

# RECLAIMING CHILDHOOD



October 23, 2025  
8:30 - 9:30 am

# Agenda



- I. Welcome & Call to Action
- II. Status of Progress to Date
- III. Community Action Highlights
- IV. Impact of the RC Task Force
- V. Call to Action
- VI. Conclusion and Next Steps



# Call to Action



Delegate Mark Earley, Jr.  
Virginia House of Delegates  
District 73



Janet V. Kelly  
*Secretary of Health and  
Human Resources*

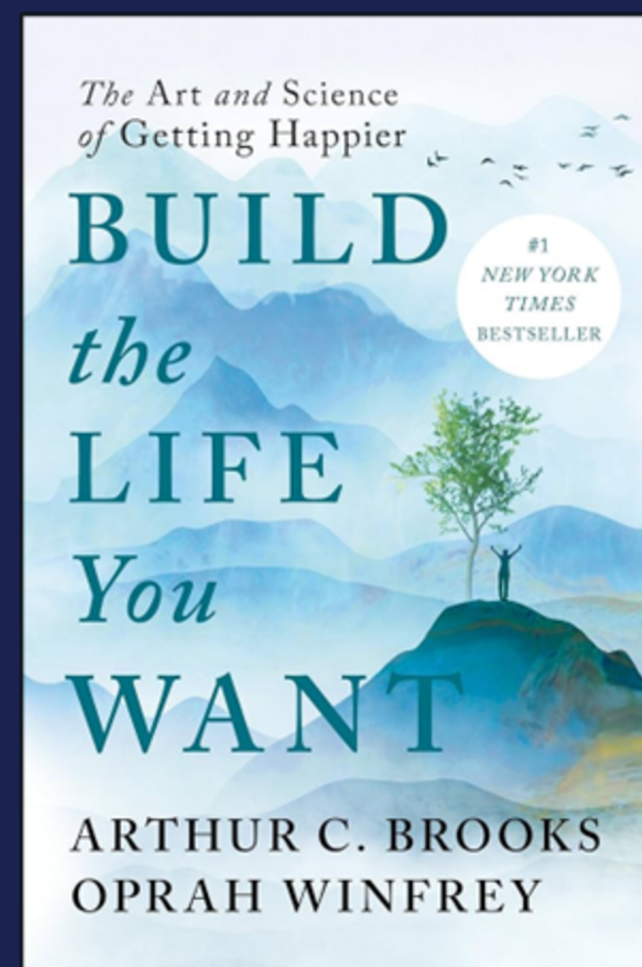
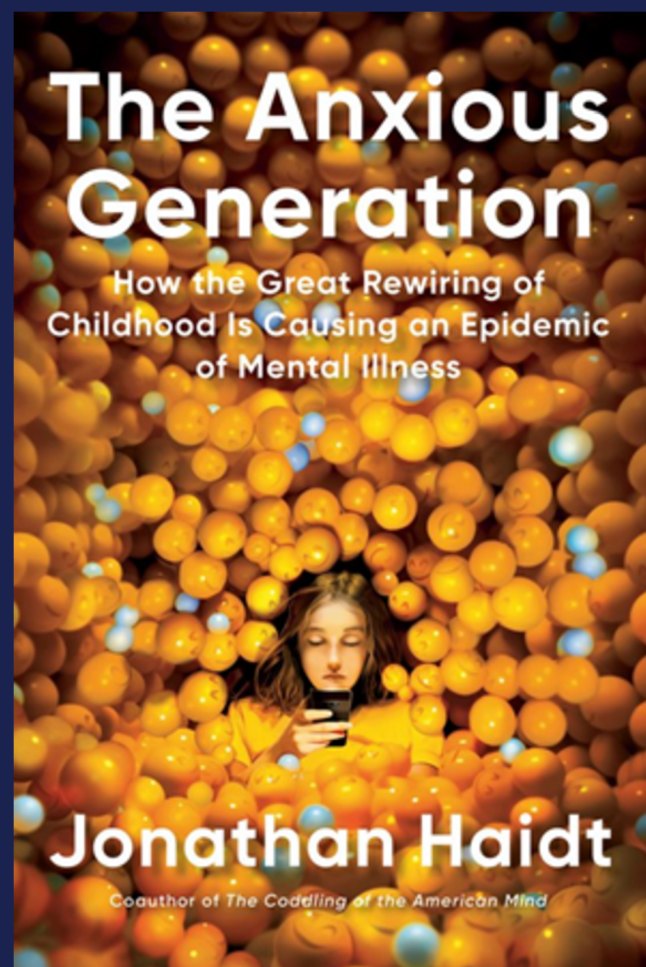
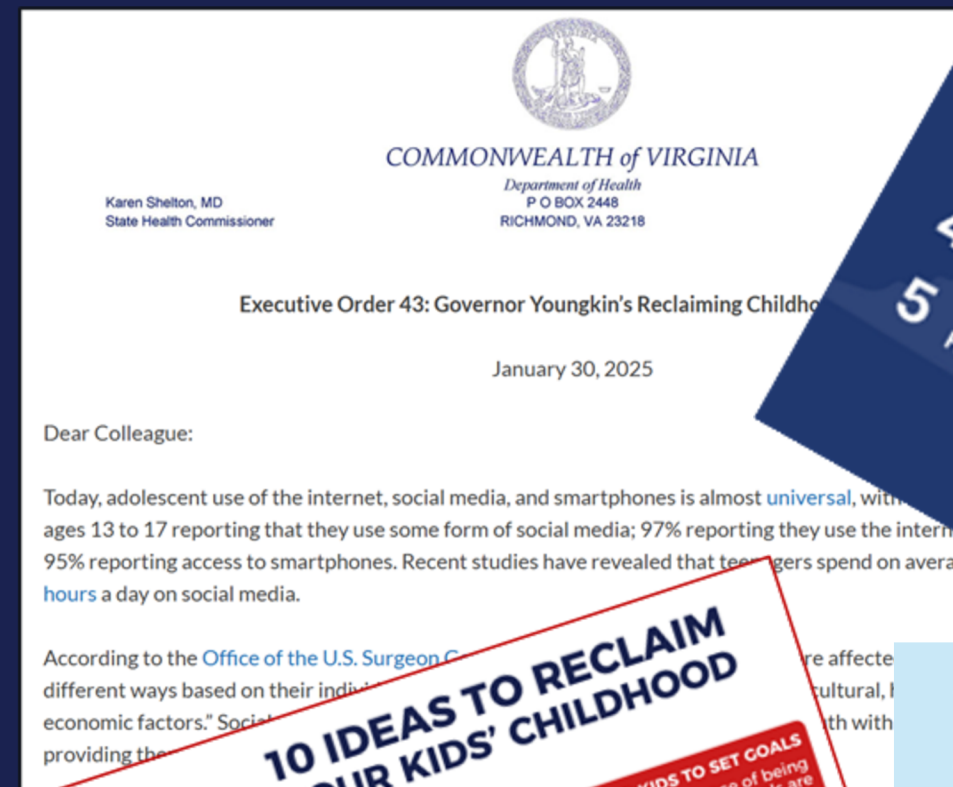


Suzanne S. Youngkin  
*First Lady of Virginia*



Aimee R. Guidera  
*Secretary of Education*







2025

# Social Media & Mental Health Toolkit

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- 3 Strategies for Parental Guidance and Oversight
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- 5 Establishing Healthy Internet Use Practices
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## 2 Social Media and Youth Mental Health

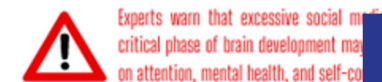
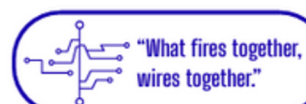
### The Science Behind How Social Media and Excessive Internet Use Affects Brain Development

During the teen years, the brain is rapidly reshaping itself through synaptic pruning—strengthening frequently used pathways and trimming unused ones. Habits like constant scrolling or checking notifications can shape long-term brain wiring.

Too much fast, unpredictable content can overstimulate the brain's reward system, leading to addictive behaviors and reduced ability to focus, manage stress, or enjoy offline life.

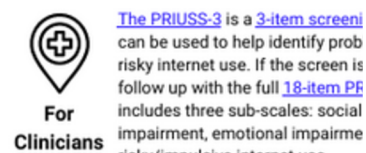


The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, is still developing in teens. This makes them more sensitive to



#### Warning Signs of Social Media Overuse or Misuse

- Mood changes after being online
- Avoiding offline activities
- Poor sleep or "doomscrolling"
- Falling grades
- Feeling isolated or overwhelmed



The PRIUSS-3 is a 3-item screen that can be used to help identify problematic internet use. If the screen is followed up with the full 18-item PEI, it includes three sub-scales: social impairment, emotional impairment, and risky/impulsive internet use.

## 3 Strategies for Parental Guidance and Oversight

### Section Highlights

- Explains digital platforms and their common features - benefits and drawbacks
- Practical guidance for monitoring screen use, setting age appropriate boundaries, and using parental controls
- Fostering open family communication and modeling positive digital habits

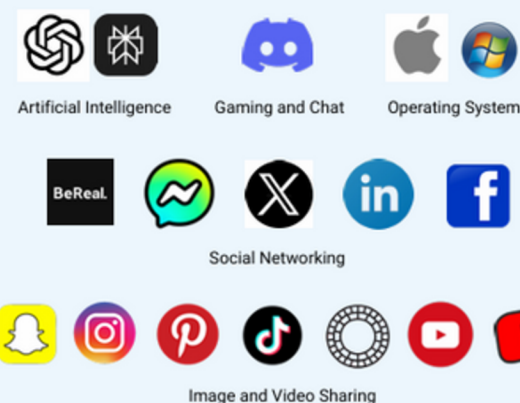
### Digital Platform Literacy

Digital platforms—like social media, artificial intelligence, and gaming apps—connect people and enable sharing and interaction. They offer access to vast information and opportunities for self-expression, but also risks like misinformation, privacy concerns, and addictive design features that can affect youth mental health.

Social media apps evolve quickly, making it hard for parents to keep up. Parents should actively learn about the apps their children use, as popularity doesn't guarantee safety. Controversial apps often return even after removal, so staying informed is crucial.

### Test Your Digital Platform Knowledge

Do you know the difference between Artificial Intelligence, Gaming & Chat, Social Networking, Image and Video Sharing, and Operating Systems? Name these popular icons then click on the icon to learn more about their features.



Links to the [Center of Excellence for Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#)

## 5 Establishing Healthy Internet Use Practices



### Take 15 minutes to do a social media clean up!

Adapted from [Smart Social](#)

#### What is a social media clean-up?

- Organize and declutter your online space.
- Update privacy settings, unfollow profiles, and delete questionable posts.
- Remove anything that could have a negative impression on your identity and ensure your digital footprint fits an image consistent with your interests and values.
- Search for your name on the internet. Check the first few pages of results to see what kind of information and images are appearing.

What apps do you spend the most time on?

#### Why should parents and educators care?

- A questionable social media presence could potentially show red flags and lead to a job or school rejection letter.
- A positive social media presence can highlight positive attributes and demonstrate responsible online etiquette.
- Cybercriminals can learn a lot about students from their social media accounts.

Did someone tag you in a photo that is questionable?

#### What can parents and educators do?

- Help determine what is appropriate for them to post to create the image they want prospective colleges, employers, and others to see.
- Have an open dialogue with your child and guide them in learning what text and photos are appropriate to post online.
- Determine what platforms are best for your child to use to build a positive social media resume to be noticed by job recruiters and colleges.

# RECLAIMING CHILDHOOD



# Community in Action: Highlights



**Emily Harrison**

*Collaboration with the  
Partnership for  
Community Wellness at  
Roanoke County Schools*



**Jason Frost**

*Wired Human and the  
Screen Safe Alliance*



**Clare Morrell**

*Author of *The Tech Exit:  
A Practical Guide to  
Freeing Kids and Teens  
from Smartphones**



**Carrie Sheffield**  
*Healthy Faith*

# Impact of the Reclaiming Childhood Task Force





# Conclusion and Next Steps



- Social Media and Youth Mental Health Trainings through December 2025
- Get involved for Virginia General Assembly 2026
- Support community action!

# THANK YOU!



# #ReclaimChildhood

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Website:

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