

On Tuesday the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory about the dangers of social media on children. The 25-page report touched on a lot of data and research that clearly shows how social media and tech negatively affect children, tweens, and teens. I'm talking about the report's findings with the Chief Parenting Officer of the company "Bark" that recently compiled an annual report of its own for 2022 that shows some of the things kids experience online. And it's shocking. I'm looking at some of their findings and what parents need to know about what their kids are seeing.

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SUPERS

0-8 Jamey Tucker/whatthetech.tv
15-22 Tatania Jordan/Bark.us

ON-CAMERA TEASE

KIDS AND SMARTPHONES LITERALLY GO HAND-IN-HAND THESE DAYS AND SO DO PROBLEMS NONE OF US PARENTS EVER HAD TO DEAL WITH AT THAT AGE. I'M JAMEY TUCKER COMING UP, SOME OF THE SHOCKING THINGS KIDS SEE ONLINE, EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT LOOKING FOR IT.

ANCHOR INTRO

THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL ISSUED A STRONG WARNING TO PARENTS ABOUT THE RISKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUNG PEOPLE. URGING PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE POSSIBLE HARM IT CAN HAVE ON CHILDREN, TWEENS, AND TEENS.

HIS WARNING ECHOES THE WORDS OF MANY HEALTH AGENCIES AND PARENTS WHO'VE KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT SOCIAL MEDIA AT A YOUNG AGE CAN RESULT IN A MULTITUDE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES. OUR CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY REPORTER JAMEY TUCKER TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT CHILDREN ARE SEEING ONLINE, EVEN WHEN THEY'RE NOT LOOKING FOR IT.

PACKAGE SCRIPT

Parents should know kids see things online that they shouldn't. What parents may not realize is how common it is. Even if their child doesn't search for nude images, drugs, or discussions about depression and violence, they can't avoid it.

You name it, kids are experiencing it, and it rates much higher than any one of us may imagine. Tatania Jordan is the Chief Parenting Officer at Bark, a company that just released its annual report on children and the content they see online.

88% of teenagers experienced violent subject matters. 66% of tweens engaged in conversations about alcohol and drugs, 64% of teenagers were involved in self-harm or suicidal situations, 82% of teenagers and 62% of tweens encountered nudity or sexual content. they're not even looking for this stuff. It's just there."

But the Surgeon General's report puts the responsibility on parents and kids to avoid this type of content. The only way to do this, Jordan says, is to prevent access to the devices. Easier said than done when they and their friends already have access to Snapchat, Instagram, online video games, and other platforms.

you do not have to give your child access just because all of their friends have it" it's okay to delay. I've never heard a parent say, 'i should have given my child access to xyz sooner. Not once. Flip side, i've heard way too many parents say I wish i would have waited.

It's clear, if not obvious, that social media, including online video games, pose serious risks to children, tweens, and teens. But some parents found there's strength in numbers. We'll talk about that next time. That's What the Tech? I'm Jamey Tucker

ANCHOR TAG

BARK'S REPORT FLAGGED THE APPS KIK, TUMBLR, TWITTER, AND DISCORD AS THE TOP 4 APPS WHERE KIDS MOST OFTEN SEE SEXUAL CONTENT.

web story

On Tuesday the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, released an [advisory](#) about the risks social media has on children, tweens, and teens. The report cited multiple research papers and calls on parents and kids to be aware of the risks.

"I thought it was a little late," said Tatania Jordan, Chief Parenting Officer of Bark, a company that makes kid-safe smartphones.

Jordan says it is a warning that should have come years ago since most parents and mental health experts have been aware that social media is often linked with serious mental health issues. Jordan says for many families, taking action after a teenager has been using a smartphone for years is too late as well. But bringing attention to the problem should give parents of younger children a reason to be proactive.

"For those parents who have not yet given their kids access to social media, listen up: you do not have to give your child access just because all of their friends have it," Jordan said.

Bark released its findings from an extensive review of over 4.5 billion messages shared by young users of Bark phones. Among the statistics it found are these:

- 88% of teenagers experienced violent subject matters.
- 66% of tweens engaged in conversations about alcohol and drugs.
- 64% of teenagers were involved in self-harm or suicidal situations
- 82% of teenagers and 62% of tweens encountered nudity or sexual content.

"You name it, kids are experiencing it, and it rates much higher than any one of us may imagine," Jordan said.

But the Surgeon General's report puts the onus, or responsibility on parents and kids to avoid this type of content. The only way to do this, Jordan says, is to prevent access to the devices. Easier said than done when they and their friends already have access to Snapchat, Instagram, online video games, and other platforms.

"It's okay to delay. I've never heard a parent say, 'I should have given my child access to XYZ sooner.' Not once. On the flip side, I've heard way too many parents say I wish I would have waited. I wish I would have waited."

Jordan, who is the mother of a 14-year-old wants to remind parents of children and middle-schoolers that handing them a phone and approving a social media account should not be a given.

"Just because social media platforms state you must be 13 years of age or older to use it, doesn't mean that, at 13, go ahead and give your kids all the things. Some children still aren't ready at that age," she said.

What can parents of young children do when their kids say 'But all my friends have a phone, Snapchat, Instagram etc'? Some parents have found there is strength in numbers by banding together to set community rules when it comes to devices and platforms.

[See Bark's full Annual Report](#)
www.whatthetech.tv
[Surgeon General's Advisory](#)