GROWING UP DIGITAL
Australia:
INFOGRAPHICS SUMMARY REPORT
Who participated in Phase 2?

About three in four respondents had an annual household income over $100,000.

The data represented more than 5,000 children.

2,450 Australian parents and grandparents participated aged 25-65.

83% were female.
Childhood has changed.

More than four in five children own at least one screen-based device. The average is 3 devices owned by each child.

- 78% were living in metropolitan or urban areas.
- 22% were living in regional, remote or rural areas.
- 95% had completed post-secondary school education or training.
- The mean number of children in each family was 2.1.

In almost equal proportions, Australian families enjoy these activities as their top three things to do when spending time together:

- 18% watching TV or movies
- 18% cooking and eating
- 19% being outside

Who participated in Phase 2?

Australian parents and grandparents participated aged 25-65.
Childhood has changed.

Less than half (46%) of parents felt that their child spends a day without digital technology.

Personal ownership of gadgets starts as young as 4 years old.

Parents were most worried about the negative impacts of screen use on their child’s physical activity levels, attention span and time to play.

Parenting is harder than it used to be.

3 of 4 parents think it is harder to control their child’s digital habits since they have got their own screen-based device.
Parenting is harder than it used to be.

83% felt that their child was negatively distracted by digital technologies.

Families believe that being on a digital device displaces their child’s opportunity to do other activities.

Similar proportions of parents felt that their child is in control of their digital media habits.

- In Control: 36%
- Not in Control: 33%

52% disagreed that ‘digital technologies make childrearing easier’.

65% agreed that ‘negotiating digital technologies use causes conflicts in our home’.

70% believe that they usually agree between themselves as parents when it comes to making decisions about their children’s digital technology use.

60% share equal responsibility for setting limits around their child’s use of digital media and devices.
Parents know they are role models but are distracted.

72% of parents recognise that their own habits using digital media and technology influence those of their children.

“It is addictive, I yearn for more time away from it for me and my family”.

“As a parent I need to know how to work the programs and site the kids access to be able to protect them. I do not assume they are safe”.

Over 90% of parents felt that they themselves were negatively distracted, at least to some extent, by digital technologies.

Three in four believed that this distraction is growing.
COVID-19 changed everything.

More than half (53%) of parents indicated that their attitudes towards digital media and technology have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

57% of grandparents felt that their attitudes had not changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

57% This was higher in the lowest-income families than any other income bracket.

49% This was lower in respondents from regional, rural and remote areas.

“I was anti-technology and wanted less time on devices at school. Now I am pro-technology and believe it opens up a wider opportunity for education”.

“My child's screen time during lockdown was difficult to monitor and limit. And this now continues even after lockdown”.

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The thin line between leisure and learning.

Four in five parents believe that children need to be skilled in digital media and technologies in order to succeed in life.

54% of parents feel that parents and schools share an equal responsibility in helping a child to develop the skills and habits that they need to grow up in a digital world.

Almost four in five parents felt that their child’s use of technology when at school was ‘about right’.
The thin line between leisure and learning.

More than half of parents primarily allow their children to use digital media and technology for entertainment value. Comparatively, only one in five predominantly use it for learning purposes.

About half of parents agreed that they would welcome more support from their child’s school to help them and their child to manage digital media and technologies use at home.

"Our dependence on technology for connection and schoolwork has increased, therefore the requirement for screen time after school has increased. It has forced us to have more conversations about striking the right balance between technology and off-line schoolwork".
Connected and disconnected.

65% of parents felt that when their child is bored, using digital devices to distract them is their first choice.

37% of children and young people have been anxious or depressed because of their time online or because they were not allowed to use their device.

Parents believe that the impact of digital media and technologies on their children has been more positive than negative on a child’s mathematical abilities, reading abilities, and social skills and friendships.

- 45% Mathematical abilities
- 37% Reading abilities
- 34% Social skills and friendships

When asked the degree of impact that they believe digital media has on anxiety levels, over half - 55% of parents believe there is no impact.

When asked about their thoughts on the impact of digital technologies on sleep, 50% of parents believed that devices had no impact.

90% of parents felt that digital technologies make it easier to stay in touch with family and friends.
Digital inequity and how it affects young people.

The proportion of parents who felt that their personal use of digital media and technologies had no impact.

- 23% Families with a household income LESS THAN $100,000 pa
- 16% Families with a household income MORE THAN $100,000 pa

3 in 5 children who are struggling at school go to bed with their devices.

30% of families allow their children to use their devices in their bedrooms after bedtime every single day.

Nearly half (47%) of lower-income parents allow their children to sleep with their smartphones every single night.

Parents who provided their children a mobile phone was significantly higher in the lowest income bracket than any other group, and lowest in high achieving children.

- Lowest income bracket 62%
- High achieving children 45%

Lower-income parents and lower-achieving students are most at risk of problematic interactive media use.
Grandparents care a lot about how the digital world is affecting their grandchildren. 42% of grandparents never or rarely share the digital space with their grandchildren.

"With all of my 9 grandchildren, ages 3 to 17, I see very negative effects on their behaviour when using devices, they become moody, argumentative, throw tantrums, they can't self-regulate their time and have to be told to stop. The ability to complete schoolwork on devices at home is positive, the ones of primary school age do that well, however their handwriting skills are not great and their ability to spell check makes them lazy and doesn't help with their spelling abilities".
How do we compare to Alberta?

60% of Albertan parents indicate that their child’s use of technology has a negative impact on physical activity, whereas this was 73% in Australia.

Nearly half (47%) of Australian parents suggest that it has a negative impact on emotional health compared to 37% in Alberta.

30% of respondents in Alberta suggest that technology increases their child’s anxiety, 39% of Australian parents thought the same. Most notably in Australia, a larger proportion (55%) actually believe it has no impact at all.

Parents were asked about their child’s use of technology at school in both surveys, and rates were relatively similar with more Australian families feeling like the balance between learning and digital media was right.