

Parents: What the Study Found

About the parents

All were parents of children aged 10- 13 years and represented the diversity of family life in Australia.

Key findings about parents

1. Parental Uncertainty

Parents naturally expressed a high level of care and concern when it comes to their children's online activities. Many parents had a fear of the unknown explaining that they weren't sure what online risks lay ahead for their child but were sure there would be some.

2. Parental Peer Pressure

The quickly evolving nature of technology and the lack of clear social norms around age-appropriate online behaviour contributed to parental anxiety. They grappled with questions like, "What should a 10-year-old be allowed to do online versus a 12-year-old?" and often feel pressured to keep up with other parents' decisions regarding their children's technology use, fearing their child might be left out or disadvantaged if they impose stricter limits. This constant comparison and the fear of missing out led to parents second-guessing their own choices and potentially relaxing boundaries they might otherwise set.

3. Relying on children as informants

The study found that parents often turn to their children as a primary source of information about potential risks associated with specific apps or online platforms, so the parent could then provide the right guidance. While demonstrating a willingness to engage with their children about technology, this reliance also highlights generational differences in tech use and parents were often unfamiliar with the apps their child used.