Story 5, the toys take on a new challenge facing today's children: **the growing influence of technology in everyday life.**

The story follows Bonnie, now 8-years-old, who still enjoys playing with her toys and creating imaginative adventures for them.



However, her parents notice she is having a difficult time connecting with other children and making friends. As any parent would be concerned about their child not being able to make friends, they give in and purchase her a Lilypad, a tablet-like device designed to help children learn and socialize. As Bonnie becomes increasingly drawn to her new device, the film explores several powerful themes that stay with you when you leave the theatre, including the importance of friendship and the need for balance and moderation in the digital world.

The film does not present technology as evil or harmful. Instead, it acknowledges that technology can be useful, educational, and enjoyable when used responsibly. The film encourages the audience to find a healthy balance between screen time and real-world experiences. Spending time with friends, engaging in creative play, and participating in everyday activities are all essential parts of a well-rounded childhood.

Other Toy Story 5 ratings or articles:

[Toy Story movie rating from Commonsense](#)

[Boston Digital Wellness Lab article](#)

[Children's Health: on Toy Story 5 Gets at Something Real from NPR](#)

[Child Development-6 Things "Toy Story 5" Gets Right About Kids and Technology Article from Psychology Today](#)

