

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,

There's a question I keep coming back to lately, one I think a lot of parents are asking too: Who actually controls what your child sees online?

The honest answer, right now, is mostly the platforms. And that's not because parents haven't been paying attention — it's because the system was never really set up to give you the tools to be in charge.

That might be changing. There's legislation moving through Congress right now that I think deserves your attention — not because it solves everything, but because it's asking the right question: should your child's default setting online be "open to everything" or "protected until you decide otherwise"?

Most parents don't hesitate when they hear it framed that way.

The digital world our kids are growing up in is genuinely new territory. None of us had a roadmap handed to us. But that doesn't mean we're powerless — it means we have to stay engaged, stay curious, and keep showing up. That's what good parenting has always looked like, and it's exactly what this community does.

As always, I'm glad you're here.

Warmly,

Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?

A photograph of a child's hands holding a tablet. The tablet screen displays a colorful, cartoonish interface with various characters and text. The child is wearing a pink and white patterned shirt. The background is blurred, showing a person in a blue shirt. The image is framed by orange bars at the top and bottom.

FACT OR MYTH?

If a law protects kids online,
**parents don't need to do
anything else.**

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



THE BOREDOM JAR



The Boredom Jar

Before the weekend, sit down together and fill a mason jar with activity ideas. Write them on slips of paper, draw them, decorate the jar — whatever sounds fun. Aim for a mix: something active, something creative, something quiet.

The next time someone says "I'm bored," the jar has the answer. Pull a slip and go.

It sounds simple because it is. But there's something genuinely fun about the ritual of it — the anticipation of reaching in, the silliness of whatever you pull, the fact that your kids helped build the thing that's now solving the problem. They're invested in it before the boredom even hits.

A few ideas to get you started:

- Build a fort
- Dance party (you pick the song, they pick the next one)
- Draw a map of your neighborhood from memory
- Write a letter to someone you haven't talked to in a while
- Backyard obstacle course
- Make up a story, one sentence at a time

The jar lives on the counter. *No screens required.*

THE LATEST

Who Should Decide What Your Kids Access Online? A Bill in Congress Says It Should Be You.

Jonathan Haidt has been one of the loudest and most credible voices in the conversation about what smartphones are doing to our kids. His book *The Anxious Generation* laid out years of research behind a conclusion that many parents had already reached intuitively: something shifted around 2012, and it wasn't subtle. Depression, anxiety, loneliness — the numbers moved in the wrong direction right around the time smartphones became a permanent fixture in kids' pockets.

Haidt doesn't mince words about why. "The companies are competing against each other for users' attention," he's written, "and, like gambling casinos, they'll do anything to hold on to their users even if they harm them in the process."

That's the backdrop for a bill now working its way through Congress — one that Haidt himself has pointed to as a step in the right direction.

What the Parents Over Platforms Act Actually Is

The Parents Over Platforms Act (POPA) has a simple premise: parents should be the ones setting the rules for what their kids access online, not tech companies, and not a government default that treats every family the same.

Right now, keeping kids safe online is a patchwork. Some states have passed laws that require parental approval for essentially every app a minor downloads — which sounds protective until you realize that means you'd be approving weather apps, homework tools, and news sites right alongside TikTok. The burden ends up on you, and it's constant.

POPA takes a different approach:

- You answer one question: "Is this user a minor?" once, when you set up the device.
- The app store sends a simple signal to apps: minor or adult. Your child's actual birthdate and personal information stay private.
- Apps automatically adjust for minor accounts. Adult content is blocked, targeted advertising is turned off, and safety features are activated.
- You still have full control to block specific apps, set limits, and monitor usage. You're just not flooded with approval requests every time your kid wants to download something new.

Why It Matters That Haidt Supports It

What makes Haidt's voice meaningful here is that he doesn't come from one political tribe. His research has been cited by both ends of the political spectrum, and his recommendations have always centered on the same idea: ***we've overprotected kids in the physical world and underprotected them in the digital one.*** The phone-based childhood, he argues, replaced the free-range, play-based childhood that generations before Gen Z grew up with — and kids are paying for that trade-off.

When he highlighted POPA on social media earlier this month, he called it an example of "creativity in finding ways to do it well" — specifically because it asks parents to set age information once, at setup, rather than turning every app download into a permission slip.

That framing matters. Because there's a real difference between a policy that empowers parents and one that just adds more checkboxes while leaving the underlying problem untouched.

What This Means for Your Family

No law is going to replace what you do at home. Knowing which platforms your kids are using, talking openly about what they're seeing, protecting sleep by keeping phones out of bedrooms — *those things matter more than any bill Congress passes.*

But legislation like POPA is asking the right question: should the default setting for kids online be "open to everything until a parent catches it" or "protected until a parent decides otherwise"? Most parents would choose the second option, and quickly.

The families who are most prepared for whatever comes next (legally, technologically, culturally) are the ones paying attention now. Not because they're anxious, but because they're engaged. And that's the thing no app store or federal rule can replicate.

You're already doing the most important part. Staying informed on what's moving through Congress is just another way of staying in the game.

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](#)

TURKEY & ZUCCHINI MEATBALLS W/ MARINARA

A WEEKNIGHT STAPLE HIDING A SECRET INGREDIENT!

These aren't your average meatballs. Shredded zucchini goes straight into the mix — keeping them tender, adding a little extra nutrition, and disappearing completely into the final product. Baked hands-off in the oven, ready in under 35 minutes, and works over pasta, in a sub roll, or straight from the pan.



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

ENGAGE WITH US

Your kids just saw you put your phone down for a whole evening. What did you do instead — and what happened?

[SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE](#)

KEEP IN TOUCH

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



Paid for by Advocates for Healthy Kids

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