Yesterday I looked at some of the things kids regularly see when they open an app or use a smartphone. They can't avoid sex, violence, depression, talk of suicide, etc. So why don't parents agree to let them have a phone? Because all the other parents do. Today we're looking at a possible solution that works for parents in some schools, communities, and just groups of friends.

TRT   143
STD OUT

SUPERS

0-8 Jamey Tucker/whatthetech.tv
23-30 Brooke Shannon/Wait Until 8th
59-108 Tatania Jordan/Bark CPO

ON-CAMERA TEASE:

WITH ALL THE PROOF THAT SMARTPHONES POSE RISKS TO YOUNG KIDS, WHY DO SO MANY PARENTS ALLOW THEIR KIDS TO HAVE ONE? WE ALL KNOW WHY. I'M JAMEY TUCKER COMING UP WITH A SOLUTION WHEN YOUR CHILD ARGUES "BUT ALL MY FRIENDS HAVE ONE".

ANCHOR INTRO

   PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN IS ASKING CONGRESS TO PASS NEW LAWS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SOME OF THE THINGS THEY SEE ONLINE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA. BUT THE WHITE HOUSE PUT SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITY ON PARENTS.

   EARLIER THIS WEEK AN ADVISORY BY THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL WARNED PARENTS THAT SOCIAL MEDIA IN PARTICULAR, POSES SERIOUS RISKS TO CHILDREN. AND AT THE ROOT OF IT ALL, IS HOW SMARTPHONES MAKE DANGEROUS CONTENT EASILY AVAILABLE. OUR CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY REPORTER JAMEY TUCKER TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT PROTECTING CHILDREN AND HOW SOME PARENTS HAVE FOUND A SOLUTION.

PACKAGE SCRIPT

With all the dangerous content available on smartphones, what keeps a parent from telling their child they cannot have a smartphone? It's parental peer pressure.
"I didn't want them to be the only kids with their heads up"
That's what happened to Brooke Shannon when her elementary child begged for a smartphone saying "But all of my friends have one".

what I kept hearing is the reason parents were giving kids these phones was that they didn't want their kids to feel left out."

So Shannon started "Wait Until 8th", an initiative or plan to encourage parents to all say no, at least until the 8th grade.

"So it gets you through all of elementary school, most of middle school at that point if you want to transition you can, and you'll have a year before high school."

Would that make a big difference? Yes, that's so powerful"

I asked Tatania Jordan, chief parenting officer of Bark which has 8 years of research that shows what kids run across when they use phones and social media.

"If a certain amount of parents are together at one school or zip code

they can truly make a difference, but the problem is a lot of parents are isolated. A lot of parents aren't talking to other parents. We're operating in isolation as well and that is not powerful."

Jordan took another step, launching a Facebook group for parents called "Parenting in a tech world" which now has over 300,000 followers.

"If you're struggling, go there. You may not know who to talk to in your neighborhood or in your city. Go to that group. There are other parents that have been through what you're going through and are happy to help."

Once a child gets a smartphone, it's nearly impossible to take it back. Taking a stand at the beginning may be the best way to protect children from all the things you wish they'd never see. That's What the Tech? I'm Jamey Tucker

ANCHOR TAG

WAIT UNTIL 8TH HAS RESOURCES SUCH AS TALKING POINTS, POSTERS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS TO HELP ORGANIZE PARENTS IN YOUR CHILD'S CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, YOUTH GROUPS, OR SCHOOLS. YOU'LL FIND IT AT WAITUNTIL8TH-DOT-ORG

WEB STORY

The White House urged Congress this week to find ways to protect children from harmful content they see on social media and the internet using smartphones. The issue was addressed on Tuesday by U.S. Surgeon General

Dr. Vivek Murthy in a strongly worded advisory to parents on the risk social media use poses to children.

Parents understand what kids often run across on a smartphone connected to the internet. Even parents who want to hold off giving their children a smartphone often find it difficult because all of their friends have one.

"I didn't want them to be the only kids with their heads up," said Brooke Shannon when her elementary-age daughter asked for an iPhone. Rather than giving in to parental peer pressure, Shannon reached out to the parents of her daughter's friends.

"So I emailed about 20 or so moms just to see what they were thinking and what I kept hearing is the reason parents were giving kids these phones was because they didn't want their kids to feel left out."

Shannon launched "Wait Until 8th", an initiative or plan to encourage parents to all say no, at least until the 8th grade.

"That's around 14," she explained. "So it gets you through all of elementary school, most of middle school at that point if you want to transition you can, and you'll have a year before high school."

The organization has since grown to empower parents as a large group to say yes to waiting.

The Chief Parenting Officer of Bark which has 8 years of research that shows what kids run across when they use phones and social media says it's a rather simple solution.

"If a certain amount of parents are together at one school or zip code. They can truly make a difference, but the problem is a lot of parents are isolated. A lot of parents aren't talking to other parents. We're operating in isolation as well and that is not powerful."

Jordan took another step, launching a Facebook group for parents called "Parenting in a Tech World" which now has over 300,000 followers.

"If you're struggling, go there. You may not know who to talk to in your neighborhood or in your city. Go to that group. There are other parents that have been through what you're going through and are happy to help."

Once a child gets a smartphone, it's nearly impossible to take it back. Taking a stand at the beginning may be the best way to protect children from all the things you wish they'd never see.

WaitUntil8th asks parents to take a pledge that they'll hold off on giving their child a phone. If you're interested in organizing parents in your school, youth group, or just the circle of parents of your children's friends, you can find resources on the website.

www.waituntil8th.org
Parenting in a Tech World Facebook group
Bark's Annual Report on Online Content and Children
www.whatthetech.tv