

The Healthy Buzz



Fresh tips, tasty bites, and growing strong—together!

WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

Parenting today often means navigating systems that were never designed with families at the center. Whether that's a healthcare landscape filled with competing interests, or digital platforms engineered to compete for your child's attention. It's easy to feel like decisions are being pushed at you, instead of made with you. But here's the truth: parents still matter most.

In healthcare, the best outcomes happen when families and clinicians collaborate. Parents are the decision-makers; doctors provide guidance and clarity. The Patient's Bill of Rights exists to protect your role, ensuring educated, respectful, and case-by-case choices for your child.

The same principle applies online. Parents set boundaries, protect sleep, and prioritize real-life connection. But companies like Meta also must be accountable for designing platforms that safeguard young users. Strong parental leadership and corporate responsibility work together, and both are needed to support children's health and well-being.

*Across health care and technology, the goal is the same: protect children, respect families, and put well-being ahead of pressure or profit. You deserve clear information, honest conversations, and the confidence to make decisions that fit your child — not someone else's agenda. **When parents are trusted and supported, kids are stronger for it.***

Warmly,

Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?

FACT OR MYTH?



If child safety settings are on, **nothing harmful** can reach my child online.


Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](#) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY ACTION



Our Tech Contract.

 Bedtime = No Screens

 Safe Apps

 Daily Screen Time

Dinner = No Screens

Child



Date

Parent



We
agree

Family Tech Contract - Do It Together!

Set your family up for healthy screen habits with a tech contract everyone helps create!

How it works:

- Have your kids decorate the contract.
- Parents guide rules; kids contribute.
- **Ideas:** bedtime phone basket, "safe" apps, daily screen limits, and one tech-free family anchor (like dinner).
- Agree on simple, fair consequences and sign it together.

Why it works: Kids are more likely to follow rules they helped make, while parents stay in charge of safety and boundaries. Hang it somewhere visible as a reminder that healthy tech habits are a team effort!

Trust parents and clinicians to decide on maternal vaccines

[The Virginian-Pilot](#)

Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant

As a board-certified OB-GYN with more than 25 years of experience, I've seen the best health decisions made where medical evidence meets family values—and where parents decide in partnership with their own clinicians. Nowhere is that more important than when we talk about protecting newborns from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Respiratory viruses pose a real threat to infants, particularly in the first months of life. Newborns face higher risks of severe illness and hospitalization, and RSV remains a leading cause of infant admissions each year. Maternal vaccination — given during pregnancy so protective antibodies can be passed from mother to baby — offers an important layer of protection during a child's most vulnerable period.

That's why, in my own practice, I advise many patients to consider maternal RSV vaccination. It can significantly reduce the likelihood that a newborn will struggle to breathe in an emergency department or require hospitalization. But this decision is never one-size-fits-all. Timing, medical history, seasonality and individual risk factors all matter. The right choice should always be made by parents in consultation with their own healthcare provider.

Parents want that choice. Recent polling released by American Advancement shows that **more than 80% of Republicans and key swing-state voters** believe government health agencies should not restrict access to safe, effective vaccines. When it comes to their child's health, parents overwhelmingly trust their own doctors most. Physicians remain the most trusted voices. Parents want information — not mandates.

Through my work with **Advocates for Healthy Kids**, I help provide parents with clear, trustworthy information so they can make empowered, informed decisions for their families. This includes guidance on choosing a provider you trust, understanding your rights as a health care decision-maker for your child, and navigating vaccine conversations with confidence. In a media environment filled with noise and polarization around children's health, families deserve reliable, patient-focused information grounded in evidence — not politics.

In medicine, roles are clearly defined. Patients and parents are the decision-makers. Clinicians are trained experts who listen, diagnose, teach and advise. There is no role for politicians in the exam room.

The Patient's Bill of Rights exists to help families understand the authority they hold in medical decision-making. Parents have:

The Right to Refuse Care: You have the legal and ethical right to decline any treatment, test or procedure offered to your child, as long as refusal does not place them in immediate, life-threatening danger.

The Right to Privacy: Your child's medical information is protected under HIPAA. You control who can access those records and have the right to ask questions, request corrections and understand how information is used.

The Right to Equal Respect: Regardless of your values or beliefs, you are entitled to respectful, non-coercive care. You have the right to ask questions, take time to decide, and be treated with dignity.

The Right to Know Your Options: Your provider should explain all medically appropriate options, including benefits, risks and alternatives. Informed consent means receiving the full picture — not just a single recommendation.

The Right to Choose What's Best: Ultimately, parents decide what is right for their child. Providers advise; they do not coerce. As long as a child is not in immediate danger, that choice belongs to the family.

Medical settings can feel overwhelming, but parents are not powerless. You are your child's first and most important advocate. When you understand your rights, you are better equipped to ask questions, seek clarity and make confident decisions.

When parents and clinicians work together — guided by evidence, compassion and trust — we protect newborns, strengthen families and preserve the integrity of medical care. That is the standard every family deserves

Dr. Siobhan Stolle Dunnavant of Gloucester is a board-certified OB-GYN with more than 25 years of experience caring for women and delivering babies in Virginia. A mother of four and a former state senator, she serves as a spokesperson for Advocates for Healthy Kids, where she helps parents navigate evidence-based decisions on maternal and pediatric health, including RSV prevention.

What the Landmark Social Media Cases Mean for Families — and How Parents Can Keep Kids Grounded

Opening arguments are beginning in Los Angeles County Superior Court in the first major "social media addiction" trial against Big Tech, part of a wave of cases arguing that platforms

were designed in ways that harm young people’s mental health. ***The comparison has been made to seatbelts, secondhand smoke, and warning labels — only now the focus is on newsfeeds, notifications, and late-night scrolling.***

For parents, this moment matters because it reinforces something families have known for years: screens aren’t inherently bad, but how they’re designed (and how they’re used) can shape kids’ sleep, focus, and emotional health. While courts debate responsibility at the platform level, families can take meaningful action right now at home.

What’s Happening in Court

The California state case [claims that engagement-driven design](#) (infinite scroll, autoplay, algorithmic feeds) deliberately hooked young users and contributed to [increased risk](#) of depression and self-harm. Executives from major platforms are expected to testify. A separate case is moving in federal court (*Federal MDL 3047*).

These cases matter because they challenge a long-standing business model in which companies profit by capturing attention — including children’s attention — with few meaningful guardrails. Court decisions could influence how platforms design teen experiences, from age verification to default privacy settings and limits on attention-maximizing features. **These decisions matter, but families don’t need to wait for a verdict to protect their kids.**

What We Believe

Parents are the first and most important line of defense when it comes to children’s online lives.

No app, filter, or law can replace engaged parenting. Knowing which platforms kids use, setting age-appropriate boundaries, and talking openly about online experiences are foundational. Parents shape daily habits (sleep, focus, and confidence) in ways no company ever will.

At the same time, social media companies must be held accountable for creating safer environments for kids.

Big Tech companies like Meta have built highly profitable products that capture and monetize young users’ attention. That reality isn’t new, and it’s why stronger safeguards matter. Designing platforms that minimize screen addiction, prioritize child safety by default, and respect developmental limits isn’t anti-technology. **It’s basic responsibility.**

These truths are not in conflict. Parental leadership and better platform design are

complementary — and both are necessary if we want healthier outcomes for kids.

The Mental Health Backdrop, in Plain English

[The U.S. Surgeon General](#) has warned that social media can pose risks to youth mental health and called for safer-by-default design from platforms along with common-sense family boundaries (tech-free spaces, age-appropriate use, and sleep protection).

Parents don't need academic language to recognize the patterns. [Research consistently links](#) heavy screen use (especially in the evening) with shorter sleep duration, delayed bedtimes, and poorer sleep quality in children and teens. Over time, those disruptions affect mood, focus, and emotional balance.

Inside classrooms, the effects show up in attention and learning. Nearly [three-quarters of U.S. high school teachers](#) say cellphone distraction is a major problem, which is why many schools are moving toward phone-free class time.

What Parents Can Do Now

So, what should parents do right now? You don't have to pick a side in the shouting match. You can set simple, steady habits that protect what matters most: sleep, attention, real-life connection, and your child's confidence.

1) Protect sleep first

Make your child's bedroom phone-free and charge devices outside the room overnight.

2) Make attention visible

Create a homework routine: phones in a basket, focused work blocks, short movement breaks.

3) Build real-life connection into the routine

Encourage in-person friendships and unstructured play. Protect one daily "anchor point" like dinner, a short walk after dishes, or ten minutes of reading together.

4) Create a simple family tech plan

Decide together: where devices live at night, which apps are okay for which ages, and what happens if a rule is broken. Set platform settings to the safest defaults available.

5) Model the balance you want to see

Kids mirror us. If you're asking them to put away devices at dinner, put yours away too. Narrate your own choices: "I'm putting my phone in the basket until after bedtime."

Protecting Kids Online Takes Parents AND Accountability

Parents must stay actively involved in their children's online lives. Setting boundaries, protecting sleep, and modeling healthy habits are essential because no platform or policy can replace engaged parenting. Families have always been the first line of defense when it comes to kids' well-being.

But responsibility cannot stop there. Companies like Meta have built enormously profitable platforms by capturing children's attention, often without adequate safeguards in place. Expecting parents to manage the consequences alone is not reasonable. Protecting kids online requires both strong parental leadership **and** real accountability for Big Tech. **Families deserve technology designed with children's health and development in mind — not business models that put profit first.**

Good Data Welcomes Good Questions

Parents deserve real answers — not labels.

Prevention can be powerful, but it's okay to ask questions about any medical intervention involving your child.

Good care looks like respectful, case-by-case decisions made with a trusted clinician and your family's values in mind.

Curiosity builds confidence.

Questions to Bring to Your Next Visit:

- What's the benefit for my child right now?
- What are the risks and benefits of the illness vs. the vaccine?
- What are common side effects/what should I look out for?
- What's a common misconception with this?

Check out what Dr. Dunnivant has to say about this!

[SEE THE INSTAGRAM POST](#)

Looking for a place to start your research?

Check out our [Resources Page!](#) It's a great place to begin your journey in becoming a confident, educated advocate in your child's development.

[START YOUR RESEARCH](#)

FUN LUNCH IDEA

EDIBLE TREASURE MAP

Turn lunchtime into an adventure while sneaking in some healthy ingredients! Kids can create their own "treasure map" right on their plate. This is super customizable to what your child likes, and gives them a great excuse to play with their food!



[DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER](#)

ENGAGE WITH US

Have you noticed anything concerning on your child's device from an app that was supposed to be safe? How did you handle it with them? What did you do to make sure that doesn't happen again?

LET US KNOW HERE

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnivant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



Paid for by Advocates for Healthy Kids

1802 Vernon St NW, Washington, DC 20009

This email was sent to test@recipient.com

[Unsubscribe](#)