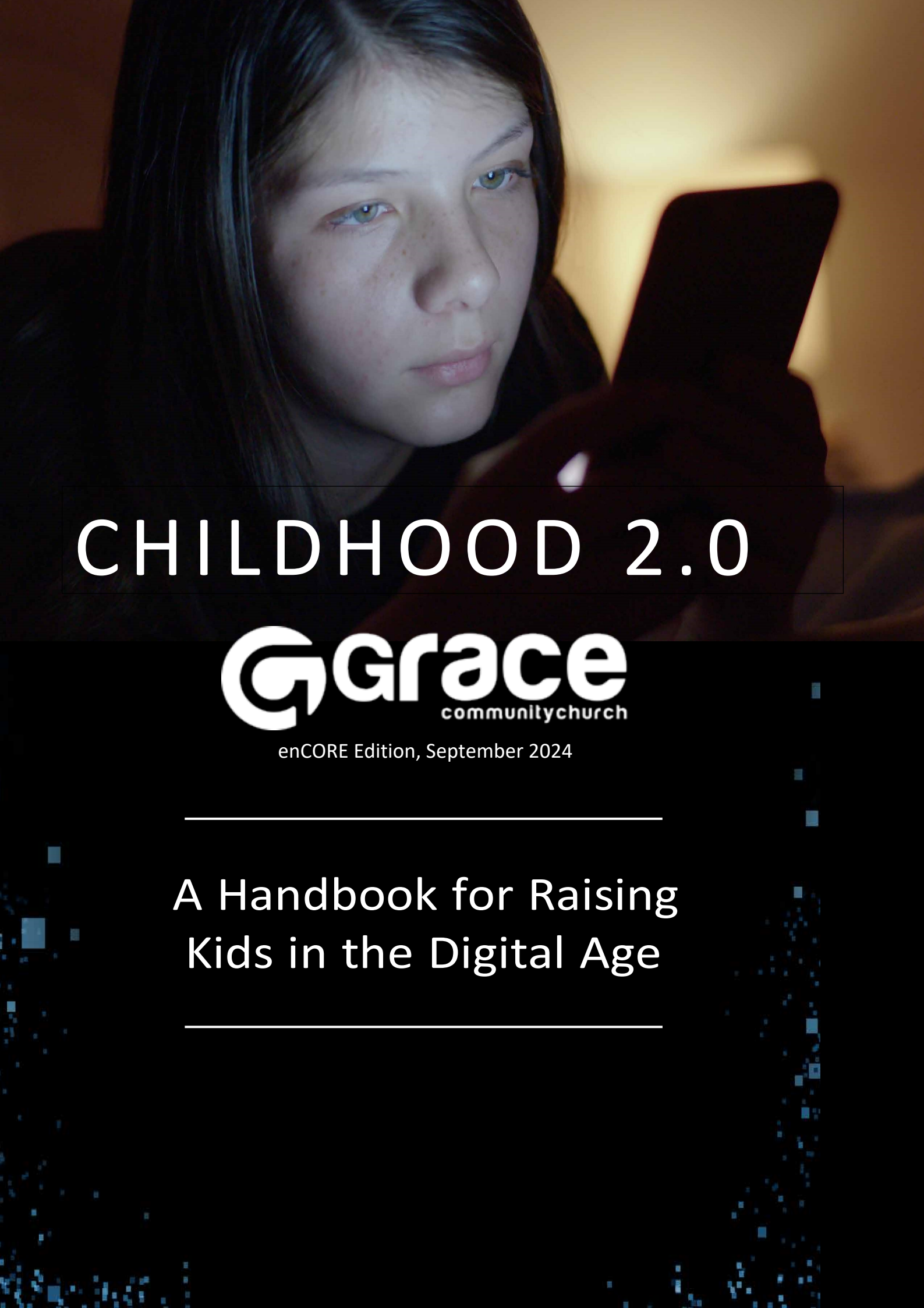




CHILDHOOD 2.0



enCORE Edition, September 2024

A Handbook for Raising
Kids in the Digital Age

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Disclaimer

All content provided by the creators of *Childhood 2.0* was created for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult your child's physician or another qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding a potential medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of any content provided here. The filmmakers are not responsible for the claims or advice of linked external websites.

About Childhood 2.0

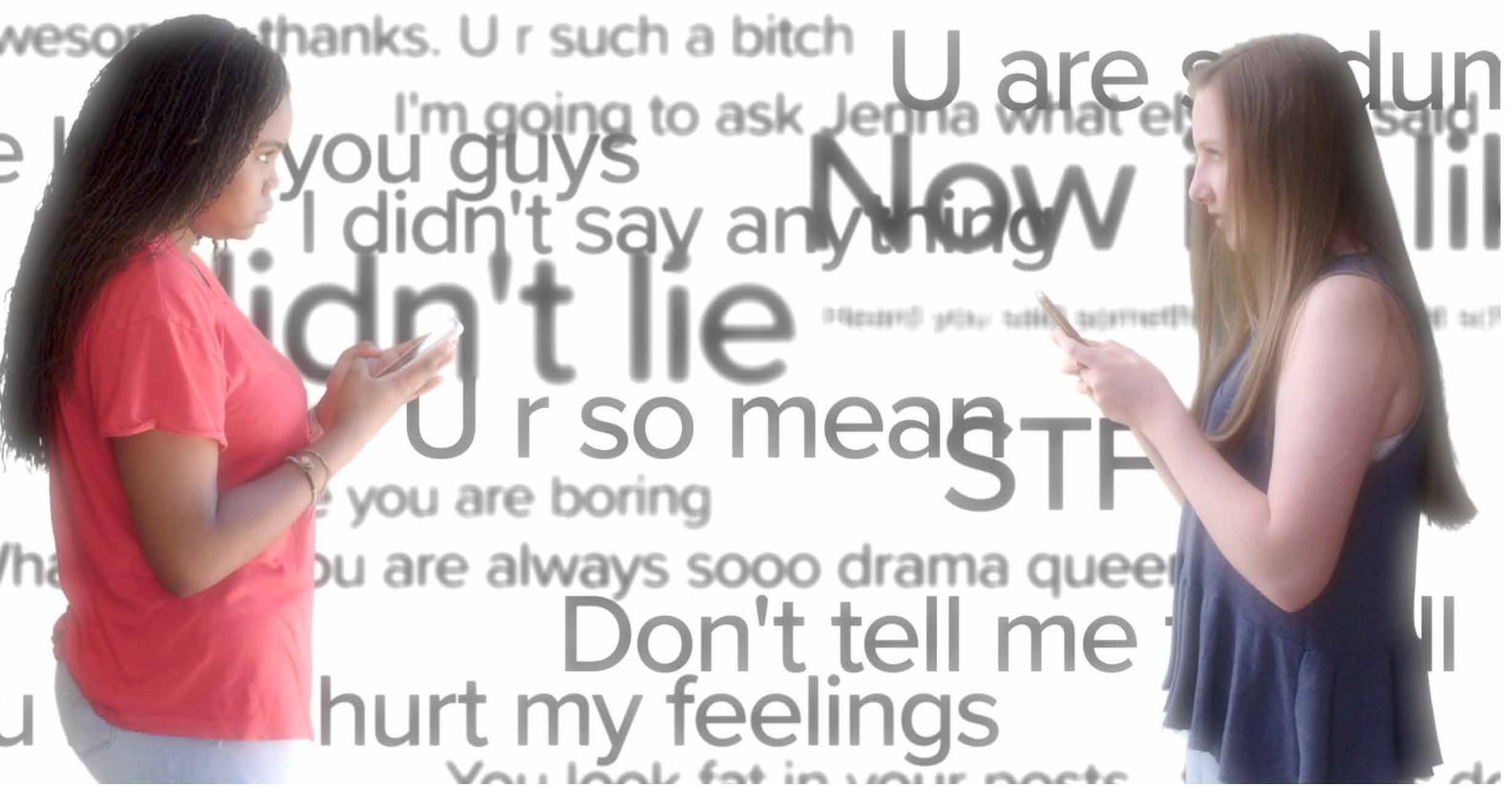
When we were growing up, our parents worried about stranger danger and whether or not we were home by the time the streetlights came on. But for parents raising the first generation of kids with smartphones, everything is different. [Childhood 2.0](#) takes a deep dive into what coming of age really looks like today — and just how much things have changed thanks to technology and social media.

Featuring actual parents and kids as well as industry-leading experts in child safety and development, this documentary is required viewing for anyone that wants to better understand the world their children inhabit as they navigate growing up in the digital age.

Learn how access to social media and ever-evolving technology creates new issues that past generations didn't have to face, including cyberbullying, near-instant access to porn, online predators, a rise in child suicide, and more.

How to Use This Resource

This handbook is a companion piece to *Childhood 2.0*, though it also stands on its own and is helpful for anyone raising kids in the digital age. In it, you'll find information about some of the common issues and digital dangers kids are up against — not only the ones discussed in the documentary, but also common issues like violence and anxiety. Each section includes a list of recommended actions families can take if they suspect their child needs help, along with a list of online links and resources as well as helpful prompts for starting those hard — but important — conversations.



Anxiety

Many kids have fears and worries, and feeling sad and hopeless from time to time is a part of growing up. However, when kids don't outgrow the fears and worries that are typical in young children, or when there are so many fears and worries that they interfere with school, home, or play activities, it could be a sign of an anxiety disorder.

Examples of different types of anxiety disorders include:

- **Separation anxiety:** Being very afraid when away from parents
- **Phobias:** Having an extreme fear about something specific, such as heights, snakes, or shots
- **Social anxiety:** Being extremely afraid of interacting with other people
- **General anxiety:** Being worried about bad things that might happen in the future
- **Panic disorder:** Having repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected fear along with symptoms like heart pounding, breathlessness, or feeling dizzy, shaky, or sweaty
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** Experiencing intense anxiety, nightmares, and /or physical symptoms after an extremely traumatic event

Recommended Actions

- **Pray with your child.** Prayer is not a magic “fix” for anxiety (or any of our problems), but it is the correct response when we are in need. Your kids are in need when they are anxious, and we are told to cast our cares on Him. Prayer gives us an opportunity to be thankful for what God has done and acknowledge our needs before him. (Phil 4:6-7)
- **Offer support.** Let your child know you're there for them—fully and unconditionally. Tweens and teens don't like to feel patronized or crowded, so let your child drive the conversation.

more actions on the next page →

- **Learn to recognize the signs of anxiety.** If your child can't easily tell you when they're feeling anxious, look for signs of physical complaints that may indicate it: stomachaches, headaches, and vomiting. They may also look clammy or sweaty if their heart is racing from worry. Pay attention to abrupt mood changes as well.
- **Don't try to get rid of their anxiety—help them manage it.** No parent wants to see their child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to completely get rid of stressors that trigger it. It's to help them learn to identify, tolerate, and find ways to reduce their anxiety.
- **Remind them bad things can happen, but with Christ's help they can overcome.** You can't guarantee that a child's fears are unrealistic—falling a test, getting teased, or messing up a piano solo. But you can express confidence that they'll be okay even if those things do happen. They'll be able to manage these bumps in the road, and when they realize this, their anxiety may lessen.
- **Encourage a healthy lifestyle.** Mental and physical health are closely intertwined. Make sure your child is eating nutritious food, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- **Get help for your child.** Our small group leaders and staff are a great starting point for your child to express their worries and fears and receive Biblical counsel on dealing with stress and anxiety. Of course, if your child needs professional help, make sure that they get it. We can make recommendations, or you can talk with your child's school counselor, their physician, or a mental health professional to help them through their anxiety.

Helpful Resources

> Bible Reading Plans:

- for Kids Dealing with Anxiety



- For Students Dealing with Anxiety



> Articles

- How Parents Can Help Their Children Overcome Anxiety and Depression - Focus on the Family



- How to Help Your Teen with Social Anxiety - Focus on the Family



> Bible passages about fear and worry.

- Luke 10:38-42 – Martha was “distracted,” (vs 40) “worried,” and “upset/troubled” (vs 41), but Jesus told her that she was looking at her situation the wrong way, that her focus was on the wrong thing. We do this too and it causes anxiety.
- Psalm 37:1-8
- Matthew 6:25-34
- 1 John 4:18
- Philippians 4:6
- John 16:33
- James 1:2-4
- Mark 4:37-39



Conversation Starters

- **How does it feel when you get anxious?**
- **What is a recent situation that made you feel anxious?**
- **What do you do when you're feeling worried or stressed?**

Depression

Childhood depression is different from the normal “blues” or everyday mood changes that kids experience while growing up.

Here are some warning signs of potential depression:

- Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or worthlessness
- Withdrawal from their favorite activities
- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue and low energy
- Physical complaints that do not respond to treatment
- Thoughts or talk of death and /or suicide

Recommended Actions

- **Offer support.** Let your child know you’re there for them—fully and unconditionally. They may need to be reminded that you love them and that God loves them, even though they feel hopeless or worthless. Also, tweens and teens don’t like to feel patronized or crowded, so let your child drive the conversation.
- **Be gentle, but persistent.** Don’t give up if your child isn’t ready to talk at first—the conversations can be stressful for them. Be respectful of their comfort level while still emphasizing your concern.
- **Listen without lecturing.** Resist any urge to criticize, pass judgment, or make ultimatums once your child begins to open up. It’s important that your child is communicating.

more actions on the next page →

- **Validate their feelings.** Don't try to "talk your child out of their depression," even if their feelings seem irrational to you. Simply acknowledge the pain and numbness they may be feeling. Let them know it's OK not to feel OK.
- **Study Bible passages together.** While 10% or so of depression stems from physical or chemical imbalance, many times depression comes from not handling life Biblically. Our friends at Relational Impact Ministries have collected several examples from the Bible of depression where this is the case (listed below). In cases where it is not physical or chemical, studying these passages together may help your child realize they are not alone in going through depression and that there is hope for moving out of it with God's help.
- **Encourage a healthy lifestyle.** Mental and physical health are closely intertwined. Make sure your child is eating nutritious food, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- **Get help for your child.** Our small group leaders and staff are a great starting point for your child to express their feelings and receive Biblical counsel on dealing with them. Of course, if your child needs professional help, make sure that they get it. We can make recommendations, or you can talk with your child's school counselor, their physician, or a mental health professional to help them through their depression.

Helpful Resources

- > Bible Reading Plan—Delight: Devotions for Finding Joy



Helpful Resources (continued)

> Articles

- Do Your Children Suffer from Depression?



- Teens and Depression



> Bible Passages to study together

- Cain – Genesis 4 – Rooted in anger and jealousy, wrong view of God
- Elijah – 1 Kings 19 – Rooted in physical exhaustion (ran for his life, wanted to die)
- David – Psalm 32, 38, 51 – Guilt over sin, physical symptoms accompany depression
- The Psalmists - Psalm 42, 43 – Emotions in control, loss of hope
- King Ahab (Jezebel's husband) – 1 Kings 21 – He wanted Naboth's vineyard:
 - Vs. 4 - ...*And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.* Due to not getting his way. Not having a material possession. Self-pity.
- Jeremiah – Lamentations 3 – Rooted in circumstances, misinterpretation of circumstances, wrong view of God – Remedy was sleep and food.
- Paul – 2 Corinthians 1:8 (*For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.*)



Conversation Starters

- **What do you think is the difference between being sad and being depressed?**
- **Do you ever wish you were happier?**
- **Do you ever not feel like yourself?**

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying happens when someone harasses, threatens, or embarrasses another person online. It includes aggressive or cruel online communications such as texts, direct messages, and social media posts. Some cyberbullies also share personal information, pictures, or videos designed to hurt or shame their targets.

Here are some common warning signs that your child may be experiencing cyberbullying:

- Hesitancy to use devices — or stopping altogether
- Getting emotional before, during, or after using a device
- Being secretive or avoiding discussions about online behavior
- Avoiding school or social activities
- Changes in grades, mood, behavior, sleep, or appetite

Recommended Actions

- **Remind your child** that their identity comes from God, not others (especially bullies).
- **Reassure your child** that you love and support them unconditionally.
- **Don't automatically take away their device.** Show your child that they won't be punished if they tell you the truth about what's happening.
- **Learn about cyberbullying laws in Texas.**
<http://cyberbullying.org/bullying-laws/texas>
- **Block the bully.** Instruct your child to unfriend, unfollow, or block the individual(s) antagonizing them.

more actions on the next page →

- **Document everything.** Work with your child to keep a log of all harmful messages. This will be useful should you need to report these events to your child's school or to law enforcement. **Be sure to include:**
 - What happened and when
 - The names / usernames of all bullies and witnesses
 - What websites / platforms (e.g. Instagram, text messages, etc.) were used
 - The content of the messages, including screenshots if possible
- **Assess the scope of the problem.** Talk to your child to see if they are being bullied offline as well. Consider contacting their school to see if they have additional insight.

Helpful Resources

- > Article: What Does the Bible Say about Bullying and How We Should Respond? This article includes 4 Christian Responses to bullying and includes encouraging verses for navigating this challenge.
- > 10 Day Bible Reading Plan—Trending: Bullying



- > Verses to Study/Memorize
 - Matthew 10:28
 - 2 Corinthians 12:10
 - Psalm 118:13-14
 - Matthew 5:38-48
 - Deuteronomy 31:6



Conversation Starters

- Can you tell me about a time someone was mean to you online?
- What would you do if someone started calling you names on Instagram?
- Why do you think it's sometimes easier to write mean things online than to say them in real life?

Sexual Content

While it's normal for kids to become aware of their sexuality as they mature, behaviors such as searching for or watching porn or sending sexually explicit messages require your attention.

Recommended Actions

- **Remind your child** that God created our bodies and sex and that they are good, when used within the plan he created.
- **Ensure your child is developing respect** for others. Share the Bible's values around sex and emphasize the importance of developing meaningful, respectful relationships.
- **Remind your child about the dangers** of sharing sexual content. Once a message is sent, it can never be retrieved, and your child is no longer in control of it. Remind them that even if they trust the person they're communicating with, phones can be lost, stolen, or collected by the recipient's family.

Helpful Resources



> *The Pocket Guide to Talking About Sex* from pureHOPE/christian parenting.

> Bible Reading Plan: Parenting In A Sexualized, Digital Age



> Verses to Study/Memorize

- Psalm 119:9-10
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-20
- 2 Timothy 2:22
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 1 John 2:16
- Job 31:1
- Matthew 5:27-30
- Philippians 4:8



Conversation Starters

- **Have you ever seen naked people online?**
- **Do any of your friends ever watch porn?**
- **How do you feel when someone sends you a sexual text message?**

Predatory Behavior

As a parent or guardian, you've probably talked to your child about "stranger danger." But predators can also sexually, emotionally, and psychologically abuse children without ever being in the same room with them — although it may eventually lead to in-person abuse.

Online grooming occurs when a predator initiates and cultivates a relationship with a child through the internet, and it can include:

- Sending explicit messages
- Sharing or requesting sexual photos or videos
- Targeted manipulation
- Isolation from family and friends
- Sextortion

Recommended Actions

- **Pray for your child.** You can't protect them from every possible danger, including predators, but you can trust in the One who can.
- **Educate your child.** Tell your child not to talk to people online who they don't know in real life. Teach them to recognize red flags like when someone online asks them to share their full name, address, or where they go to school. Remind them to never send pictures to strangers, even if the photos seem innocent.
- **Show your child you support them** if they tell you they've been contacted by a predator. A calm, empathetic conversation will help your child feel comfortable discussing what's going on. Let them know that it's not their fault.

more actions on the next page →

- **Document everything.** Work with your child to keep a log of all predatory activities. This will be very important should you need to report these events to law enforcement. **Be sure to include:**
 - What happened and when
 - The names / usernames of anyone who was involved or witnessed it
 - What websites / platforms (e.g. Snapchat, text messages, etc.) were used
 - The content of the messages, including screenshots if possible
- **Take action.** If your child is in contact with someone you believe is dangerous, have your child block, unfriend, and unfollow them immediately. If someone has tried to convince your child to meet them in real life, report them to the police.

Helpful Resources

- > Focus on the Family article: *Teach Children About Online Sexual Predators*



- > Video: Understanding the Scope of Human Trafficking

- > Bible Reading Plan: Praying for Vulnerable Children



- > Verses to Study/Memorize

- Matthew 18:1-10
- Psalm 27:1
- Psalm 91:1-2
- Psalm 61:1-3



Conversation Starters

- **Has anyone ever made you feel uncomfortable when you were playing online? How did you respond?**
- **What do you say to a stranger online if they ask what school you go to?**
- **If someone online said they'd hurt your family if you didn't do something, what would you say?**

Sextortion

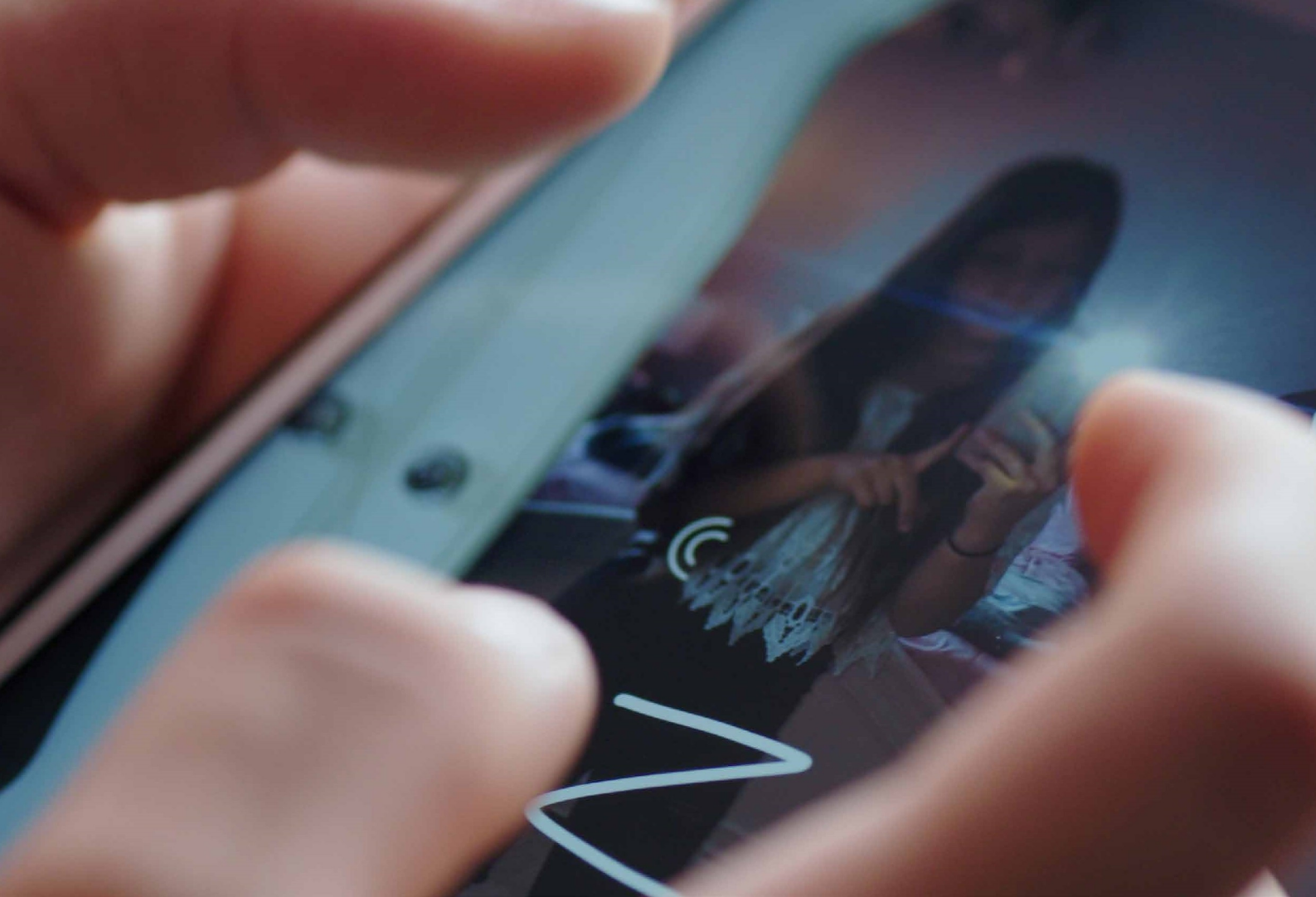
Sextortion occurs when kids are coerced into sending sexually explicit material to another person, often under threat of harm to themselves or someone they love.

Recommended Actions

- **Keep open lines of communication** with your child. Make sure they know they can come to you if they're receiving online communications that make them feel uncomfortable.
- **Check the laws of your state.** It's illegal in many states for adults to exchange sexual content with an underage child — even if it's just text or chat messages.
- **Document everything.** Work with your child to keep a log of all inappropriate activities. This will be very important should you need to report these events to law enforcement. **Be sure to include:**
 - › What happened and when
 - › The names / usernames of all perpetrators and witnesses
 - › What websites / platforms (e.g. Snapchat, text messages, etc.) were used
 - › The content of the messages, including screenshots if possible
- **Get help for your child.** Sexually abusive activities like sextortion can have serious emotional effects on a child. Even if they never had a physical interaction with a predator, they still need support — from you and likely from a school counselor, physician, or mental health professional — as they heal from what they've experienced.

Helpful Resources

- > See resources for Bullying and Predatory Behavior



Conversation Starters

- **Has anyone ever asked you to share a nude photo of yourself?**
- **Has anyone ever sent you a picture of their private parts?**
- **What would you do if a stranger sent you an inappropriate message?**

Self-Harm or Suicidal Content

While self-harm can sometimes be associated with suicidal ideation, the two aren't always connected and can often have different symptoms.

Here are some warning signs of potential self-harm in kids:

- Frequent and unexplained cuts, bruises, scars, or burns
- Insisting on wearing long sleeves or pants — even in warm weather
- Increased anxiety, stress, or depression

Here are some warning signs of potential suicidal ideation in kids:

- Talking about being a burden to others
- Sleeping much more or much less than usual
- Giving away prized possessions
- A sudden improvement in their mood
- Reaching out to people they haven't spoken to in a long time
- Uncharacteristically reckless behavior

Recommended Actions

- **Offer support.** Let your child know you're there for them—fully and unconditionally. Kids are often confused or uncertain about what they're going through, so it's important to validate their feelings. They need to be reminded that you love them and that God loves them, even though they feel life isn't worth living.
- **Remove dangerous objects.** Ensure that weapons and medications aren't easily accessible. Consider putting these items behind a lock or completely removing them from your home.

more actions on the next page →

- **Get help for your child.** If your child has expressed suicidal thoughts, we are here for you. However, you should also talk with your child's school counselor, their physician, or a mental health professional to help your family understand what underlies those thoughts and to develop a treatment plan. The new suicide prevention/mental health number to call is 988.

Helpful Resources

> Bible Reading Plan:

- Overcoming Thoughts of Suicide and Self-Harm



> Article

- What Can You Do to Safeguard Your Teen from Suicide? - Focus on the Family



> Podcast

- Teen Suicide: Know the Signs, a 3 episode podcast - Focus on the Family



> Bible passages of encouragement to read/memorize.

- Isaiah 41:10
- Jeremiah 29:11
- John 10:10
- 1 John 4:4
- Psalm 55:22
- Romans 8:1-2
- Romans 8:38-39
- Psalm 34:18-19



Conversation Starters

- **Have you ever wanted to hurt yourself?**
- **What do you know about suicide?**
- **What would you do if you were feeling hopeless?**

Discussion Questions

After you've watched the documentary, you'll likely have a lot of thoughts and feelings. Here are some suggested questions to get a conversation started, with options for both you and your kids to answer.

For parents to answer

1. What did you think your parents wouldn't understand when you were a teenager? *Example: When I was 13 in 1993, I would listen to TLC's Crazy Sexy Cool on my Walkman because I was afraid of what my parents would think if they heard the lyrics.*

2. Talk about a time you did something risky that your parents never found out about. *Example: I spent a lot of time talking in AOL chat rooms to people who were way older than me. My parents had absolutely no idea what I was doing typing late into the night on the computer in my bedroom — they thought I was just playing games.*

3. What's something that makes you feel like you're turning into your parents? *Example: When I was a teen, I would spend hours on the telephone chatting with friends. My parents would get annoyed and say, "You saw them all day at school! What do you still have to talk about?" Now I find myself doing the same things with my own kids — just with texting.*

4. Kids aren't the only ones obsessed with being online all the time. What are your worst digital habits? Be brutally honest. *Example: I am on my phone 100% of the time. For work, I'm always checking email and Slack. When I'm not on my phone, my Apple Watch is constantly pinging me. I'm in a lot of Facebook groups too — some for parenting tips, some for cat memes. At night, my partner and I watch Netflix until it's time for bed. But then I can't turn the lights out without watching every Instagram Story — no matter how late it is.*

For parents to ask your kids

5. What's one thing you wish I knew about your life as a kid growing up in the age of social media and smartphones? *Example: I wish you understood the pressure I felt to send nudes. Everyone is doing it and if I don't, I'll get dumped for the next person who will. I know your generation never did anything like this, but today it's pretty much expected.*

6. What does privacy mean to you in a time when everything is public? How much do you think kids should have and how does that change depending on who's looking? *Example: Privacy means having the space to be myself without feeling like I need to filter everything I do — I want my online life to be mine. So I want a lot of privacy. But I also know there are plenty of times when, if I'm not filtering for one group, I'm filtering for another. I might not post something I wouldn't want you to see, but I might also post something I want my friends to see that I don't actually care about. It's really hard to find balance.*

7. I'm sure you've seen me on my phone a lot throughout your life. What have you learned from my technology usage? *Example: You're always on your phone, so it's totally not fair that I can't be on mine as much. I see how important it is for you, and it's just as important to me.*

8. *Childhood 2.0* discussed some serious mental health issues. How are you feeling these days? What can I help you with right now? *Example: I'm starting to feel like I'm never going to get life right — and I know I'm not the only one. All of my friends are really bummed and stressed right now. The situation seems pretty much hopeless and I'm feeling like what's supposed to be some of the best times of my life are just lost forever.*

Suggested Solutions

This handbook is a great starting point for learning more about parenting in the digital age, but there's also a whole world of information, products, services, and blogs out there — several of which are featured in Childhood 2.0 — that can help your family even more as you work to help keep them safe online and in real life. Here are just a few suggested solutions that will provide you with peace of mind.

Technology

[Bark](#)

Bark monitors kids' texts, emails, and social media for digital dangers and alerts parents to potential issues like cyberbullying, depression, online predators, and more. Bark also provides screen time and filtering controls.

[Google FamilyLink](#)

For families with Android devices, Google FamilyLink is a free service that lets you set digital ground rules to help guide your kids as they learn, play, and explore online.

[Apple Screen Time](#)

Apple families can use this free service to set screen time limits on their children's devices, receive weekly reports, and more.

Online resources

[Protect Young Eyes](#)

Protect Young Eyes is a thought-leading website that keeps parents in the know about the latest devices, technology, and more with reviews, blog posts, and presentations.

[NetSmartz \(by NCMEC\)](#)

This online safety education program provides age-appropriate videos and activities for children to learn about online risks and how to avoid them. missingkids.org/NetSmartz

[PluggedIn.com](#)

This Focus on the Family resource provides in-depth reviews of movies, TV shows, books, video games and more so families can determine the age appropriateness of what their kids consume.

