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JULY 16, 2015



Parents and Social Media

Mothers are especially likely to give and receive support on social media

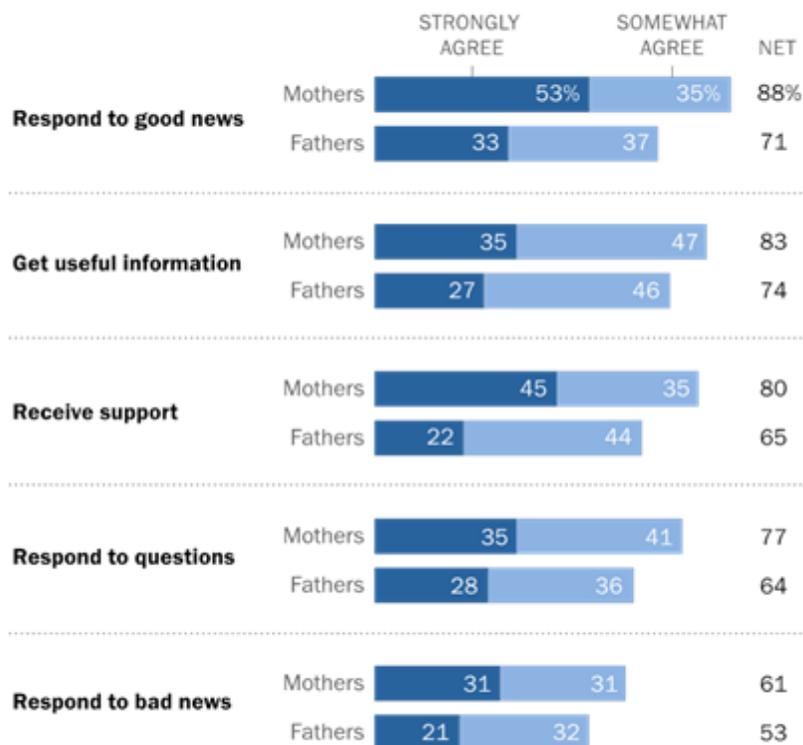
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Social media networks have become vital channels for Americans' daily interactions. Users rely on these platforms to keep in touch with family and friends, gather information and share what is important to them. This report explores how parents – 75% of whom use social media – turn to social media for parenting-related information and social support.¹

[feedback](#)

Mothers Give and Receive Support on Social Media

Among social media users, the % of mothers and fathers who say they “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” that they do the following on social media...



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sept. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=1,235 social media users ages 18+. The margin of error for all social media users is +/- 3.2 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

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Mothers are heavily engaged on social media, both giving and receiving a high level of support via their networks.

Social media networks are host to a wide range of human experiences; they help connect people with one another in both good times and bad. Parents – in this study defined as those with children under 18 – are especially likely to try to respond to the good news others post, answer others’ questions or receive support via online networks. This is true for all kinds of personal matters they encounter – not just parenting posts. While somewhat less common, a majority of parents agree that they try to respond to bad news as well. Mothers are more likely than fathers to engage their networks across a variety of these outreach and support examples:

- 81% of parents who use social media try to respond to good news others share in their networks, including 45% of social-media-using parents who “strongly agree” that they do so. Some 53% of mothers say they “strongly agree,” compared with 33% of fathers who say that.
- 74% of parents who use social media get support from their friends there.² Digging into the data, 35% of social-media-using parents “strongly agree” that they get support from friends on social media. Fully 45% of mothers who use social media “strongly agree” that they get support from friends on social media, compared with just 22% of fathers.

- 71% of all parents on social media try to respond if they know the answer to a question posed by someone in their online network. About a third (32%) of parents who use social media “strongly agree” that they try to respond to questions. Mothers and fathers are relatively similar in their responsiveness to questions on social media; 35% of mothers say they “strongly agree” that they make an effort to respond to questions, compared with 28% of fathers.
- 58% of parents who use social media try to respond when a friend or acquaintance shares bad news online. Mothers are particularly likely to “strongly agree” that they try to do this – 31% say so, compared with 21% of fathers.

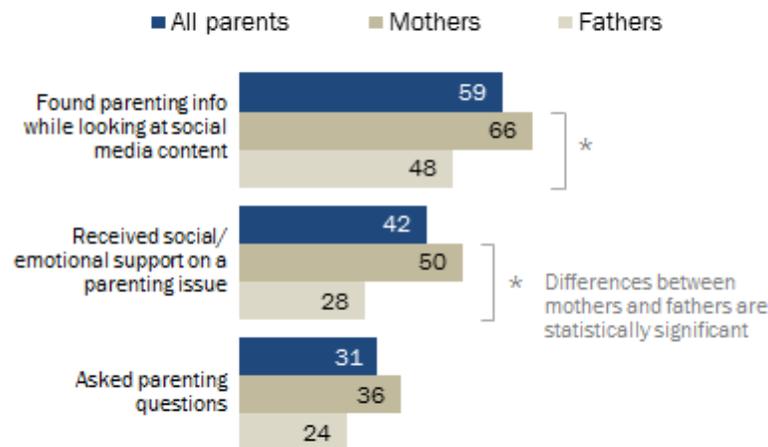
Social media is broadly viewed as a source of useful information and as one parenting tool among a collection of options. Mothers use it as a parenting resource slightly more often than fathers.

While a large share of parents find value in social media as a general information resource, fewer say they come across useful parenting information while using social media. At the same time, one-in-four say they get support from their networks for parenting issues, and mothers who use social media are more than three times as likely as fathers to say they get support.

- 79% of parents who use social media agree that they get useful information via their networks. One-in-three (32%) “strongly agree” that they get useful information. Mothers are just as likely as fathers to “strongly agree” that they find useful information through their social media networks (35% vs. 27%).

Social Media is One of Many Sources for Parenting Advice and Information

Among all parent social media users, the % who have done the following on social media over the previous month...



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sept. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=241 parent social media users ages 18+. The margin of error for all parent social media users is +/- 7.4 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

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59% of social-media-using parents indicate that they have come across useful information *specifically parenting* in the last 30 days while looking at other social media content. Mothers are particularly likely

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encounter helpful parenting information – 66% have done so in the last 30 days, compared with 48% of fathers.

- 42% of these parents have received social or emotional support from their online networks about a parenting issue in the last 30 days. This includes 50% of mothers, compared with 28% of fathers on social media.
- 31% of parents who use social media have posed parenting questions to their online networks in the last 30 days. Mothers and fathers are equally likely to do so.

Few parents say they have felt uncomfortable when information about their children is shared by other family members or caregivers on social media.

Most parents have not felt uneasy about the content posted about their children by other family members or caregivers on social media.

- 12% of all parents of children under 18 say they have ever felt uncomfortable about something posted about their child on social media by a spouse, family member or friend. Fully 88% say they have not felt this way.
- 11% of all parents have ever asked for content about their child posted by a family member, caregiver or friend to be removed from social media.

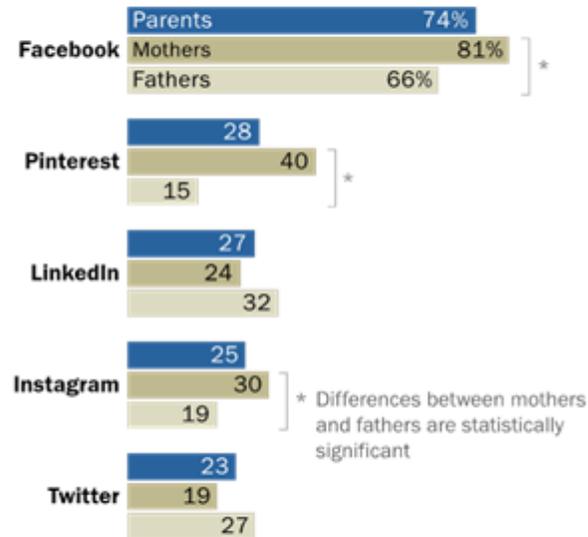
Parents, like non-parents, use a variety of social media platforms.

This survey also took a broad look at the social media habits of parents. Among internet-using parents,³ social media use across a variety of platforms is common. Parents look a lot like non-parents in this regard, though there are differences between mothers and fathers:

-

Parents Use a Range of Social Media Platforms; Facebook Tops the List

Among all internet users, the % of parents who use each social media platform



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sep. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=1,597 internet users ages 18+. The margin of error for all internet users is +/- 2.9 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

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Three-quarters of online parents use Facebook, as do 70% of non-parents. Mothers are more likely to use Facebook than fathers, with 81% of moms and 66% of dads using the platform.

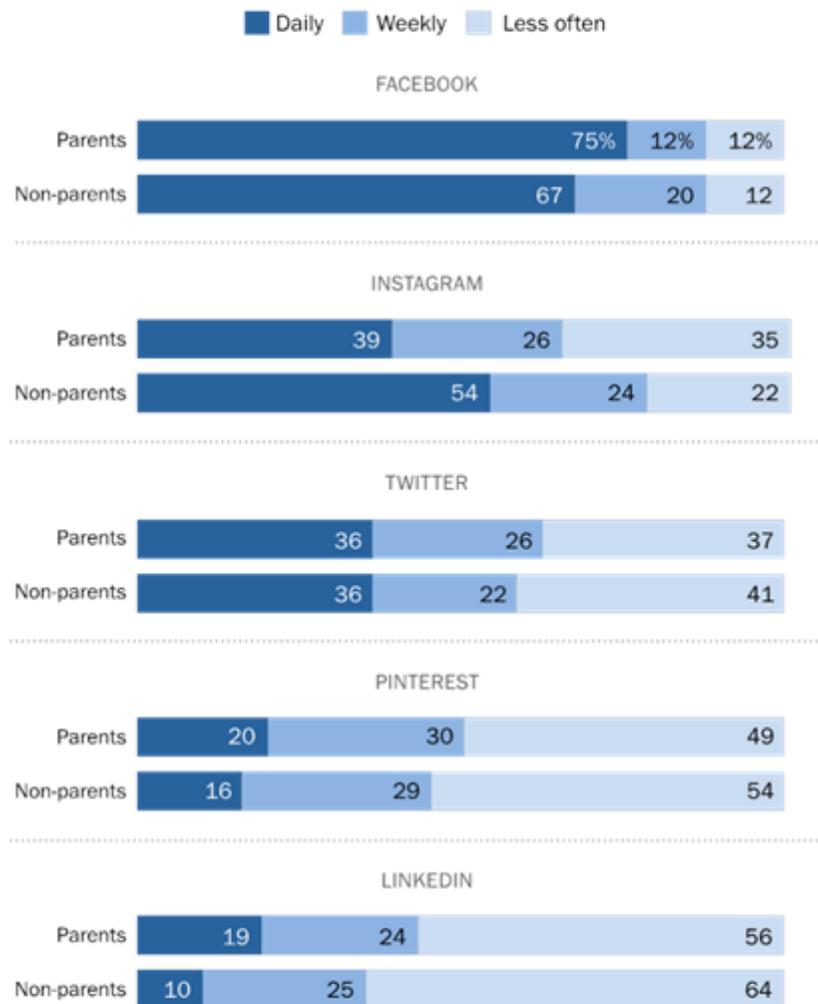
- 28% of online parents use Pinterest, including 40% of mothers and 15% of fathers.
- 27% of online parents use LinkedIn. Mothers and fathers are equally likely to use LinkedIn.
- 25% of online parents are Instagram users. Mothers are more likely than fathers to use the platform, 30% vs. 19%. Younger parents (those under 40) also are more likely to use Instagram than older parents, 33% vs. 18%.
- 23% of online parents use Twitter. Moms and dads are equally as likely to use Twitter.

Parents are particularly active on Facebook and LinkedIn, while non-parents use Instagram more frequently.

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Social-Media-Using Parents Use Facebook and LinkedIn More Often and Instagram Less Often Than Non-Parents

Among users of each respective social media platform, the % of parents vs. non-parents who use the site with the following frequencies...



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sept. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=1,074 Facebook users, with a margin of error of +/-3.4 percentage points; N=463 LinkedIn users, with a margin of error of +/-5.2 percentage points; N=317 Instagram users, with a margin of error of +/- 6.3 percentage points; N=398 for Pinterest users, with a margin of error of +/-5.6 percentage points; N=323 for Twitter users, with a margin of error of +/-6.3 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

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Parents on Facebook are especially avid users: 75% log on daily, including 51% who do so several times a day. This is a statistically significant difference when compared with non-parents, of whom 67% log on to Facebook daily, including 42% who do so several times a day. Mothers on Facebook are more likely to check the platform several times a day compared with fathers, 56% vs. 43%.

- Parents who use LinkedIn are more likely than non-parents to use the site daily (19% vs. 10% of non-parents).
- Parents who use Instagram are not as active as non-parent users. Some 54% of non-parents who use Instagram say they use the site daily, compared with 39% of parents.

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- Among Twitter and Pinterest users, there are few statistically significant differences in how frequently parents and non-parents use the platforms.

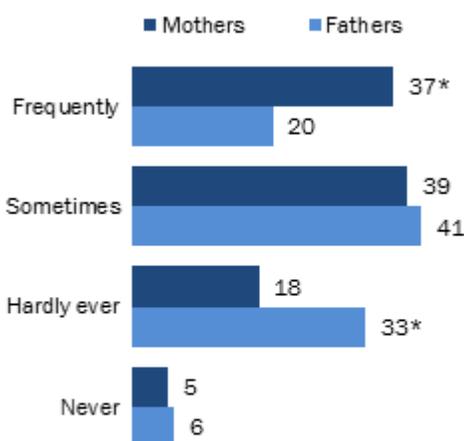
How parents use Facebook

Given Facebook's status as the most popular social media platform, this report takes a deeper look into the network composition and habits of parents on the network: Three-quarters (74%) of parents use Facebook.

Parents, particularly mothers, interact with their networks frequently.

Mothers More Likely to Interact With Their Facebook Networks

Among Facebook users, the % of mothers and fathers who "share, post or comment on Facebook as opposed to reading or viewing content"...



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sept. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=324 parents who use Facebook ages 18+. The margin of error for parent social media users is +/- 6.3 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

An * indicates a statistically significant difference between mothers and fathers.

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(http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/pi_2015-07-16_parents-and-social-media_05/) Fully 94% of Facebook-using parents share, post or comment on Facebook (as opposed to simply reading or viewing content), with 70% of parents doing so "frequently" or "sometimes." This compares to a statistically similar 93% of non-parents who say they ever post content to the platform.

Overall, mothers and fathers who use Facebook are equally likely to say they ever share, post, or comment on Facebook. However, mothers are more likely to do this with greater frequency. Some 76% of mothers on Facebook say they do so "frequently" or "sometimes," compared with 61% of fathers who say the same.

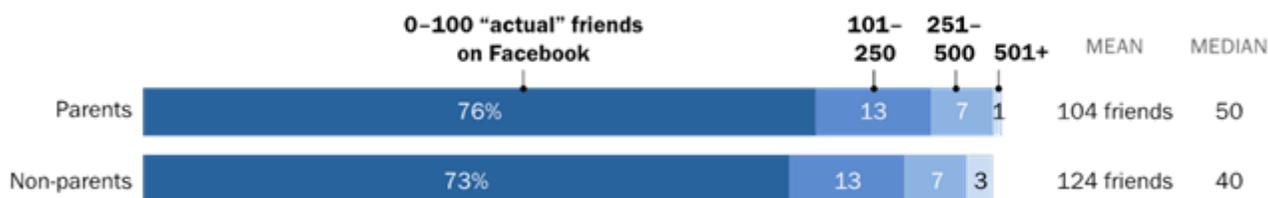
A typical parent has 150 Facebook friends. One-third of them are "actual" friends.

Among parents, the median number of Facebook friends is 150, while the typical non-parent Facebook user has a median of 200 friends. The largest group of parents on Facebook (42%) have between 0 and 100 Facebook friends on the network. Another 20% of parents say they have between 101 and 250 friends, while 23% have between 251 and 500 friends. Non-parents are more likely than parents to have very large Facebook networks — 16% of non-parent Facebook users have more than 500 Facebook friends, compared with 11% of parents.

Facebook networks are composed of a variety of people, not all of whom are necessarily considered close. Parents who use Facebook were asked how many of their friends on the platform they considered “actual friends.” A majority, 76%, said they considered between 0 and 100 of their Facebook friends “actual friends.” The typical parent reports a median of 50 “actual” Facebook friends, while the typical non-parent counts 40 of their Facebook friends as “actual” friends. As noted above, parents report having a median of 150 Facebook friends, and non-parents report having a median of 200 Facebook friends. Thus, a typical parent’s Facebook network is about one-third “actual” friends, while non-parents typically report that less than a quarter of their network is made up of actual friends.⁴

More Than a Few Good Friends

Among all Facebook users, the % of parents vs. non-parents who say they consider the following number of Facebook friends to be actual friends...



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sept. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=1,074 Facebook users ages 18+. The margin of error for all Facebook users is +/- 3.4 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

Note: "Don't know" and "refused" responses not shown. Figures may not add to 100.

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(http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/pi_2015-07-16_parents-and-social-media_06/)

Family and friends make up the bulk of Facebook networks for parents and non-parents alike.

Family and friends, both new and old, are the most common types of connections in users' Facebook networks.

- 93% of parents who use Facebook are friends with family members other than their parents or children on the network.
- 88% are Facebook friends with their current friends.
- 88% are connected with friends from the past, such as high school or college classmates.
- 60% are friends with their work colleagues.
- 53% are friends with their parents.
- 47% are friends with their children on Facebook.
- 41% are connected with people they have never met in person.
- 41% are friends with their neighbors.

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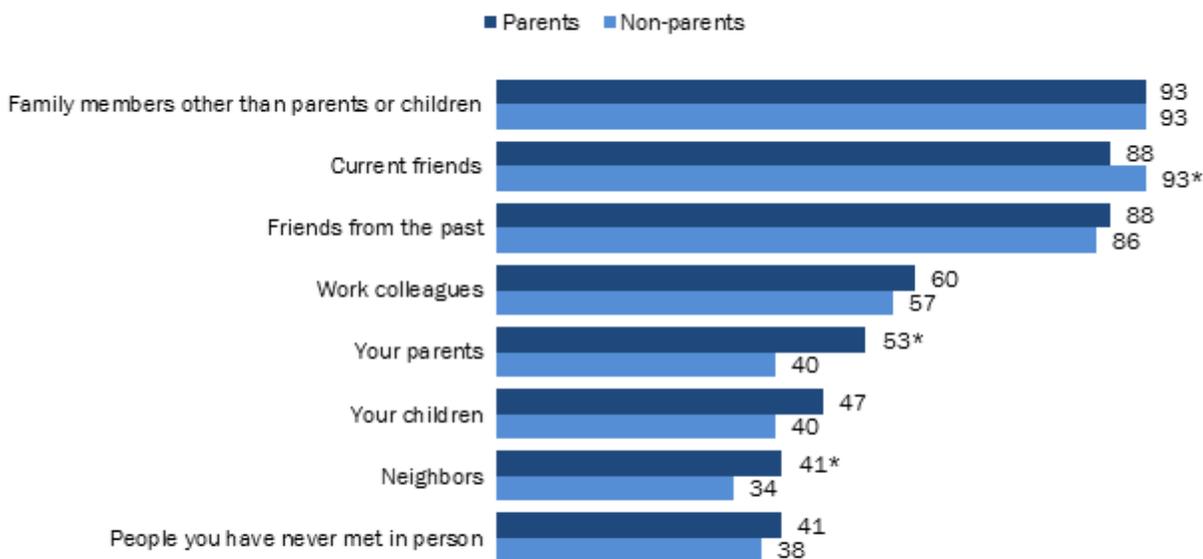
Parents are more likely to be Facebook friends with their parents than non-parents, 53% vs. 40%. They also are more likely to be friends with their neighbors on the network, 41% vs. 34% of non-parents.

Age is a major factor in who makes up the bulk of parents' Facebook networks. Some 93% of younger parents (those under age 40) who use Facebook are connected with friends from the past. This is significantly more than the 83% of older parents (those ages 40 and older) who say the same. Younger parents also are more likely to be Facebook friends with their own parents (71% vs. 35%).

Older parents, those ages 40 and above, are more likely to be friends with their children on Facebook. Some 65% said so, compared with 30% of younger parents. These findings likely reflect the fact that Facebook requires users to be ages 13 and older.⁵

Parents More Likely to Be Friends With Their Own Parents and Neighbors

Among Facebook users, the % of parent vs. non-parents who say they are friends with the following types of people...



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Sept. 11-14 and 18-21, 2014. N=1,074 Facebook users ages 18+. The margin of error for Facebook users is +/- 3.4 percentage points. Parents in this survey were defined as those with children under age 18.

An * indicates a statistically significant difference between parents and non-parents.

Note: Non-parents may be friends with their children who are ages 18 or over.

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(http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/pi_2015-07-16_parents-and-social-media_07-2/)

The data reported here were collected in two telephone surveys conducted by PSRAI and fielded from Sept. 11 to 14, 2014, and Sept. 18 to 21, 2014. The surveys interviewed a nationally representative sample of 2,003 American adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (1,002) and cell phone (1,001, including 594 without a landline phone). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source from Sept. 11 to 14, 2014, and Sept. 18 to 21, 2014. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 2.5 percentage points.

1. In this report, “social media users” are defined as anyone who reported using one or more of the following social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, an employer-provided social media tool or another social media tool or site not included in this list (respondents were asked a separate question about each platform). Among all U.S. adults (including both parents and non-parents), 66% indicate using some type of social media. ↩
2. These “friends” on social media could represent a variety of people including family, work colleagues, friends of friends and other kinds of connections. ↩
3. 91% of all parents use the internet. This compares to 77% of other adults (non-parents), a significant difference. 81% of all adults use the internet. ↩
4. These numbers are slightly higher than those identified in earlier research that asks about “actual friends”; a 2014 study found that US adults reported a median of 120 total friends and 40 “actual” friends. Ellison, N., Vitak, J., Gray, R., & Lampe, C. (July, 2014). Cultivating Social Resources on Social Network Sites: Facebook Relationship Maintenance Behaviors and Their Role in Social Capital Processes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 19 (4), 855-870. ↩
5. While parents were defined in this survey as those having as least one child under age 18, parents answering this question may also be referring to their Facebook friendships with children who are 18 and older. ↩

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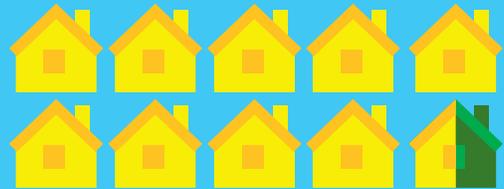
24/7 CHANNEL & LIVE STREAM

112

**Station licensees
offer the FREE
over-the-air channel**

Now available to more than

**95%
OF U.S. TV
HOUSEHOLDS**



Has reached

13.4 million

children 2-8 to date

**More than HALF
are Hispanic or
African-American**

(Nielsen NPOWER L+7 5/1/2017 - 1/28/2018, PBS Subchannel Reach, M-Su6A-6A, 50% Unif., 1+ min. K2-11)

**High-need children
are benefitting
MOST**

Viewing is up

↑85%

**among children in
low-income families**

↑65%

in broadcast-only homes

(Nielsen NPOWER L+7, 10/30/2017 - 11/26/2017, 10/31/2016 - 11/27/2016, M-Su 6A-6A
All PBS TPd R&F, Std Mo Unif., 6+ min. K2-8 HHw/Inc<\$25K, K2-8 B'cast only HH)

**Viewers who watch the
live stream are**

30% MORE ENGAGED

**than other viewers on the
PBS KIDS streaming platforms**

(Engagement = session viewing time. Source: Google Analytics Sept - Dec '17)



What is PBS KIDS Family & Community Learning?

PBS KIDS Family & Community Learning is a series of workshops that engage families in hands-on learning utilizing PBS KIDS media. Designed for families with children ages 3-8, the workshops use guided play to introduce both kids and grown-ups to exciting digital and tangible tools that are designed to support the development of science inquiry and engineering design practices. The workshops aim to foster collaboration, communication, and fun among family members while supporting grown-ups confidence and comfort to support their children's learning.

Why PBS KIDS Family & Community Learning?

Children are naturally curious and creative, constantly attempting to make sense of their world. Early STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) learning can be a direct extension of that curiosity, exploration, and creativity; providing opportunities for children to take initiative for their own learning, where they are free to ask questions, explore, investigate, express themselves, and share their ideas as they grow and learn.

As families explore and play together, facilitators are there to support the experience; modeling, discussing, and pointing out STEM learning as it's happening while providing grown-ups with experiences and tools that they can use to support their children's learning throughout the series and beyond.

Where did it come from?

PBS KIDS Family & Community Learning is inspired by a model developed by Ricarose Roque at the MIT Media Lab - <http://family.media.mit.edu>. It is further informed by past Ready To Learn family engagement work and recent research from EDC/SRI on [*What Parents Talk About When They Talk About Learning*](#).





The Role of the Mass Media in Parenting Education

A. Rae Simpson
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Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Consultant, Center for Health Communication
Harvard School of Public Health

Thus far, this symposium on "The Media and Parenthood" has considered a number of very compelling aspects of this topic: What impact do media have on family life and family interactions? What impact do media have on children? And how can parents and others influence these media effects on children?

I would like to consider briefly a complementary issue, that is, the impact of the media on the parents themselves. In particular, I would like to consider the impact of the media on parents about parenting, that is, the ways in which the media play a role in providing information and support to parents about child-rearing. In other words, while we have been considering largely the influence of the media on children, and hence indirectly on their parents, I would like to shift our focus for the moment to the influence of the media on the parents, and hence indirectly on the children.

In the past few decades, there has been an explosion of information and advice about child-rearing in the mass media. In nearly every category of mass media, from books and magazines to television and the internet, messages about child-rearing are being directed to parents to an unprecedented degree.

Yet little attention has been given to the quantity or quality of those messages, or to their impact on parents or parenting. Similarly, little attention has been given to the opportunities offered by the media to have greater and more positive impact on parents at a time when, by all accounts, such support is badly needed.

To address this gap in our understanding, recently the Center for Health Communication at the Harvard School of Public Health, with funding from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, undertook a study of the role of the mass media in parenting education. Its goal was to pull together existing information, to offer some initial observations, and to catalyze further research, reflection, discussion, consensus, and action.

In this two-year project, the Harvard Center for Health Communication gathered and analyzed data about the role of the mass media in parenting education from a variety of sources, including research studies, press reports, and media project samples and descriptions. Also, over 200 interviews were conducted with key professionals in such fields as media policy, historical research, communication research, health care, funding administration, health promotion, parent education, child advocacy, journalism, publishing, broadcasting, media economics, anthropology, sociology, advertising, and public relations. A group of eight leaders served as expert advisors, and a number of other interviewees offered substantial information and advice.

The scope of the project was defined to include media activities for which parents and others in parenting roles were specifically designated as a target audience. Projects were not included for which the

primary audience was children, although it was clearly acknowledged that parents are an important audience for children's media, as monitors and mediators of their children's experience, as the ultimate target of much of the advertising and many of the messages in children's media, and as the family members most likely to experience and influence any media effects on children's behavior. It was further acknowledged that some children's and family programs, such as *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, offer powerful models for healthy caregiving behavior, and that parents sometimes report watching them for this very purpose. Finally, it was acknowledged that the presence of the media profoundly influences family patterns of interaction, by virtue of the quantity of their daily consumption by children and parents, alone and together, and by their presence as "background noise" in family life.

Focusing, then, on messages directed to parents about parenting, and gathering a broad range of research and practical experience, the project issued a report last summer that identified four significant strengths in media coverage of parenting, but also four serious weaknesses. Based on this analysis, the report recommended two major initiatives, in order to capitalize on the media's strengths, address the weaknesses, and tap more effectively the considerable potential of the media to support current and future efforts on behalf of children, parents, and families.

The following is a summary of the report's findings. The full report is available from the Harvard Center for Health Communication, which is headed by Dr. Jay A. Winsten, and for which I serve as a consultant. The summary is necessarily brief, but I will very much welcome questions and discussion at the end of this session.

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Strengths in the Media's Role

In assessing the current state of media attention to parenting, several positive and promising developments emerged. Of these developments, the following four strengths were particularly noteworthy:

- **Parenting has become a staple among topics in many print media.**

Printed parenting materials have proliferated dramatically in the past two to four decades-- books, magazines, newsletters, regional parenting papers, pamphlets, and parenting articles in newspapers. Over 1500 parenting books are estimated to be in print today, representing about 20% of the "psychology" market. Similarly, over 200 magazines are estimated to be devoted to aspects of parenting and family life, not including women's magazines and other more general titles that include significant parenting material. Controlled-circulation, regional parenting papers, typically distributed free to consumers, are now available in almost every major city, and controlled-circulation "baby" magazines, also free to consumers, reach almost every new parent. Child and family beat reporters have become quite common at major daily newspapers, and "child-related" stories are a regular feature of the news landscape. In short, almost every parent, regardless of socioeconomic status, is exposed to printed information about parenting, most repeatedly.

- **Parenting initiatives within the electronic media are expanding.**

In particular, significant growth is occurring in three areas: (1) in public television, where two parenting series ran last year, and at least two others are in development; (2) in cable television, where several parenting and family series are running; and (3) on the internet, where parenting sites are mushrooming. On commercial television and radio, news programming and talk shows include a significant amount of parenting content. Also, public service campaigns often target parents as a key audience--campaigns such as the major "I Am Your Child" initiative, recent initiatives of the Advertising Council, and network initiatives such as NBC's *The More You Know*.

- **The demand for media information among parents is substantial and increasing.**

By a number of measures, many parents have a high level of interest in information about child-rearing, including information from the mass media, on a broad range of topics. Studies suggest that media are commonly used as sources of parenting information, sometimes as extensively as, or more extensively than, interpersonal sources such as family, clergy, or counselors. Of course, the extent to which particular parents are reached by the media varies profoundly according to a number of important factors, including age, gender, communication skills and style, cultural and language preferences, and economic resources. There are promising examples, however, of efforts to reach harder-to-reach parents, such as newsletters for isolated rural parents (including here in Wisconsin), community mobilization campaigns on African American urban radio stations, and Spanish language public service announcements.

- **The preponderance of professional opinion, supported by theory and research, is that the media, as part of a complex set of factors, can and do have a significant impact on parents and parenting.**

Although little direct research has been done specifically on the effects of the media on parents, inferences can be drawn from theory, related research, and professional experience. Together, they make a strong case that the media—including both informational and entertainment media—have important influences, in conjunction with other forces and strategies, on parents' attitudes and behaviors about child-rearing. The media, in other words, are potentially an important tool in supporting and informing parents.

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Weaknesses in the Media's Role

On the other hand, a number of drawbacks seriously undermine the ability of the media to contribute effectively to the well-being of parents and families. Of these drawbacks, four are especially important:

- **Easily accessible sources of information for the media on parenting topics are scarce and scattered.**

Contributing in particular to the inaccessibility of information is the fact that researchers and resources related to parenting are embedded in dozens of organizations and disciplines, from psychology to law, from early childhood education to adult education, from medicine to social work and community development. Over 40 professional organizations alone represent parenting researchers and practitioners. For journalists, and even for practitioners working with parents, information is difficult to locate and even more difficult to evaluate.

- **Parenting advice conveyed by the media is often confusing and conflicting.**

Caught in the interaction of economic, intellectual, cultural, and social forces, the only constant in child-rearing advice has been change. For example, broad shifts from permissive to authoritarian approaches have occurred from century to century, and, within the twentieth century, from generation to generation. Within the pendulum swings, advice about specific issues also shifts from source to source, from expert to expert: consider, for instance, recent assertions about the value and the risks of spanking or the value and risks of building children's self-esteem. Amid this

fluctuation and controversy, researchers, practitioners, the media, policy makers, advocates, and parents have all been frustrated in their efforts to seek reliable information from each other.

- **Parents of adolescents receive less information and support from the media than parents of younger children.**

This relative inattention to the parenting of adolescents occurs in spite of the fact that adolescents have unique and critical developmental needs, and that failure to meet those needs creates serious risks for adolescents, families, and society. Parents play a critical role in influencing outcomes for teenagers, as recent research has underscored, but they often lack the information and support to do so effectively. Exacerbating the problem are powerful negative images of teenagers in the news and entertainment media; recent research documents a significant tendency for the news and entertainment media to portray adolescents as "troubled teens," plagued by problems of crime, violence, drugs, and bad attitudes. These images are also widespread within the public at large, according to survey data, including parents themselves.

- **Entertainment television has been largely overlooked as a source of influence on parenting and as a vehicle for supporting and informing parents.**

What little is known about the messages about child-rearing that reach parents from entertainment programming is mixed, partly reassuring, partly troubling. Content analyses document what we know anecdotally: entertainment programming, in particular family sitcoms and films, portray dozens of parent-child interactions every hour. While depictions of family life are in many ways positive, concerns are widely shared about such issues as the underrepresentation of many cultural groups; stereotypical portrayals of gender roles; depictions of young children as needing little care and supervision (in part because the children serve largely as "props" for the adult interactions); and the depiction of parents as solving family problems quickly, easily, and in isolation from any support system. Research is urgently needed to analyze further the messages conveyed by entertainment media about parenting and family life, to assess the impact of those messages on parents, and to explore the potential for influencing those messages in positive ways, using initiatives that have been effective in promoting other important social issues, such as immunization and drunk driving.

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Recommendations

These weaknesses, while significant, are also windows of opportunity for making significant progress in understanding and strengthening the role of the media in supporting parents. At the heart of the problem are weaknesses in the knowledge base, and a set of concrete steps can be taken to address these weaknesses in cost-effective ways.

The steps involve, first, consolidating findings and building consensus among researchers and practitioners involved in issues of parenting, and second, ensuring that the emerging knowledge is disseminated in careful, extensive, and effective ways. The Harvard Parenting Project therefore recommends in its report two key initiatives:

- **Strengthen the knowledge base about parenting, in particular by consolidating knowledge and building consensus about key findings.**

It is widely agreed that the time has come to bring together leaders from a broad range of disciplinary and cultural perspectives in order to consolidate, integrate, and analyze both research

and practical knowledge about parenting.

A key purpose of these efforts would be to identify the areas of agreement that exist within the diversity of cultures and approaches that make up current parenting research and practice in this country. Widespread (albeit never universal) agreement is possible in several areas, according to a number of leading researchers and practitioners. Significant commonalities would be expected to emerge, for example, with respect to some of the central goals that parents and society hold for children and child-rearing, with respect to some of the key roles that children need parents to play in order to meet these goals, and with respect to some of the key resources that parents need from society, as well as the most effective ways to provide them. More diversity, although still some important agreement, would be expected with respect to specific parental strategies for meeting children's needs. The degree of consensus that has been achieved in recent initiatives, such as in the information on early brain development prepared for the "I Am Your Child" Campaign, illustrates the potential for this kind of process.

Such initiatives would take unprecedented steps to clarify the areas of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty with respect to existing knowledge about parenting. The implications of doing so would be profound for empowering the media, parents, and all those who work with and for parents and families.

- **Implement comprehensive, integrated communications strategies to disseminate the emerging areas of consolidation and agreement about parenting in ongoing and targeted ways.**

Information about the importance of parenting and of particular parenting practices will only be as effective as its dissemination. Carefully planned and executed communications initiatives are needed to ensure that, as it emerges, new information reaches parents, as well as media, advocates, policy makers, and practitioners who work with parents, such as parenting educators, health care providers, early childhood educators, teachers, and mental health providers. A number of characteristics would be important to the success of such initiatives, including their coordination with the many existing media projects that target parents and families.

Within these initiatives, special attention also needs to be paid to the areas in which there are gaps in current media efforts. This can be accomplished by designing and implementing special initiatives to address key issues, including (1) targeting parents who are not effectively reached by current media efforts, including harder-to-reach parents and parents of adolescents; (2) researching more extensively the impact of current messages in both informational and entertainment media, as well as ways to introduce more positive effects, especially in entertainment media; and (3) creating a permanent resource center to make information accessible to the media and others in an ongoing way.

In other words, the report recommends that significant attention be given to the coherence and the accessibility of the knowledge base about parenting, as well as to a few major gaps in the media's attention to parenting and our attention to the media.

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Next Steps

The Harvard Center for Health Communication undertook the study just described in part to clarify the best ways that the Center could contribute to the process of tapping the powerful potential of the media on behalf of parents and families. As a result of our analysis, the Center has now designed projects that follow up on some of the study's key findings, including the need for consolidation and consensus-

building about the body of knowledge, and the need for more media attention to the parenting of adolescents. Our goal is also to stimulate and support other initiatives, to have a "ripple effect," and in fact we see indications that this is happening already.

Conclusion

The stage is set, in other words, to take media initiatives in parenting education to a higher level, one that influences underlying social and parental attitudes, reaches broader audiences, sets priorities around particular social needs, engages in more self-reflection and analysis, taps existing knowledge more effectively, and addresses consciously and comprehensively the critical needs of children, parents, and families. I look forward very much to the discussion, and to working together on these important issues.

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Copies of the full report on which this presentation is based may be obtained by contacting:

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CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Since 2014, Too Small to Fail and Univision Communications, Inc. — the country’s leading media company serving Hispanic America — have partnered to create *Pequeños y Valiosos* (Young and Valuable), a multi-platform public awareness campaign that brings Too Small to Fail’s messages about early brain and language development into Hispanic homes and communities across the country. Leveraging Univision’s wide array of assets — network and cable television, radio, online/social media, on-air talent and community outreach — the campaign has amassed more than **715 million audience impressions**, provided more than 350,000 families with information online and via text, and reached over 200,000 parents and caregivers through community events and other local outreach. *Pequeños y Valiosos* campaign messages encourage parents and caregivers to dedicate time every day to language-rich activities — like talking, reading and singing with their young children — and also highlight the benefits of bilingualism and early numeracy. In 2016, the campaign expanded to include messages on the connection between social-emotional development and early learning.

Beginning in 2017, Univision and Too Small to Fail piloted a new strategy to integrate messages about early brain and language development Univision’s entertainment programming, including: (1) *Pequeños Gigantes USA*, Univision’s hit reality children’s competition show; and (2) *La Fuerza de Creer*, an original television mini-series themed entirely around early childhood issues. These efforts marked the first time that Univision has ever partnered with an outside organization to embed social messages into prime-time entertainment programming.

MOBILE CAMPAIGN

As part of *Pequeños y Valiosos*, Univision and Too Small to Fail launched a first-of-its-kind Spanish-language mobile messaging service in late 2015 that provides parents of children aged 0-5 with twice-weekly tips, prompts and activities to support parent-child engagement, boost early brain and language development, and encourage early learning. Enrollment in the mobile messaging service is now the campaign’s primary call to action and audience resource, promoted across all *Pequeños y Valiosos* television and radio public service ads (PSAs), news and entertainment integrations, and community events. To date, more than 70,000 parents have enrolled in the service, with nearly 40,000 active subscribers (as of 6/15/18).

AUDIENCE RESPONSE & IMPACT

In 2017, American University’s (AU) Center for Media & Social Impact studied the overall audience impact of exposure to early childhood messaging across the campaign’s three storytelling genres: **reality** (*Pequeños Gigantes USA*) vs. **scripted drama** (*La Fuerza de Creer*) vs. **news** (*Despierta America*). AU researchers also evaluated the quality and impact of the campaign’s text messaging resource for parents.

Key highlights include:

- After watching all three programs that integrate Too Small to Fail early childhood parenting messages, parents reported **significant increases** (11% - 14%) in intent to engage in various targeted behaviors associated with the campaign messages, such as talking, reading, singing, engaging in math activities, and speaking two languages daily.

On the other hand, those in the control condition (who viewed an unrelated telenovela with no early education content), showed virtually no change.

- Viewers who were exposed to *Pequeños y Valiosos* campaign messages showed a positive shift in the perceived importance of talking, singing, and engaging in early math activities with their children.
- Parents who subscribe to the campaign's mobile messaging campaign are **more than twice as likely** to talk, read, sing and engage in simple math activities with their children compared to the national average for Hispanics. Nearly 9 in 10 subscribers (88%) engage in conversation with their children for at least 15 minutes per day; nearly 8 in 10 (78%) sing with their children for 15 minutes every day; nearly 7 in 10 (67%) read with their children daily (67%); and, nearly 7 in 10 (71%) engage in simple math activities daily. By comparison, according to the Child Trends analysis of the 2013 National Survey of Children's Health, just 42% of Hispanic parents report telling stories or singing to their children, and just 29% report reading to their children daily.
- What's more, for 2 in 3 subscribers, campaign texts have prompted more frequent talking (62%), reading (67%) and singing (59%). And, nearly that many have followed a text suggestion for an activity with their children (64%).

2018 CAMPAIGN

In 2018, Univision and Too Small to Fail are focused on two simultaneous approaches: (1) **deepening** the audience's understanding of early brain and language development through more in-depth messaging across Univision's entertainment, news, and text platforms, including storytelling as a key strategy to deepen understanding and strengthening our cross-platform work to better connect entertainment to digital/social media and news; (2) **expanding** our audience reach through traditional communications tools (i.e., PSAs, community events, social media, on-air "tent pole" promotions, etc.);

A centerpiece of our 2018 campaign strategy is strengthening our work across entertainment platforms, with more extensive messaging integrations in *Pequeños Gigantes* (reality) and a longer season (5 episodes) of *La Fuerza de Creer* (drama). Public service ads (PSAs), news coverage and online content round out the campaign. We believe this layered approach – emphasizing depth of messaging – will give viewers more meaningful entry points to the campaign.

“Social media alone is unlikely to be at the heart of the issue, but it can make a difficult situation even harder.” Teens who have created idealized online personas may feel frustrated and depressed at the gap between who they pretend to be online and who they truly are. “If you practice being a false self eight hours a day, it gets harder to accept the less-than-perfect being you really are,” says Dr. Wick, “and as we all know there’s no harsher judge of a kid than herself.” What can parents do to help kids build a safe and reasonable relationship with social media before they’re out on their own? Dr. Wick says keeping teens from falling into the social media trap is more complicated than it sounds. “It’s not about taking the phone away or having a single conversation.” Many use social media channels to connect with family, friends and to entertain themselves. Too much social media use can effect self-esteem. Despite social media playing a positive role for most, the survey found the high use of social media and technology can have a negative impact on youth self-esteem. Parents and teens need to be informed about engaging with the online world. Parents can ask their teen to show them how they use social media and what it is. Try to navigate the social world together, rather than acting as a supervisor. Ask your teen to help you understand how they use the internet so you can make good decisions about social media use together. Read more: The way your children watch YouTube is not that surprising “ but it is a concern. Here are some tips. And many parents are wondering: Is social media causing my kid to have anxiety? It’s an important question -- and one that makes for compelling headlines for worried parents. While it’s too early to say with certainty (this is, after all, the first generation of “digital natives”), the reality is somewhat nuanced. Help kids put social media in perspective. People post stuff that makes their lives look perfect -- not the homework struggles, or the fight they had with their dad, or the hours it took to look as good as possible for the camera. Remind kids that social media leaves the messy stuff out -- and that everyone has ups and downs. Encourage offline activities.