

Helping **parents** understand **teenagers** and their world

Teens, Sleep, and Pandemic Breakdown

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

Let them sleep in! It is important that they maintain a regular sleep schedule and are not staying up too late. I would even recommend parents take this time to observe their children and see if they notice any improvements in their mood, concentration, performance, and behaviors with this extra sleep. Given the additional stress kids are going through, it is even more important we help them get adequate amounts of sleep so they are as resilient as possible.

Nicholas H. Benson, MD (Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine Specialist), when asked his opinion about letting teens sleep in (as long as they are still getting their distance learning schoolwork finished), mspmag.com, April 22, 2020



WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



So. . . here we are. . . all still trying to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic. In recent weeks I've been listening to parents talk about the good, the bad, and the ugly that's been coming out of the stay-at-home-and-quarantine order. On the good side, families are spending more time together and rediscovering the joy of eating dinner together. Many families are taking advantage of this activity-free interlude to engage in playing games, getting outside together, and having family devotions. Believe it or not, there are bright spots shining in the midst of this Coronavirus.

But there's one dark spot I'm hearing about more and more. Long before Covid-19, we were sounding the alarm about how often kids are engaged with their devices, sometimes at the cost of uninterrupted sleep. Now, with Covid-19, our kids tend to go to bed later and use the overnight to kindle the peer-to-peer connections they've lost due to quarantine. I've been hearing this consistently from parents over the past few weeks, and they are looking for insight into how to remedy a situation that is undermining physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

We can begin by understanding just how much sleep our kids *do* need. Researchers tell us that teenagers have always needed just over nine hours of uninterrupted sleep for healthy physical and emotional growth/development. But judging from what the research is telling us about new patterns of adolescent sleep, healthy physical and emotional teenage development is in jeopardy of becoming a thing of the past.

We must also look at the clear and convincing data regarding the fallout from digitally-interrupted sleep. These dangers include:

Depression and Anxiety. Counselors who screen patients for depression and anxiety will first ask patients about their sleep. Not getting enough sleep not only leads to depression and anxiety, but will make it worse.

Obesity. People who don't sleep enough tend to crave and eat more food.

Heart Disease. A lack of sleep leads to greater stress, which in turn can elevate blood pressure and increase the risk of strokes and heart disease.

Decreased neurologic function. Not only does a lack of sleep lead to fatigue and decreased attention span, but it also affects driving and reaction time. Sleep impaired driving has been equated to driving while alcohol-impaired with a blood alcohol content of .08%.

Aggressive and inappropriate behavior. When you're tired, you tend to get grumpy.

Parents, we are called by God to nurture our children into spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical maturity in ways that glorify God and equip them to live a God-honoring life. We are called to protect our kids from harm and provide for their well-being. Safeguarding their sleep is our responsibility. And the antidote to digitally-interrupted sleep is simple: Don't let them sleep with their phones in the same room. Let's take advantage of pandemic-time to instill healthy digital habits. ✨

TOP 10...

Most Viewed YouTube Channels in the U.S.

During the week of
April 20, 2020
Source:
Tubefilter



1. **Cocomelon - Nursery**

Rhymes

2. **Like Nastya**

3. **Kids Diana Show**

4. **WWE**

5. **Movieclips**

6. **Vlad and Nikita**

7. **BabyBus - Nursery**

Rhymes

8. **TC**

9. **Ryan's World**

10. **Sesame Street**



QUICK STATS

In 2014, 8.8% of lifetime e-cigarette users initiated use at age 14 years or younger, whereas in 2018 this number increased to 28.6%.

(American Journal of Public Health)

During the first week of most of the nation's stay-at-home order, network traffic for voice and video calls was up 212%.

(Comcast)

FROM THE NEWS:

HYPER-SEXUALIZED DANCE

In the wake of the controversy following this year's hyper-sexualized Super Bowl halftime dance show, Mary Bawden of the organization DA:NCE (Dance Awareness: No Child Exploited) wrote a timely blog. Bawden loves dance and says that watching a child explore the art of movement through dance is precious. But she is also sounding the alarm regarding how in children's dance classes around the nation, young children are being taught to dance with choreography that hypersexualizes them and their bodies. She warns readers that our kids are being taught movement patterns that are highly suggestive, and which include obscene gestures. Add to that the presence of sexualized music and seductive costumes, and you've got a mix that has negative effects on kids. These negative effects include body dysmorphia, desensitization to hyper-sexualization, promiscuity, higher risk of pornography use, and higher risk of abusive relationships. Parents, nurture your kids into the counter-cultural beauty of a biblical sexual ethic.

TRENDS: METABOLISM DROPS

Styles and fads have come and gone in the teen population thanks in part to the way these things are spread from teen to teen through one's peer networks. The constant presence of social media has facilitated quicker and more widespread opportunities for viral fads, as kids are engaged 24/7 with their social media peer networks. The video-based social media platform known as Tik-Tok is one avenue where kids learn about the latest styles and practices.

Tik-Tok influencers have fueled a dangerous fad towards the use of the Wellness Solution brand's products known as Metabolism Drops and Metabolism Capsules.

Even though the weight-loss products are targeted to women over eighteen, girls are using Tik-Tok to encourage others to misuse the product, especially at high doses. Parents, be aware, and warn your kids about the dangers of these products. But be sure to go a step further and teach your kids that identity is not to be found in one's body image, but in who they are in Christ.



LATEST RESEARCH: FAMILIES PRAYING AND WORSHIPING TOGETHER

In a recent article in *Christianity Today* magazine, Lyman Stone from the American Enterprise Institute reported on research into how family religious practices in the home influence the faith formation of children in positive ways into adulthood. Of course, this should not come as a surprise. Throughout the Scriptures, Christian parents are instructed to pass on the faith from generation to generation. If this is God's design, then we should expect it to work. After looking at the research, Stone writes these words: "Families who pray and worship together tend to continue praying and worshipping together. The key to the successful transmission of the Christian faith across generations is not more youth groups or hipper pastors but the Holy Spirit working through the vocation of parenthood as parents take the time to share their faith with their own children." Parents, remember that God has called you to be the primary nurturing influence your child's life. Embrace and live out that high calling!

CPYU'S DIGITAL KIDS INITIATIVE



www.DigitalKidsInitiative.com

Social Media Poison

by Walt Mueller



I recently read an informative op-ed piece by Stella O'Malley, a therapist who works with families. O'Malley titled her piece, "The Children I Meet Are Often Shattered By Their Social Media Use." The headline caught my eye as I am constantly involved in debates on the long and short term dangers related to life on our emerging smartphone populated landscape. She writes, "I can't help but notice how much our devices have become a poisoned chalice in our lives. On the one hand, they are great fun and often fascinating, but on the other hand, they can be a continuous distraction from our real lives and can often make us feel tense, nervous, and disconnected."

She then goes on to explain how companies that profit from technology target children and parents with the educational benefits of devices and apps. But, as she says, it doesn't take long for these things to be swapped for mindless rubbish. Parents, be aware. Jumping into the digital landscape without caution is very risky.

New Podcast

Youth Culture Matters is a long-format podcast from CPYU co-hosted by Walt Mueller and Jason Soucinek.



Listen at www.cpyu.org/podcast.

Be sure to check out Episode 102 titled "Mental Health for Families in our Current Crisis" with Julie Lowe



FROM THE WORD

What do you consider to be the "necessary" aspects of your job as a parent? We would all agree that we need to provide our children with the physical sustenance that ensures that they will grow from childhood into a healthy adulthood. This includes food, water, shelter, medical care, immunizations, etc. We would also agree that it would be horribly irresponsible if we didn't provide our children with an education that prepares them for independent living in the world. In addition, we might include some of the cultural requirements expected of parents in today's world. . . things like getting our kids into extracurricular activities and a variety of social settings. When done correctly and with attention to balance, these things are "necessary" and good.

"WOE TO ME IF I DO NOT PREACH THE GOSPEL!"
1 CORINTHIANS 9:16

But do we consider the spiritual nurture of our children a "necessity?" And if we do, what level of importance do we give to spiritual nurture? The dictionary defines "necessity" as something that is required or indispensable. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that it was necessary for him to preach the Gospel. Preaching was an obligation that Paul felt and a necessity that he could not ignore or escape. Because of his God-given calling, Paul tells the Corinthians very simply, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson translates this verse as reading, "I'm *compelled* to do it, and doomed if I don't!" That's some strong language that captures just how important the communication of the Good News about Jesus Christ really is.

Because you have been given the gift of children, it follows that you have been called by God to nurture your children. . . physically, emotionally, relationally, intellectually, *and* spiritually. In fact, the spiritual nurture of our children should be primary, shaping and informing all the other aspects of nurture. Parents, get to know the Gospel. Consume it. Embrace it. Live it. And then, be a conduit of the Gospel to your kids.

HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

One of the many good things that has come out of this crisis is that families are spending more time together. In fact, families are rediscovering the joy of sitting down at the dinner table together to share a meal and time in conversation. And, as we navigate the questions, fear, and anxiety that have come with living in this cultural moment, we realize that our kids are ripe and ready to hear the truths of God's word. We've been given a great opportunity to nurture our children and teens in the faith! Here at CPYU, we've launched a family tabletalk initiative designed to provide your family with tools to help you dig deeper into and apply God's word. We've recruited a team of gifted thinkers and writers to create several weeks worth of "Family Tabletalk" daily devotional guides. The guides give you a Scripture passage to read together at the dinner table, some commentary on the passage to spark your thinking, some questions to help you apply and discuss what you've read, and a short prayer to pray together. These Family Tabletalk devotional guides are all free. Scan the QR code to the left, or visit www.cpyu.org/ftt.

Family TableTalk Conversation 01
Is God In Control?
read Hebrews 1:1-4
think When we read the Bible from cover-to-cover, we encounter a consistent truth about God that brings great peace and comfort, especially during those when we are filled with fear and anxiety. It is a truth known as God's Providence. In the first few verses of Hebrews, we read that God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, is not only the Creator of the world and the One who purifies us from our sins through his sacrifice on the cross, but he "upholds the universe by the word of his power" (vs. 3).
This is God's providence! After creating all things, God did not step away from his creation, leaving everything to chance, fate, luck, or fortune. Rather, he has remained continually involved with all things he has made, directing them as he wills, he is sustaining, governing, ordering, and "holding together."
[Col. 1:16-17] what he has made. What joy it is to know that God is at work in the midst of all circumstances since He is the One who is active in the world, that not a sparrow falls from the air apart from God's providence. He is so involved in all things that he knows how many hairs we have on our head [Matt. 10:29-30].
Even small actions and circumstances (circumstances are always for God—what is the author of risk to work in our world, our families, and our lives to bring about great good, including a deeper knowledge of his love. Working to understand the mystery of God's providence might not lead to risk in immediate and clear understanding of what God is doing, but it can lead us into an immediate and clear understanding of the fact that God is doing something for our good and his glory!
apply How have you seen God's providence at work in the good circumstances and experiences of your life?
• Difficult Provisions are hard things that bring blessings. How have you seen God work in the difficult circumstances of your life?
• What might God be doing in the world through the Coronavirus epidemic?
pray Lord, help us to see that you are always in control. We are grateful for your providential care in our lives, our families, and our world. Help us to trust and hope to you as you are working out your plans for us, for our family, and for our world.
by Walt Mueller
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