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Co-constructing meaning: Parents and children navigating digital literacies together

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Digital spaces have become a type of public square where citizens communicate and connect (Gleason & Von Gillern, 2018). Adults and adolescents enter these spaces daily and negotiate new practices and identities (Ito et al., 2009). Although today's teenagers were born into a digital world, they still have much to learn about participating in digital contexts (Turner & Hicks, 2015, 2017), as they learn alongside, or in front of, their parents, who have adopted digital practices as adults.

Digital literacy refers to the ability to read, write, and participate in online spaces and includes the awareness, attitude, and ability to use digital texts and tools to locate, organize, manage, evaluate, synthesize, and create digital content (Turner et al., 2017, 2020). Though research has been done on how adolescents engage in digital spaces (e.g., Ito et al., 2009), little understanding exists of how parents and children can learn together about the ecosystems of the Internet. To fill this gap, a group of literacy educators formed a research collective. We explored questions related to digital literacy and negotiated identities of parents, educators, and researchers. As parents with, perhaps, more knowledge than others about how digital spaces work, we sat at an interesting intersection (Garcia et al., 2014), and we approached the research as opportunities to learn alongside our own children by "co-constructing" (O'Byrne et al., 2021) our understandings. In this inquiry, our children were co-researchers in exploring: What happens when parents and children co-construct meaning regarding the challenges and opportunities in using digital technologies?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK/ LITERATURE REVIEW

In theorizing child–parent research, Abrams et al. (2020) looked to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) who

suggested that teacher research is necessary in order to transform knowledge in the field. Their argument lifted the voices of teachers working on the "inside," giving them value in a field that typically published research conducted from the "outside-in" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 33). Abrams et al. (2020) extended this thinking to child–parent research, "wherein (a) the child is the agent of study, (b) the child's voice is valued, not objectified, and (c) there is deep introspection and self-awareness" (p. 4). By understanding the role of child-as-researcher to be a continuum that spans from involvement to partnering, we sought to conduct the inquiry from the inside, valuing the voices and participation of the adolescents in our homes.

Parents listening to youth, and perhaps having their values and attitudes influenced by their children, is not a new concept (Dillon, 2010 ; Hagestad, 1984; Peters, 1985). Bidirectional influences in a child–parent relationship (Kuczynski et al., 1997) can help identify situations where parents and children have beliefs, values, attitudes, motives, and skills that continuously change. The relationship is guided by a pattern of conflict, negotiation, cooperation, mutual shaping, observation, and modeling (Kuczynski et al., 1997). We adopted a bidirectional perspective as we explored questions about how adolescents and parents come to understand and apply knowledge of the affordances and limitations of digital spaces.

Research in this area is limited as we are just beginning to understand the laws and ethical guidelines necessary for companies who build the spaces in which teens participate (Ito et al., 2021). In some cases, youth who use algorithmically driven tools are more effectively critically literate (Ku et al., 2019). Tynes et al. (2021) suggested that as more content and media explicitly deal with race, teens need to develop online critical evaluation skills. Researchers also showed that media mediation by parents may reduce youth sexting behaviors (Corcoran et al., 2022). Some groups have provided guidance to address challenges in digital

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| **1**

spaces. Common Sense Education (Common Sense Media, n.d.), Cyberwise (2022), and Parenting for a Digital Future (The London School of Economics, 2022) offer actionable guidance on building safe, digital literacy practices for parents and youth. Most of these portals of information are just beginning to explore topics related to digital literacy.

Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020) indicated that parents resist (limit technology use), balance (consider the risk and reward of digital participation), or embrace (pursue educational and professional opportunities to engage digitally). We believe these perspectives are heavily informed by parental beliefs and practices around technology and we seek to listen to youth as active stakeholders and decision makers. The field needs research and guidance on how adolescents, as well as the adults in their lives, learn about important aspects of digital literacy. We hoped to begin to fill this gap by starting "inside," with our own children.

METHODS

This study extends our previous inquiry into teaching our own children about issues surrounding algorithms, privacy, and security across four case studies (O'Byrne et al., 2021). As the data collection and analysis for that study finished, the pandemic transformed the world. Two years later, we revisited conversations we conducted in fall 2019 and engaged our adolescents as co-researchers to co-construct meaning about how parents and educators can best help youth navigate both the affordances and potential harms of digital tools and spaces.

Approach

We approached this research as a form of duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), a relatively new qualitative approach, especially with children (Ceglowski & Makovsky, 2012). Duoethnography is dialogic and allows for "intersecting autoethnographies" (Breault, 2016, p. 2) by drawing on the experiences of two or more co-researchers, over time, to explain a phenomenon (Norris, 2017). It aims to disrupt a single narrative by drawing on the collective, sometimes similar or opposing, perspectives of its co-researchers. Differing perspectives are valued, and both co-researchers and readers are active meaning makers. The methodology is flexible, not prescriptive (Norris, 2017). We moved backward by reflecting on what changed in 2 years of time, we moved sideways by considering evolving and multiple perspectives, and we moved forward with new insights (Breault, 2016).

We recognize that it is unique to encounter research that is a collaboration between parents and their children. Therefore, we want to be as transparent as possible. The adolescents initiated lines of inquiry. The parents developed the academic research questions, methodology, and manuscript. Together, we reviewed and discussed extant literature, engaged in data collection and thematic analysis, and contributed findings to the research report. As the project extended for years and through a pandemic, the adolescents' interests in being researchers waned, and they were satisfied with contributing their findings and with their parents developing the rest of the academic paper to explain the research tools, data, and findings to the intended audience.

Participants and context

This study, which took place in our homes and on Zoom across four states, included eight co-researcher participants, organized into four parent–child dyads.

Positionality

The collaborative included four literacy researchers who understood that children live in and shape a connected world where they have the ability to consume and create literally at their fingertips. We were also parents who navigated the realities of helping guide youth as they engaged in these practices. Our research and findings were ultimately influenced by our positionality, which included cultural background and value systems which must be made known to the reader (Bourke, 2014; Chiseri-Strater, 1996).

We are White, heterosexual, cisgender, middle class individuals living in the United States. We (parents and children) may not represent a broad range of individuals in terms of knowledge, skills, awareness, and cultural practices. To acknowledge the bias and privilege we bring to the research process, we engaged in a process of *reflexivity* (Bourke, 2014) to understand how positionality affects our research practice and the production of knowledge from this work. This reflexivity included transparency in self-disclosure, as well as a critical examination of our motivations, interests, roles, and assumptions (Chiseri-Strater, 1996).

We also acknowledge our privilege as it relates to digital exclusion, or questions about who has access to both technology and skills to fully participate in a networked, global community (Schejter et al., 2015). As researchers and educators, we work with marginalized communities to address the issues of access, opportunity, and the development of digital literacy. In this study, we focus on literacies identified by our children, who *do* have access, that relate to their authentic digital participation.

Dyads

Data were collected by four research teams, with the experienced researcher serving as the principal investigator and his/her own child as co-researcher. As teachers and parents, adults typically hold socially constructed authority. In this study, parents intentionally disrupted that power dynamic, inviting their children to negotiate decisions about lines of inquiry and share in analysis and development of findings. In the parent–child dyads, children acted as partners, whereas in other parts of the process (e.g., manuscript authoring), they did not participate as full partners on a co-researcher continuum (Abrams et al., 2020).

Kristen and Megan. Kristen was a teacher-educator who described herself as "tech-curious." As a high school English teacher, she experimented with instructional technologies, and as a researcher she explored the impact of technology on adolescent literacy practices. As a parent, she mentored her children's engagement with digital media and technologies with a mindset of "gradual release." Megan, her daughter, was 14 at the time of this writing. She had a proclivity for digital creation and had recently begun to engage actively on Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and SoundCloud.

Elizabeth and Addy. Elizabeth was a literacy teacher-educator. As a graduate student, she became interested in technology and applied what she learned in the classroom as a sixth-grade teacher. Her interest in screentime stemmed from becoming a parent and being poised to foster her own children's healthy relationship with technology. Addy, her daughter, was 13 at the time of this writing. Addy was a relatively new user of TikTok and Snapchat.

Katie and Charlie. Katie was an early literacy scholar and former kindergarten teacher who was interested in the ways media impact teaching and learning. She was curious how technologies and digital media contributed to and integrated with children's emergent and early literacy skills and practices. Katie cautiously worked to understand digital tools and their role in her children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Charlie, her son, was 13 at the time of writing. He loved playing digital sports, logic, and construction games, especially with friends. Charlie had a phone of his own for a little less than a year but did not have a social media account.

Ian and Jax. Ian was a researcher who investigated the intersections between literacy and technology. A former middle grade and secondary English teacher, he engaged students in online spaces. Ian similarly supported his own children to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, and ethically in new digital spaces. Ian's son, Jax, age 11 at the time of writing, was making the transition to middle school and increasingly using a mobile device to stay connected while away from home. Jax played Minecraft with others in the family's Minecraft server or watched and created video content.

Data collection and sources

In alignment with a dialogic research method, our data sources included collaborative conversations through oral and written dialogue (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Table 1 presents a summary of the various meetings, purposes, and participants in the research activities. These activities represented a fluid process, where the adults moved from collaborative inquiry with their

TABLE 1 Meetings, purposes, and participants in Co-research

Meeting	Purpose	Parent researchers	Adolescent researchers
1	Interviewing (semi-structured group): Changes in practices and impact of pandemic	X	
2	Co-researcher dyad conversations	X	X
3	Debriefing protocol: Sharing dyad conversations	X	
4	Discussion of family screentime rules	X	X
5	Debriefing protocol: Sharing dyad conversations	X	
7	Reading transcripts	X	X
8	Debriefing protocol: Screentime rules	X	
9	Writing reflective memos to synthesize themes from conversations and rules		X
10	Reading each other's memos and talking back to others' voices		X
11	Reflecting on child-researcher findings	X	
12	Developing themes across all data points	X	
13	Reflecting on themes across all data points	X	
14	Writing the research report	X	
15	Checking the copy for accuracy and authenticity of voice	X	X

children to a researcher-space with the other adults. In this way, the conversations among adult researchers informed how we would engage in dyads; the dyads, operating with shared decision making, in turn influenced the process of the adults.

We started using stimulated recall to prompt conversations between parent and child, following a semistructured protocol (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Vesterinen et al., 2010). This protocol included (1) reminding the child-researcher about the data that we had collected 2 years prior, (2) replaying the recorded interview, (3) inviting either researcher to pause and comment at their discretion, and (4) discussing how digital practices had changed.

Conversations were recorded, and transcripts were shared with both parent- and adolescent-researchers. We also engaged in collaborative writing (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). For instance, in a shared document, we wrote about the evolution of our respective families' screentime "rules." We chronicled what we learned and what we thought might come next. These written documents were additional data sources that served to archive our ongoing meaning making (Norris & Sawyer, 2012).

Throughout data collection, child-researchers were in dialogue with one another through their responses to transcripts and writing. Parents initiated thinking about what the other children said by sharing transcripts of other dyads. Children annotated, writing comments and questions on the transcripts. All of the responses were shared across dyads. Similarly, children wrote their findings, or "most important things," from the project and commented on each other's writing. Parents assembled these child-to-child asynchronous conversations in documents and shared them again with children, who revised their writing for publication. Parents also used the dialogues to prompt their own conversations and to complete the thematic analysis.

Analysis

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). We engaged in iterative and introspective conversations where we discussed data as parent-researchers, shared those conversations with child-researchers, collected new data through collaborative writing and conversation, and reflected on meaning making. Parents reviewed transcripts and identified critical incidents "that were turning points in the researcher's understanding or that changed the direction of events in the field site" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 184). We wrote these incidents as vignettes, with at least three researchers composing, revisiting the data, and revising. This method allowed us to engage in a process of reflexivity, both individual and collective.

Themes that spoke to the research questions anchored and organized the vignettes. The child-researcher

understandings were part of the parent-researcher analysis process. The children's interpretations are presented as they desired. Commentary on their work in the findings represents our own learning alongside them and captures all of our voices in dialogue with one another.

Trustworthiness

We recognize power differentials may have influenced conversations with our children, but we believe the trust established with our children enhanced our research methods (Ceglowski & Makovsky, 2012). To build trust, we engaged in an iterative process with shared conversations, reading of transcripts, and writing of findings. To check individual biases, we engaged in rigorous collaborative inquiry (Breault, 2016), where co-researchers shared openly, challenged interpretations, and offered insights on an ongoing basis. As is the case with qualitative approaches, our findings represent what happened in our context, and we do not assume that they can be generalized.

FINDINGS

In our positions as academic faculty, we have shared theory, literature, and methods for this study. We acknowledge that the dominant voices that come through this article to this point are from the adults. Below, there are instances in which the authorial voice shifts to the adolescent-researchers as we collectively explore: What happens when parents and children co-construct meaning regarding the challenges and opportunities in using digital technologies?

Learning with and from our children

Critical moments shaped our understanding even as they influenced the decisions around use of digital tools in each of our homes. The data revealed themes that helped us make meaning of the process, and we present those themes through the re-telling of the moments.

Trust and empowerment

"Megan came home kind of surprisingly one day and said, 'Can I get Snapchat?'" Kristen recalled how Megan's inquiry, 2 years prior, served as a place to start conversations, an approach point (O'Byrne et al., 2021) to build meaning together around digital practices. As Kristen and Megan revisited that recorded conversation, they recalled Megan's decision not to get Snapchat

then, and Kristen asked, "Does having this conversation [now] make you want to get Snapchat?" Later that night, Kristen knew Megan was still pondering the question when she asked, "Do you think I should get Snapchat?" Kristen replied, "I don't know. Do you think you should get Snapchat? You know, that's your decision to make." Nearly every day that week Megan asked for Kristen's advice. Finally, Kristen said, "Why don't you just do it? Download the app. I'll download the app. We'll all do Snapchat together; we'll figure this thing out."

Although each parent in the four dyads reported a mutually trusting relationship with their child, trust with devices was not automatic. Restricting access to devices and social media was common from parents in the earlier phases of the study and, in the opposite direction, children did not initially trust parents to support and empower them in their use of technology and digital media. Ongoing conversations, like the one above, built mutual and reciprocal trust among parent–child dyads. Kristen noted, "It is because of this conversation and ongoing [ones] they have this trust with us that, yes, we're there to catch you if you fall." We found that the trust we established with our children empowered them by gradually releasing responsibility to take on more ownership in their digital practices. As Kristen reflected with the parent-research team, she said:

> We looked at the [Snapchat] app together and tried to figure things out together. But that's more for me to say to her, I'm still here…I have to let her know that this is okay, and that she has to make her own decisions, but at the same time, I want her to know that I'm still here.

Through their dialogue and shared participation, they developed a mutual meaning-making process that empowered Megan.

As Kristen shared her experiences with the parent-research team, Elizabeth learned about her own parenting. When Addy asked for TikTok, Elizabeth engaged Addy in the decision-making process. Mimicking what Kristen had done with Megan, Elizabeth asked Addy to closely read the Terms of Service (TOS) "to understand what she was giving away." Elizabeth and Addy were then able to have an informed conversation about the app. Addy confirmed reading the TOS deepened her understanding: "I read the TOS…I learned a lot of security stuff, just that really none of your information is secure on social media," and ultimately, Elizabeth said, "For Addy, she decided it seemed worth the cost of giving some privacy away to feel part of a community." Like Kristen, Elizabeth invited Addy to co-construct meaning, building mutual trust that ultimately enabled her to empower Addy to make her own decisions.

Communication

All four dyads had challenges to overcome as they experienced teens engaging new practices with digital tools. Communication became key in moving through the challenges and ultimately gaining trust and empowerment. In one critical moment, Charlie approached Katie to ask if he could get Snapchat. Knowing that Kristen and Elizabeth had invited their children into a decision based on similar questions, Katie thought before answering. Ultimately, she responded, "not yet," but this moment prompted a series of dialogues regarding Charlie's behavior and his desire to be social with his friends.

Katie told the parent-research group, "Most of his peer group had been on [gaming consoles] since third or fourth grade. They quickly moved to social media, so he feels like everybody else is on Snapchat and TikTok, and he's not." But Katie felt like she was missing the component of trust that would lead to his empowerment. She shared that Charlie had subverted limits by "stashing devices and sneaking them up to his room to play when he wasn't supposed to."

Katie talked with Charlie about this behavior, listened to his suggestion to delete the app from his phone, and monitored his device use through Apple's iOS Screen Time tool. When Charlie re-downloaded the app and continued to play the game without communicating it to her, she initiated a conversation that started with an invitation for Charlie to talk through why he re-installed the app.

Encouraging Charlie to communicate his needs and wants allowed Katie to empathize with Charlie's desire for social connection with peers through digital media. Conversations with the parent-researcher team helped her realize that social connection was a recurring theme in Charlie's experiences. She shared that reflection with Charlie, who said, "And this was during Covid, so I couldn't really see them that much. So I think talking on that [game] helped." These conversation points, child–parent and parent–parent and researcher-parent, helped Katie consider Charlie's request for social media, provided he could show he was trustworthy.

Katie demonstrated a shift in thinking as she shared, "Despite all of our conversations with Charlie, and listening to your experiences easing in, maybe I might need to revisit some of my boundaries and expectations." In fact, Charlie used Megan's written findings (see the sections that follow) to prompt a conversation where he communicated his observations about how he viewed the role of social media in Katie's life. Katie then reconceptualized her digital practices to model setting boundaries with social media. Shortly after, she helped Charlie ease into social media with Twitter, a tool Katie understood and used already, in order to help him develop the reflective behaviors he needed

to engage in other social media. The two continued to communicate about behaviors, setting limits and establishing boundaries that helped them to develop trust that led to Charlie's empowerment.

Mediated decision making

Our decision making regarding digital practices was mediated by time, place, and others around us. This was evident as Ian and his partner made decisions related to Jax having a phone of his own.

This decision was mediated by a new situation when Ian's family moved. Jax was both starting a new middle school and returning to school in person for the first time since the pandemic began. Ian agreed to "gradually release" some responsibility of giving a phone to Jax. Influenced by Kristen's approach, Jax's phone originally stayed in the kitchen.

When Ian's family attended a local festival, they had Jax take the phone with him as a communication tool. However, Jax began "running around trying to videotape what's going on," behavior that mediated Ian's decision making. He liked the ability to communicate with Jax and give him a bit more freedom, but he did not want Jax fully engrossed in phone use. The family decided to use a wearable device so Jax could text and call them.

The family continued to compromise and mediate decisions about digital practices together. As Ian reflected on the negotiations with his partner, he said, "We're still trying to figure out how we instill a sense of balance, I guess, in his relationship with the phone. [My partner] is not comfortable with him bringing it to school; she is comfortable with the [wearable device], but we're still trying to figure out what we do with it. So right now we're sort of in this holding pattern."

Uncovering advice for others

When the adolescent-researchers wrote "the most important things" from their reading of all of the data, the findings captured behaviors and advice. Their responses to each other offered contradictions and connections that uncovered themes. Their written comments, presented in italic font, are included from their authentic voices.

Kid behavior: Charlie

Parents should know that their kids are using these digital tools. They have a chance at helping them be successful in life, but some of it also has a chance to ruin their life.

I agree that parents should know what their kids are doing. They should also be there to guide them, or mentor them, in the process.—Jax.

Me too, though I do not think kids are going to ruin their life. That's a bit overstated.—Megan.

Some things you do on social media could affect your future.—Addy.

If a kid posts something that they are not supposed to and that is a bad thing that job interviewers or employers might not like, they might have no job. And they might not even realize it's bad, or they might—and it feels weird. Like if you post an inappropriate picture because someone asks you to. I did not know that some people might think about some hand gestures like a peace sign as explicit. I was really glad my classmate realized that when a stranger asked them to send a picture on Snapchat, that was wrong. If they had sent the picture, I think it could have been bad, but they asked their mom instead.

Their mom was surprised that someone who was not friends [with their child] could do that [solicit a picture] on Snapchat. Maybe parents need to learn about that and figure out how to help kids avoid that kind of dangerous thing. They need to know how to set up the privacy and security on the account. And, the parents need to help the kids know it is better to tell an adult when something feels weird. It probably is. Schools could help the parents and kids.

It's not the responsibility of the adult to step in. Kids should just not be stupid.—Jax.

Parent involvement: Jax

If your child is on an inappropriate thing, not really inappropriate, just not supposed to be on it, and something happens, all your personal stuff is now seen by this one person, then you really have nothing to lose, because it is already taken.

Parents should look out for their kids and just be there. Tell them, "No, you're not supposed to get on this or no to that" because we may get some dumb ideas.

Some kids are really, really, dumb.

Yep. Kids can be dumb.—Megan

Lots of kids do dumb things. I do too. Even though it can be uncomfortable, I like it when my mom tells me what I've done is dumb.—Charlie.

You definitely need your parents to be there to guide you if you are doing something dumb.—Addy.

Adult behavior: Megan

In less than 2 years, I am going to be learning to drive a car. It terrifies me, and I think I'll be a really terrible driver. I know that there is a lot I need to learn and that I'll take a class in school, and I'll have to drive with a teacher too. I also know my parents will help me. It's a process that I'm going to need a lot of coaching and support in order to learn.

Devices—they are kind of like a car. They are complicated, and they can lead to people getting hurt. But do parents take the time to teach their kids how to use them?

I know someone whose screentime is 12 hours a day. I think parents should be mindful of their child's screentime. There is the screentime app that some parents use, but I do not really like that because I see kids get stressed out and super angry when their screentime comes up. So I do not recommend that parents make their kid really stressed out. But just be aware of how much time they are spending on the app.

This goes a lot more for parents than it does for kids. Facebook is toxic. Facebook is terrible. Facebook is the worst social media app out there. Without a Facebook account, I have seen how politics are a problem on Facebook. I see this through my grandmother and some of my teachers.

I do not see the harm in social media.—Jax.

I do. Facebook is so bad.—Charlie.

I agree. Social media is not a reliable source for things like politics. Do not believe everything you see!—Addy.

Parents and teachers should know that they are even worse than their kids. Parents tell kids not to use social media, but they do. Parents tell kids not to use their phone, but they do. Parents think that their child's problem is their phone, but parents have that problem more than their kids do.

My mom should have screentime limits. Megan is right. Boo parents!—Charlie

Social media: Addy

Parents should stay engaged with their kids' phone use. My mom trusts me, but she still checks my phone, which is good because I feel like a lot of people aren't doing the same and some people should be looking at what their kids are doing on it. Then if they see they are doing something that's like, "Oh why did you need to put that on social media," they can teach them to be thoughtful about what they post on social media.

Most kids ask, "Do I look good in this picture?" and then post.—Megan.

For example, when I post, I think, "Could someone see this and make fun of me because of it? Could someone not like me because of it? Do I look bad in it? Basically, just like, "Is there anything someone could use against me?" People aren't afraid to do that.

Addy gives good advice. I'm going to try to remember this when I get Snapchat.—Charlie.

Yea, these are good questions to think about.—Jax.

Parents can also talk to their kids about how social media can hurt people and can destroy friendships, even unintentionally.

I know what she is saying. This happened to me.—Megan.

Social media posts can make friends not pictured feel left out. Friends can sometimes take your words out of context too. People you trust might not be trustable.

Parents need to talk more with their kids about how this impacts them. I think they do not to protect them.—Jax.

Finally, parents can limit screentime.

The main way I measure screentime is through "time." Not what I'm doing. It does not matter if it's coding, gaming, YouTube, Netflix. It's just time for adults so it's just time for me.—Jax.

The time usage, people are excessive on it. My screentime averages 3–4 hours per day, but my friends are on it much longer.

I'm like Addy. My screentime is also 3–4 hours per day, but my friends… a lot more.—Megan.

This sounds like one of my friends. It's hard to hang out and even play Xbox when all they do is look at their phone.—Charlie.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The co-research approach disrupted a traditional hierarchical power dynamic between parents and children. Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020) suggested that a key task of parents is to guide "children to benefit from the potential of digital technologies while also building their resilience to manage the pitfalls, to 'trust your child,' not just saying 'don't do this, don't do that'" (p. 56). As highlighted by critical moments, conversations between the parent and youth researchers in this study opened lines of communication about technology use that helped establish a reciprocal trust. Our children knew we genuinely wanted them to try new digital practices, and they valued the opportunity.

Through the process of research, the youth demonstrated a sense of agency that allowed them to push back both on adults' and peers' practices that mirrored and extended the digital practices of youth appearing in other seminal works (e.g., Boyd, 2014; Clark, 2013). Their roles as co-researchers may have been important, and it is this positioning that has potential implications for educators and parents. Because the adults invited honest conversations, the adolescents were willing to notice, name, and criticize the digital literacy practices of their parents. If we want to empower youth in their technological practices, adults need to open lines of communication that value their insights even as we share our own knowledge. Building trust through conversations might be accomplished by (1) establishing shared frames of reference, (2) entering with the intent to learn alongside each other, and (3) using language that empowers youth to speak openly and honestly about digital practices, rather than language that mystifies or minimizes technology.

Reciprocal trust also developed among parent-researchers as we found support that moved and reshaped our individual and collective knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Our conversations afforded opportunities to see into the experience of others, which prompted reflexive engagement with our co-researcher children. As we built trust among the group, we felt more empowered to trust our own children. Cooper and Rogers (2014) suggested the insider role is a powerful reflexive position. It can be used to gain deeper engagement and insight into growing understandings of lived experience. "Making the private public" (para. 2.5) can occasionally involve a degree of messiness and discomfort. However, parents and educators might find that disrupting typical power dynamics is easier with the ability to talk through their experiences in the process with others and to bring those conversations back to their open communication with youth.

The adolescent researchers identified adult behavior as an issue, and this critique led to sometimes painful self-reflection for the parents. The narrative that adults know better about how, when, and why to use technology is one that should be disrupted, and in fact, might be very problematic. If "kids do dumb things," and "adults are just as bad," then we must look to a future where children and adults work together to uncover negative digital literacy practices while also promoting positive examples. Children learn from what adults model, so to start, adults need to honestly reflect on their technology use, identify their habits, and monitor their own screentime. Then, they need to check their personal reflection through reflexive practice by inviting critique and feedback from others (both adults and youth).

Reflective, mindful practice is key in developing contexts that allow for positive growth. Both children and parents benefitted from the co-research model by moving toward intentional technology use supported by ongoing conversations that served as checkpoints. The child as co-researcher model (Abrams et al., 2020) might be more clearly applied as a parenting or educating model, particularly in areas where adults learn alongside youth. In a digital world, this learning will continue throughout our lives. Though this stance will not be without tensions, as this research demonstrates, it may offer a path to improved digital literacy for all.

CONCLUSION

In child–parent research that is ethically symmetrical (Abrams et al., 2020), the child's routines and interests shape the trajectory of the research. In positioning the child's interests at the center of inquiry, rather than the parent's, a space opens for "new ways of looking at power and privilege, new ways of speaking and collaborating, and new ways and opportunities for the child to direct his or her degrees of participation" (p. 21). In this research, we strived to understand what our children knew and perceived. We wanted to disrupt the power dynamic where the adults observed, analyzed, and made meaning and instead to co-construct meaning with our children. As Jax said, "There are decisions to be made; there is more that needs to be known; now is not that time." Through this collaboration, we uncovered a process that allowed for both reflective and reflexive practice for both adults and youth who are learning together to develop digital literacy practices.

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