ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - Volume 5, Issue 4

Last week, we celebrated National Youth Week with the theme of "Our Voice. Our Impact." We had the opportunity to speak with a number of young people during the week and see some of the amazing things that they are doing to make the world a better place for themselves and others. In this issue of the ThinkUKnow e-newsletter, we wanted to highlight that the majority of young people, the majority of the time, are using social media and communications technology well. We still need to educate and continually remind them of their ethical obligations, but it's useful to regularly reflect that maybe, the kids are alright!

Your child is not you

There is a commercial on TV at the moment where a mother tells her children to go outside rather than play on their electronic devices. She then recollects her youth and the mistakes she made, changes her mind and instead encourages her children to stay inside and watch a movie. Your child isn't you; they aren't necessarily going to have the same childhood as you did so it's important to help them develop into who they are as an individual, rather than as a younger version of you.

Take opportunities to discuss with your child the things that interest them online and help encourage them to pursue their talents, but find a balance with the other areas of their life. Children and young people will make mistakes, at times this is unavoidable, but making the mistake is only half of the issue. The other, and more important half, is learning from the mistake. Providing a safe and supportive

Time2Talk

In this section we look at ways to start talking with children and young people about their use of technology.

What do you spend most of your time online doing? Why?

What do you think about before sharing something digitally?

How do you imagine the world to be when you are an adult?

Why do you think many adults consider social media to be full of inappropriate content?

Preparing your child to be an ethical citizen in their digital interactions may prevent some online issues from occurring in the first place, lessen the harm caused by these issues and make them more comfortable confiding in you if something does go wrong.

Stand eye to eye with them

One of the common laments of the children and young people we speak to is that adults "just don't get it!" We look at young people's use of technology from our adult-perspective, rather than trying to see like from the view of a child. Ask your child about

environment for young people to learn from their mistakes builds resilience which will help them tackle challenges both now and into the future.

Don't watch out for warning signs

When we get in our cars and drive in dark, rainy conditions, we don't wait until we pass a road sign that says "Slow down when wet" or "Turn on your headlights" to take steps to improve our safety. We turn on our headlights and drive to the conditions to ensure our safety, and the safety of other road users. Why is it, then, that when it comes to cyberbullying and sexting, many of us try to keep an eye out for early warning signs rather than teaching our child how to ethically navigate the landscape of digitally-mediated relationships?

From the moment your child picks up an electronic device, that is when the education ought to begin. Whilst many schools do a fantastic job in educating children and young people in cyber safety and security, many children are already using devices before they start school so it is important that parents start this education early and reinforce the messages delivered in schools. Encourage your child to think before they post, to manage their privacy, relationships and reputation, and to leave a positive mark on social media. Try and model these behaviours yourself and set a positive example for your child.

how they use technology and why. Give them an opportunity to reflect on their digital interactions and explain to you how their peers see the world around them and how they imagine the world of their future to be.

Share with them why you see technology the way you do and try to find some middle ground you can both agree on. This can help you to establish family rules around the use of technology that might actually be followed.

Reward positive behaviour

In most other areas of a child's life, parents reward positive behaviour such as eating all their vegies, doing well in a school exam or being a great sport. When it comes to social media, however, we often fail to reward positive behaviour. We're not saying that you should laud your child with praise or gold stars for every nice word or non-cringe-worthy photo shared online, but acknowledge that they can use technology in a positive and ethical way.