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Digital Parenting

*A guide for responsible use of
digital resources by family*

Programme by : Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology(MeitY), Govt. of India

Supported by : Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Govt. of India



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Parenting is a huge responsibility

“ In India it is generally seen that from the moment the child is born, the parents take it upon themselves to look into each and every aspect of their life. They personally involve in decision making at every stage to ensure that every possible aspect, is looked into to ensure smooth sailing ahead. This is because of the responsibility they take upon themselves to use their knowledge and experience, as elders in the family to safeguard the child’s interest in every possible way.

Parents take it up as their loving duty to care and nurture the growth of the child. They put in every possible effort to plan for the bright future of the child in every possible situation. They try to think through every situation in child’s life well ahead, and therefore feel they are always right, to guide them in best possible way. Not always though, but parents can be right in thinking so.

Parents take it upon themselves to look after the interests of the their child till such time he/she becomes independent

What changes are expected to be introduced in current age parenting ?

With technology finding its way into the art of parenting, it is the approach or style of parenting that has started to evolve in India.

Parenting has become tougher in the Digital Age. Our children live in a technology mediated world, very different from the world parents grew up in. Children are Digital Natives, very well versed with the technology and Internet usage, while most of the parents are Digital Migrants, born before the age of Internet. So for them to see their children spending so much time in front of the screens can seem very overwhelming.

The digital age children are smarter and more knowledgeable in many aspects comparatively. They not only indulge themselves in technologies and digital devices like Smartphones, Tablets, Computers, variety of Applications, gaming platforms etc., to have fun, but are also involved into development of apps, developing hardware, using IoT etc. Accordingly, the parents need to adopt new styles of parenting approach which involves fun, education, encouragement and involvement. But parents need to understand even if they may not be as technology savvy as their children, but they have the life experience and critical thinking skills to deal with any situations.

*The family that
Learns Together Stays Together!!*

*Therefore be prepared for right kind of
parenting in Digital Age !!*



CONTENTS

Understanding Digital Parenting

- What is Digital Parenting
- Need for Digital Parenting
- Importance of Digital Parenting

Ways to be a Good Digital Parent

- Be a good Digital Role Model
- Practice open communication - have open talks, share & discuss
- Keep track and have information
- Be ready to Learn, Unlearn and Relearn
- Exercise parental controls

Useful resources and assessment tools for good digital parenting

- Agreement for digital resource utilization @ home
- Assessment Tool for measuring your skills at Digital Parenting
- Family Pledge for Responsible and Careful Use of Digital Devices @ Home
- How to talk to kids about Digital Devices usage and Online Safety



Understanding Digital Parenting

In the current digital era where the nuclear families have become more bound to digital gadgets, it is essential that both mother and father are well aware about the appropriate and responsible use of the Digital Resources available to them. This awareness helps the parents to ensure certain guidelines are framed within the family for accountable use of accessible digital resources.

What is Digital Parenting ?

‘Digital parenting’ basically refers to parents’ supervision of the child's online activity using digital gadgets accessible to them. The relevance of the term is gaining more and more importance in the current era because of the penetration of the digital gadgets into everyday lives of every member in the family for various purposes.



Need for Digital Parenting

Parenting until recent times was restricted to raising and nurturing the children, providing them with required amenities, care, attention and guidance. However, in recent times, with the technology taking over our lives in every aspect, it has become necessary for parents in the family to understand that they need to extend their approach and change the style of parenting from real time to digital space also.



Thus a good Digital Parenting skill requires the parents to acquaint, adapt and arise to the current scenario of Digital Survival. This skill is required by them achieve the following objectives-

1

Bridge the digital generation gap that they are exposed to in the current scenario.

2

Become competent to address the challenges address the challenges, risks and opportunities brought in by intervention of digital media in child's life.

3

Achieve the delicate balance between supervising child's online behaviour and at the same time enabling them with required online

Importance of Digital Parenting

Digital Parenting skills are essential for both parents and children to develop safe and healthy relationship with technology. These skills become essential for parents in the current scenario where every child is exposed to digital media and the virtual world, both at home and outside.

Digital parenting skills help parents find the right balance in maintaining real life human and virtual/ digital bonds. They help the whole family to partner with technology in a progressive, enabling and independent way with the freedom to use it responsibly.

Mentioned below are the few points that signify the importance of developing digital parenting skills -



1 Digital Parenting skills enable the parents to actually understand and talk to their children regarding the proper usage of digital resources.

The digital parents of current times must acquaint themselves with “what and why” of the technologies, digital devices, social media & apps, games and at the same time must be well aware of their appropriate usage. This knowledge with the right amount of age-old parenting wisdom enables them to guide the children on appropriate and right use of digital resources.

2 Knowledge of Digital parenting helps them to be prepared to be a role model while parenting in this digital age.

Parents should always bear in mind that they are their child’s first teachers, it is them who the children observe constantly while growing up and it’s their footsteps that the children step in later. Therefore, parents should not only be aware of technologies and their proper usage, but also strictly implement the standards they intend to set for children.



3

Working on Digital parenting skills helps parents to be technically updated and know about the latest technology trends. It also enables them to know about technology usage for monitoring and supervising child's online & offline activity.

The technology today is evolving at a rapid pace catering to consumers' needs in every possible way. With the ever-developing technologies, there are updated digital gadgets with variety of features, games, applications trending in the market. The appropriate information regarding the same helps the parents be abreast with latest updated trends in the technology market. This helps them be knowledgeable enough to understand and guide the child when they try to use these trending technologies. Also, there are some useful apps to track child's whereabouts, their online activity etc., apps like life 360, bark, net nanny etc. are few examples which can help in digital parenting.



4

Having Digital parenting skills gives children the confidence to rely on their parents and confide in them for any suggestions on digital related issues.

It is when the parents are equipped with the right combination of required technical knowledge, understanding & empathy for the child in this cyber age and the wisdom of parenting that the child will have the confidence to confide in parents for suggestions on their digital issues. This helps parents and children have open talks about issues, which is necessary.

5

Working on the Digital Parenting skills help parents to gain relevant information and knowledge about the dangers and threats lurking in digital Space for children and take steps to protect them.

As interesting, exciting and informative the world of internet may seem, it certainly has dangers and threats lurking around. The threats of phishing, cyber bullying, trolling, malware, hacking etc., are all real and children can be even more vulnerable to these threats. It became necessary for parents in this digital age to not only have an understanding about these online dangers and threats but also be aware about the ways and measures to be suggested to ensure online safety of child.

6

Digital parenting skills ensure parents work on gaining knowledge regarding the security features available in digital resources/gadgets and are enabled on using the gadgets effectively.

The digital gadgets accessed by children today are more advanced and have variety of security features which can be enabled for their effective use. Having knowledge about these features can help parents in activating the privacy options with appropriate security settings on the digital devices accessible to children. This can help the child in not getting exposed to inappropriate content for their age and can also keep them safe from online predators.

7

Digital Parenting skills enable digital parents to help their children to productively make use of digital devices and technology.

The digital parenting skills help the parents in having an understanding about the pervasiveness of the digital technology in the current times and specifically its influence on life, upbringing and progress of the child. Once the parents realize both the advantages/ uses and disadvantages/ threats of these digital technologies, it helps them to have enabling parenting style or approach. It helps to draw family guidelines, contracts, agreements for proper use of digital devices with open talks or discussions helping them effectively monitor and supervise child's digital activity.





Ways to be a Good Digital Parent

A good digital parenting skill requires effective execution of right proportion of age old parenting wisdom, with updated knowledge of right and appropriate use of digital devices. For a successful digital parenting story, parents have to device ways and means of implementing the good digital practices in the family.

Mentioned below are few ways that are suggested for parents to practice:

1 Be a good Digital Role Model



Modelling good digital habits is essential for parents. This is important as the parents behavior and habits are unspoken permission to children to practice the same later on.

- Not engaging too much in digital devices when you are around children.
- Pay attention to children and to what they want tell you
- Engage in interactive talk with children when you are around them
- Have digital free zones like bedtime, dinner time, play time, driving time etc.,
- Model kindness and good manners, when using digital medium for communication

2 Practice open communication have open talks, share & discuss with children



Have open, free, considerate communication with children. It is a healthy way, to strengthen family bonds and provide a strong supporting structure to kids. It also helps children put across their digital issues, to parents to seek suggestions. It helps children form confident ideas and beliefs about themselves to deal with crisis situations.

- Listen to children when they are trying to talk to you about their digital woes
- Respect their point of view without being too critical or judgmental
- Discuss about different ways to arrive at a possible solution and offer mentorship
- Engage in positive, encouraging and motivating approach while talking to children
- Have a calm and cool attitude without overreacting or over responding
- Be accessible to children; have certain time in a day allocated to family and children like dinner time, bedtime, weekend outings etc.,

3 Keep track and have information



Parents should be able to track child’s digital activity and monitor it. This is required as, by nature children are curious and will want to venture into unknown territories in the cyber space, where there may be hidden threats and dangers lurking around. Also there can be encounters from other children and strangers alike which may not be appropriate or healthy.

- Take help of available technologies and apps which help you to keep track and tabs on child’s online activity. Example: Bark, net nanny etc.,
- Be observant and aware of verbal and nonverbal behavior cues of children. Look out for signs of sadness, anxiety, mood swings, aloofness, engaging overly on digital media, addictive behavior, sleeplessness etc., which may indicate trouble.
- Enable security features and privacy settings on the digital devices in age appropriate manner
- Know about the friends, social media accounts and activities that the child is generally involved with
- Monitor online gaming habits of children and keep them aware of dangers of certain online games
- Make screen time to be a combined activity rather than an individual one

4 Be Ready to Learn, Unlearn and Relearn



Upgrade your parenting skills to suit the needs of present generation kids, keeping the old parenting wisdom and care intact. In current time parents are the only support system to the child, who need to cater to all their needs, including the digital needs. Therefore parents need to learn and adopt a new, unique, innovative approach of parenting.

- Be aware and be prepared for the challenges of parenting in the current scenario of cyber age.
- Be prepared to learn about the latest technologies, their advantages or disadvantages, about the impact it can have while the child is interacting on digital media.
- Be prepared to learn about parenting approaches that are innovative to work out effective strategies to find the right balance between setting limits yet enabling them in progressive use of technology, maintaining real time human bonds rather than virtual bonds.
- Always remember that there is no sure shot, laid down route to an absolute successful digital parenting. While there is support and information on the subject, every parents’ journey will be their own unique story with their own trials and errors. To be persistent and keep trying is the only way.

5 Exercise parental controls



Parents should be in control while pulling the reins on child's digital activity. Parents do need to exercise their authority as adults and keep it clear that they are in charge of the things. They need to clearly set the limits and rules on things that are not allowed.

- Set to no technology zones and times in the house e.g. devices should not be allowed in the bedrooms and dining rooms.. limit the Internet activity of the child during the study, family or night time.
- Set up restrictions on usage of apps, games, TV time and internet downloads, based on age appropriate content, child safety features.
- Use helpful resources like google safe search, white listing specific sites on your kids device, creating separate accounts with restrictions that are age appropriate etc.,



Useful resources and assessment tools for Digital Parenting

Agreement for Digital Resource Utilization @ home

Using digital resources is a responsible activity. It is a two-way partnership where the kids and parents in the family agree on certain rules to be abided by them while using devices and technology.

Rules to be followed



I will limit my digital gadgets time to _____ minutes



I will let you know if I see some disturbing content online



I will always be polite with others online



I will follow no digital zones during dinner, sleep and study



I will be honest and share with you what I do online



I will use digital resources to have fun and learn new things

Other Add-on Rules for our family ?

I happily agree to follow these rules agreed by us together

Signature of the Child

Date :

I/ We agree to see to it that these guidelines and rules are enforced fairly. Also, breaking the rules will have consequences and penalties. I/We will monitor your activities for appropriate guidance.

Signature of the Parent/s

Date

Assessment tool measuring your skills at Digital Parenting

Rate yourself from 0 to 4 for the following statements on digital parenting skills:

Criteria for rating yourself:

0	----->	Never good at using the skill
1	----->	Hardly ever good at using the skill
2	----->	Sometimes good at using the skill
3	----->	Almost always good at using the skill
4	----->	Always good at using the skill

I have updated knowledge on the trending technologies, their advantages and disadvantages.

I adopt innovative strategies to ensure appropriate use of digital resources by children.

I use my digital gadgets responsibly within restricted time and space and set an example for my children.

I am aware of the security, privacy and safety features of digital resources and enable them for safe usage.

I know about the tools and apps that can be used for exercising parental control for online safety of a child.

I encourage children to utilize the online resources in an enabling way, for learning new things and having fun.

I make myself accessible to my children and engage in open talks and discussions with them and understand their digital woes.

I will monitor digital activities of my child and keep track of them consistently to offer help, if required.

I am aware of the threats and dangers that are lurking in the cyber space for children and the means and measures to effectively handle them.

I am aware of the parenting challenges that the digital world presents and I am constantly working on upgrading my digital parenting skills.



Read your Scores:

If your score is 0 - 10

It means that you are a novice in digital parenting skills and have to really start gathering information related to the same and work on these skills to be an empowered digital parent.

If your score is 11 - 20

It indicates that you have very basic knowledge and that you are trying to make efforts in the right direction to work on your digital parenting skills. However, you still need to learn more and work on honing your skills. Keep going till you get there.

If your score is 21 - 30

It indicates that you have considerable knowledge and are working your way out in practicing your digital parenting skills well. However, you need to update yourself with the latest trends in technology and upgrade your skills little more. All the very best, you are almost there!

If your score is 31 - 40

Congratulations!!!
It indicates that you have commendable knowledge and have achieved success in practicing good digital parenting skills.



Family Pledge for Responsible and Careful Digital Device Use @ home



Agreement note for children on digital device usage:

I understand that using digital devices like mobile, family computer etc. is a privilege. I also understand that this right to use digital devices comes with a responsibility of following the below mentioned rules:

Internet not being a safe place and filled with unknown dangers, I understand that my parents will help and guide me for safe use of Internet and breaking the below mentioned rules can lead to restrictions and disciplinary actions.

- I will limit my screen time to _____ minutes and avoid its use during food time, bed time and study time.
- I will not share my personal Information and also respect privacy of others on Internet
- I will not download or install anything without consent of mom and dad
- I will use polite language and would not post /write/ share false or disturbing content.
- I will inform mom and dad in case I need to meet my online friend and seek help if I see any disturbing /offensive content online.

Signature of Child 1 :

Date :



Agreement note for parents on digital device access @ home:

I understand that it is my responsibility to enforce the guidelines & rules to protect myself and my family and to help them have fun and good learning experiences with digital devices online. In this spirit I agree to the following:

- I will enforce the digital devices usage guidelines in good spirit.
- I will be available to the children to talk about any of their concerns.
- I will know about and enable the privacy and the security features on the digital devices for safety.
- I will work on upgrading my knowledge and information about the trends in technology.
- I will have regular open discussions with family about the online threats, dangers and measures for protection.
- I will not take drastic measures or react aggressively under any circumstances no matter what happens.
- I will encourage children to have fun and a good learning experience online

Parents Signature :

Date :



Agreement note for Grandparents on digital device guidelines @home

I understand that it is my responsibility to support the parents in guiding the children in this digital environment for safeguarding them. In this spirit I agree to the following:

- I will make an attempt to understand the advantages and disadvantages of digital devices and internet.
- I will support parents in implementation of digital rules & guidelines set for the family.
- I will make the kids understand why is it important to follow the digital guidelines set in the family.

Grandparents Signature :

Date :





FAMILY PLEDGE FOR DIGITAL SAFETY

We, the members of the _____ family, believe that using technology and digital devices accessible to us is a privilege that we enjoy. We believe that this right to access to technology comes with responsibility to use it in a useful and appropriate manner. We understand that it is just as any other resource if used inappropriately, can have consequences that are harmful for ourselves, other members of the family and outsiders. We strongly believe that we need to make use of it in enabling and educating way, that will help learn things with fun.

We acknowledge our responsibility to lead by example and the need to put in place the rules, guidelines and framework to ensure effective, efficient and safe use of digital devices and internet accessible to us.

Therefore, we pledge that we will all hereby abide by the rules or guidelines stipulated for responsible use of the technology and digital devices accessible at home.

Names & Signatures

Children

Parents

Grand Parents

Child 1 : _____

Father : _____

Grand Father : _____

Child 2 : _____

Mother : _____

Grand Mother : _____

Child 3 : _____



Talking to Kids - What & How ?

Prior to the discussion with kids it is better to have a discussion with your spouse on what and how to communicate with kids regarding online safety. Also, consider to have a good study done on various creative and child friendly ways of presenting these aspects. The following topics can be considered for discussion-

- How similar and dissimilar is real world from online world?
- What is the ideal screen time as per age for children?
- What is the importance of viewing age appropriate content?
- What are the Do's and Don'ts while being online?
- How to be a responsible digital citizen?
- What are the consequences of breaking online safety rules set by us?

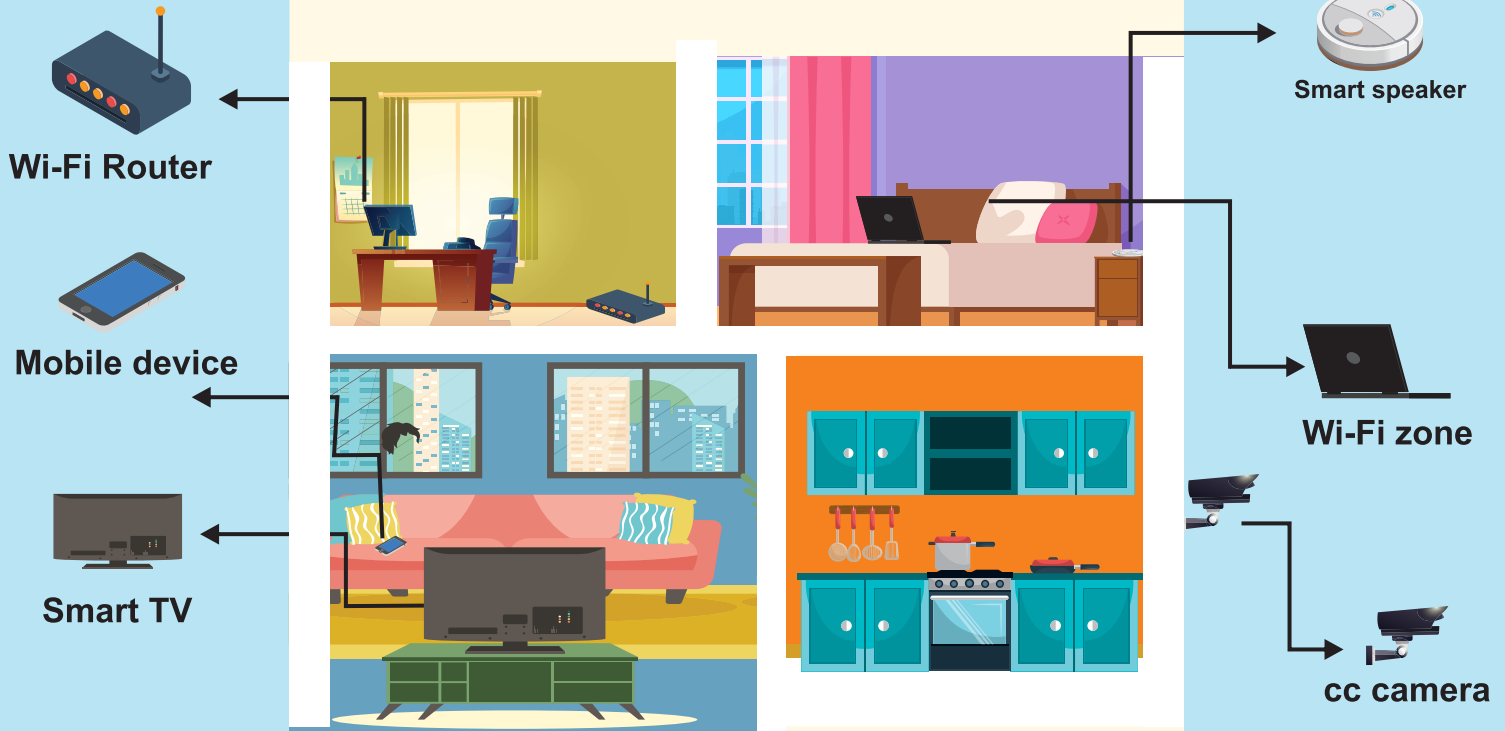
Other add-on topics of discussion for our family



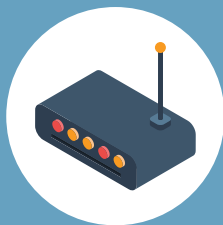
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Smart Home Device Security



Turn on your router's
firewall or use
firewall hardware



Remember to mute/turn
off the microphone
when not in use



Ensure to remove
unwanted permission
for apps



Use encryption on
your wifi router



Always update the
firmware to your
smart TV



Enable wireless
technology to enable
remote feed and
control system



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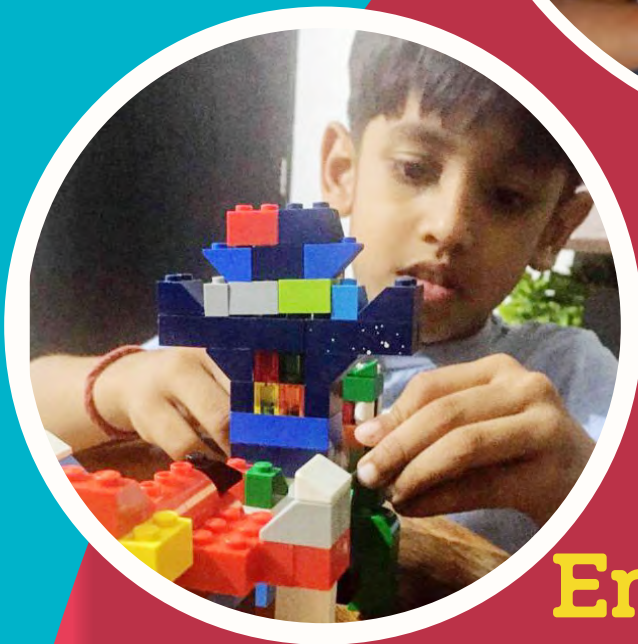
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Encourage children to participate in innovative fun based games for reducing screen time digital devices

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Looking at the growing importance for the Information Security, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology has identified this as a critical area. Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Project was formulated and launched by the Govt. of India. One of the activities under this programme is to spread Information Security Awareness among children, teachers, home users, IT and non-IT professionals throughout the country. C-DAC Hyderabad has been assigned the responsibility of executing this project by Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India. As part of this activity C-DAC, Hyderabad has been preparing Information Security Awareness material, coordinating with Participating Institutes (PI's) in organizing the various Information Security Awareness events all over India.

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