

Welcome to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations,
your authority in
navigating the world of
homeschooling diverse learners.

Featuring Peggy Ployer from
Sped Homeschool,
Annie Yorty from AnnieYorty.com,
Leilani Melendez from Living with Eve,
Stephanie Buckwalter from ELARP Learning,
and Dawn Jackson from Dawn
Jackson Educational
Consulting and Tutoring.

With over seventy five years
of combined homeschooling expertise,
experiences and perspectives,
this group is eager to
share their wealth of
wisdom to empower your
homeschooling journey.

So grab your favorite mug,
settle in and get ready for
insightful discussions,

valuable insights and practical tips.

Give your homeschool the
power boost it needs to
successfully educate the
unique learners in your home.

Welcome to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations.

I'm your host, Peggy Ployer,
and this show is where we
tackle real questions and
challenges that
homeschooling families face,
bringing you expert advice, encouragement,
and practical solutions to
support your unique learner.

Today,
we're diving into a topic that every
parent, especially homeschooling parents,
need to be aware of,
keeping kids safe in a digital world.

With the internet playing a
huge role in education, entertainment,
and socialization,

it's more important than
ever for parents to
understand how to protect
their kids online.

Joining me for this
conversation is Jack Hughes,
an eighteen-year-old online
safety expert who has
firsthand experience
navigating the digital
world as a homeschooler.

Jack specializes in parental controls,
especially on Apple devices,
and knows all the tricks
and loopholes kids use to
bypass restrictions.

He's on a mission to help
parents safeguard their
kids online by providing practical,
straightforward advice
through his podcast,
The Parent Tech Support Show,
his newsletter,

and his recently published book,

The Definitive Guide to

Protecting Kids Online.

In today's episode,

we'll cover essential

topics like how to block

inappropriate content,

set screen time limits,

and stay ahead of the

latest digital risks.

Jack will also share some

insights into how

technology has shaped his

generation and even some of

the ways kids use tech to

cheat in school.

Jack, welcome to the show.

I'm so excited for this conversation.

Thanks for having me on, Peggy.

Absolutely.

This is a topic we need to

talk about all the time

because it's forever changing.

And I think parents always seem at a loss.

So my experience with this

is I'm the oldest of fourteen kids.

So my parents had four and

then adopted ten.

And so by the time that my

younger siblings came into

the home and they were very

good at getting around stuff,

my dad was so out of tech

and he was an engineer.

I mean,

he he introduced me to an Apple computer.

I learned programming when I

was in grade school,

way before the time that

anybody learned any of that.

but he kind of got

outsmarted because the tech

kept increasing faster than

he could keep up.

And so having somebody like

you to kind of walk us

through all of that and
keep up with these things
that are constantly
changing and how kids get
around them is important for parents.
So I'm so glad to have you here today.
Yeah, my story was maybe not identical,
but very similar to you.
I'm the oldest of six siblings,
or not the oldest of six,
the second oldest of six siblings.
And my dad was also,
he was pretty tech savvy
when I was young.
He showed me how to write emails,
showed me how to text message people.
But when I got to like,
thirteen or fourteen,
I started passing him up and then,
you know, it was easy.
It was running circles
around him at that point.
Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I think kids these days, you know,
like most parents will,
will tell you if you can't figure it out,
just hand your, your tablet to, you know,
a five-year-old they'll,
they'll figure out how to
work it more so than you will.

So you specialize in helping
parents set up parental controls,
especially on Apple devices.

What are the first steps
parents should take in
though protecting their kids online?

Yeah.

So I'd say locking down, um,
be one of what you want to
block harmful content is
probably one of the main
priorities right so that
would these are really
broad brush strokes so

these are there's a lot of
nuances between all this
depending on the child's
maturity level and whatnot
or their age but I'd say
restricting the web browser
is a big thing whether that
means blocking the web
browser completely or
heavily restricting it
restricting certain apps,
so restricting their
ability to download social
media like Instagram or
maybe that could be YouTube
or YouTube Kids or something.

That could be restricting
certain games you don't
want them to play.

That could be, I don't know,
like Call of Duty or that
could be Fortnite or something like that.

And that also could be

setting downtime limits so that if they,

let's say they go to,

or they have school time

from eight till five PM,

eight AM to five PM,

have the phone restricted

during that or have app limits.

So they can't spend three

hours a day on a game or an app.

So these are broad strokes,

a lot of nuances between all of that.

Right.

But you're setting the boundaries,

basically,

as you're kind of figuring out

how to control the content.

But it's good to have those

broad kind of parameters to

start from to just kind of say, well,

these are our limits.

And I know as a parent,

we parented through that time period,

you know, about the age of your parents,

because my kids are all adults now.

And

It was constantly changing

because all these new tech

things that we never

existed all of a sudden

came into existence.

And you're like,

how do we deal with this one now?

So, yeah, it's always...

Always changing.

Yeah.

So what are the best ways

for to block inappropriate

content like on iPhones and

other Apple devices?

I know a lot of people,

they they gravitate to

those Apple devices.

I don't actually own one.

I love our viewers to know how to do that.

Yeah,

one of the reasons why I mainly

specialize in Apple phones

is because I grew up on Apple devices.

And I think the statistics are like,

eighty percent of kids use Apple devices.

So that's one of the reasons

why I focus on Apple devices.

But the best way to block

inappropriate content,

let's just focus on iPhones

and Apple devices.

You probably want to start

with the web browser.

So Safari,

which is built into Apple devices.

I mean, you can do that.

You can restrict that using screen time.

So this is your basic web filter.

So Apple has a built-in printer control.

It's called Screen Time.

You go to Settings.

You scroll down to Screen Time.

It's very confusing.

Screen Time works well,

but it's very confusing.

It's for Apple,

which prides itself on an

expert design company.

Being user-friendly, yes.

Yeah, it's not very user-friendly.

Got it.

Um,

you go to content and privacy

restrictions and you go to,

I believe it says web

content and something,

something you press that

button and they'll give

you three options.

It gives you, um, unrestricted access.

So that's what by default,

everyone has unrestricted access.

And then it gives you limit adult content.

And essentially this is a, um,

It essentially allows all the websites,

except for the

inappropriate websites that it knows of.

So all the adult content
that Apple knows of,
it will restrict on the iPhone.

But the problem with that is that catches,
you know,
that catches ninety-nine point
ninety-nine percent of the
adult websites.

But there are some in life, something new,
right?

Yeah.

Hundreds of websites a day
and it can't catch them all.

Or you could find
pornography on websites
that shouldn't have pornography on it,
like a social media site
like Twitter has a lot of
porn on it and that kids
will just use that,
even with that filter turned on.

So that filter is kind of...

It's helpful if you don't

want to see porn just for yourself,
but it's not really helpful
for completely blocking
porn from a child's phone.

That's good for parents to
know because I think a lot
of times parents will just go, well,
that's a safeguard and
we'll just turn that on and
then we're good.

Um, but that's,
that's really important for
them to know that.

Yes, that, um, that is just like the first,
first step maybe towards, um,
starting to block, but not,
not the ultimate, um, control.

So, yeah, what you can do is that, um,
you can,
you could turn it on limit adult
websites and that also
prevents them from being
able to delete their history.

So if you want to put an extra word,
You can do that and then
look through their history
and see if they are
visiting any inappropriate sites or apps.

But the safest option is
just to press the button
that says the third option,
which is approved websites only.

So it's going to block every
website except for these
approved websites that you specify.

So that's what I recommend
for most parents.

Yeah.

So there is that option as well.

Yeah.

Okay.

Well, what about screen time?

I know that's a big concern for parents.

And I know there's a lot of
evidence out there now that
screen time for kids is really harmful.

So a lot of parents already
know that they should be setting those.

What are some practical ways
for them to enforce them though?

Yeah.

a lot of a lot of parents or
a lot of people kind of
rule these out but a lot of
times the physical like
taking away of the phone at
night time or um you know
physically keeping them off
their phone especially at a
young age is is really helpful um

And then there are also,
you could set limits on their phone.

Funny enough,
you can set limits using the
screen time feature,
screen time for screen time.

I find that funny.

But Apple's screen time
system allows you to set

app limits on certain apps or categories.

So you go into screen time,

And let's say you find the

games category and you

press the social media

category and you set a limit for,

I don't know,

an hour and a half for these categories.

And then once your child or

the teenager spends an hour and a half on,

let's say Minecraft,

they spend an hour and a

half on Minecraft,

then it'll automatically block

Minecraft for that day.

Or you can set downtime limits.

So where it's like, you know,

at night time,

the phone shuts off and you

only have the essential

functions of the phone,

like messages or calls.

And you can also use third

party services to do

essentially the same things

as screen time.

So even if you don't have an Apple phone,

there's other options for

like an Android of some sort.

In fact, actually,

the printer controls on

Android is a lot better on

Apple just because Apple is

super focused on security.

and privacy,

even though that might be kind

of markety and they just

want to have control over

their phones and they say

it's for security reasons.

I'm a little skeptical of that,

but you can do a lot more

on Android than you can on Apple.

So actually,

if you want to really lock

down your child's phone,

you want to get a Android phone.

I know like the Bark phone

or the Gap phone are really

good options for that.

Oh, okay.

That's awesome.

So I know parents also worry

about their kids bypassing

these controls.

What are some of the most

common loopholes or

workarounds that you've seen?

Yeah,

so I was a expert on these loopholes.

I loved them as a kid.

Half the time I didn't need.

Probably probably the most damaging.

a loophole that I used all

the time and by far the

most useful one was

something I call the Google

sign in back door and what my

What my parents would do,

which majority of parents think,
because Apple's screen time
is so confusing, it's such a mess,
they'll block Safari off my phone.

They press the button that
says block Safari.

And so they think I no
longer have a web browser on my phone.

But the problem is they just
blocked the app Safari.

They didn't block the
phone's ability to use the internet.

The way you do that is to
use those content filters I
was explaining earlier.

Got it.

So what I would find is I
would find an app that had
a Google sign-in feature.

Have you ever signed up for
a service and the app
offered the option to use
Google to sign in?

Right.

Yeah.

So what you're able to do
with that is you're able to
press that and it opens up
a little window in the app
and you're able to get on
Google from that little
window instead of going to Safari.

And it's not just with the
Google sign and there's other,
other ways you can do that too,
but that's essentially the,
I call it the Google sign
in because it's the most common,
but yeah,

I used that a lot as a kid.

My parents always thought I
didn't have Safari,

I didn't have access to the web browser,
but for years I would just
use that loophole

And there's also stuff you

can do with Siri.

You can use Siri to search

up websites sometimes.

There's also the unlimited

screen time and messages

loophole that I would use occasionally.

So my parents would set a limit for like,

let's say it was an hour

limit on messages.

So I couldn't talk to my friends.

So

What I would do instead is I

would wait for a notification to come in.

Then what you would be able

to do is you'd be able to

swipe down that

notification and just

respond to them on that notification.

So screen time wasn't

tracking time on messages.

I was just on the notification.

So I essentially got

unlimited screen time on messages.

Some kids will download a
third-party browser like
Google Chrome or Google Play.
on their phone.

And the problem with a third
party web browser is Apple
screen time doesn't really
have a lot of control over that.

So they're able to get past the,
some of the restrictions.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So make sure no one has any
third party browsers on
their phone or your child
has no third party browsers
on their phone.

Right, yeah, that's a lot.

And they can get in some big
trouble just through those things.

So yeah, that's good for them to know.

So many parents worry about
their kids being exposed to

harmful content on social media.

What are your top

recommendations for keeping

kids safe on platforms like Instagram,

Snapchat, TikTok?

I mean,

they're all out there and we all

know that people share what

they share and how do you control that?

I'd say there's really no

good reason for someone

under sixteen to have

Snapchat or TikTok or Instagram.

It's just the cons outweigh

the benefits when it comes

to especially Instagram and

Snapchat and TikTok.

But those are the three

baddies when it comes to digital safety.

Now,

if your child is sixteen or if they

are mature enough,

all these services offer

their own built-in printer

controls and monitoring stuff.

Oh, okay.

So you could sort of see a

little bit what they're doing.

It depends on the thing.

So I can think on Snapchat and Instagram,

you can see who they're

following and who they're

texting or who they're messaging.

And you could sort of set up

content restrictions,

but it's not that good.

I'm very skeptical of that sort of stuff.

I think it's just Instagram

and Snapchat putting these

things on to get the heat

off their back because

there was a lot of cases

that was brought to them.

But you can use those parental controls.

You can monitor what your

child is doing on these services,

but I'd say just keep it
away from them until
they're at least sixteen
and then employ those built-in controls.

right yeah there's there's
just so much and so much
that they don't need to be
exposed to that is going on
on those those sites and so

I I completely agree um
yeah I get kids on uh on
tick tock and and uh
snapchat all yelling at me
for recommending these
these six teams because
they all call me snitch or
or like shut up it's funny
someday they'll appreciate you.

It might not be for a while, but yes.

So,

so what are some red flags for parents
that they should watch for
that might indicate that their child's,

you know,

accessing unsafe or

inappropriate online content?

Yeah.

So if your child is spending

a suspicious amount of time in the room,

um,

If you walk into the room

and they hide their phone all of a sudden,

I know I sort of developed that.

It was like a subconscious thing.

I didn't realize what I was doing.

My dad would walk in the room.

I would quick hide my phone

underneath the covers.

or they're never like on

their phone when you're around,

but they're always on their

phone when you're not around,

a good indicator.

Or let's say they spend a,

you look at their screen time report,

so Apple will tell you what

they're doing on their phone.

If they're spending like

five hours a day on a

workout tracking app,

that was the app I would

use to get on the web browser or online.

And so if they're spending

like five hours a day on

really weird apps,

that's a good indicator

that they're using that app

to get on the internet.

Now, if you set it up correctly,

you wouldn't have to worry

about them getting on the

internet on those apps if

you use that filter.

But like fishy stuff like that,

you wanna be suspicious about.

And if like their personality,

changes now that of course

depends on the kid if they

just you know exhibit

negative personality traits

I remember I had a friend

um like a like a year ago I

I didn't like him because

he was always really he was

kind of a jerk he was

always really rude and he

was kind of shy not shy but closed off

And it came out like a few

months later that he was

really struggling with porn

at that time and he

wouldn't tell anyone and he

was hiding it.

And now since he's told

everyone and he's gotten a

lot better at that,

I'm now like best friends with him.

It's great to have a friend like that.

But if their personality is changing,

that's also another good indicator.

yeah that's that's good to

point out and it's

sometimes hard to tell
because teenagers change so
much anyways but always
always good to think well
this might be what's
leading to that too and um
yeah I I have I own my own
physical in-person business
too and a lot of times kids
will ask me for my internet
access and I say no if your
kids don't or your parents
don't give you internet on
your phone you're not
getting it through me
Um,
and so I only give out my website
credential guest credentials to parents.
And I'm like,
if you want to give them to your kids,
that's completely fine.
But, um,
I think that's just a good safeguard, um,

out in public too,
because I don't want to be
liable for kids finding
things when they're getting
internet through me.
um yeah there's one time I
um every time we'd go to
hotels and they had the
little computers I would
use not like not not like
to search up porn or
anything like that just to
watch I was a really little
kid I couldn't watch
youtube or anything so I
would just use those
computers I would always
get up really early to
watch a minecraft videos on
those computers yeah
Yeah, that's yeah, exactly.
There's always something
that can cause an addiction

and it doesn't have to be bad,
but it takes our time away
from what we should be doing.
So with a lot of homeschooling kids,
they often use the Internet for education,
becoming more and more of a
standard as especially
since COVID with all these
new online educational tools.

How can parents balance
giving kids access to
learning resources while
still keeping them safe?

Yeah, so that's a great question.

If like your child is like
twelve and they need to
research for a paper or
something like that,
a great idea would be to
have a family computer
that's out in the open and
maybe have basic content
restrictions on that

computer so they can't just
stumble upon inappropriate content,
but have like a family
computer that's out in the
open where they can't go
take it and hide it or
something like that.

That's a great option for if
they're really young or
maybe you let them use your
own computer with your own
password that they don't
know of and that you're
always around them.

It's also a great method to
stop them from cheating
like I used to always do.

Or if they get older,
like let's say that's fourteen or so,
there's a lot of good
monitoring software for computers.

You can do a lot more with
computers than you can with phones.

And you can set it up to
where it takes screenshots
like every ten seconds or
every five seconds on the
computer and compiles all the screenshots,
which is really useful.

The ones that I would always
use is Covenant Eyes or
a content barrier or something like that.

There's a lot of good tools
out there that can also help with that.

That's awesome.

Yeah.

We had one,
we like turned our dining room
into like a library space
and that's where the family computer was.

And it was like right next
to the kitchen where I usually was.

So everybody was walking in
and out and around it.

And so that became the space
for having it.

Yeah.

It's better kind of in those
multi-purpose rooms.

Who needs a dining room
these days anyways?

Our classroom is in our dining room too.

yeah yep so you grew up with

technology and a first-hand

experience with how it

impacts your generation in

what ways do you think

technology has influenced

kids today yeah um honestly

it's made kids a lot more

more lame essentially it's

I remember growing up as a kid

I don't want to go play

outside with my friends and

shoot each other with BB

guns or light fireworks off

or just have fun in the woods.

Normal, awesome boy stuff.

But they're all stuck at

home playing their little video games.

And it's just like the

memories I would have outside.

It's great for kids to be outside.

Great for kids to have an

adventure outside.

And so that's a big problem

that technology has done with the kids.

It stopped boys from being

boys and girls from being girls.

Um, keep your child off their phone,

keep them off their, their game station.

Now, of course, in moderation,

all these things can be, can be good,

but it's also great to have

your child outside in the

woods or riding bicycles.

I remember one summer, um,

I w I was like at this time,

so I couldn't have a

driver's license and.

I couldn't go on my computer

all the time like I used to

be able to and watch YouTube.

So what I did to pass the

time is I ordered or I

found a bike on Craigslist

for like forty dollars and

I ordered a engine off

Amazon and I built my own

DUI motorcycle for the summer.

I had a whole blast for the summer.

That was a lot of fun.

But yeah,

it's a kind of a shame how technology has

has degraded childhood, I believe.

Right.

And that inventive spirit, especially,

you know, that spirit of discovery.

And it's like, oh, yeah,

I can Google anything.

And that takes that away

than you trying to discover it yourself.

And those are the things

that are building blocks

for what you do with the

rest of your life.

We don't remember what we

searched on Google.

We remember what we created,

what we invented.

Yeah.

Another big problem with that too,

when you're just stuck at

home playing games,

you're not developing your

relations with your friends.

You're not learning how to

interact with people.

You're not working on how to

overcome problems with

friends and whatnot, fights or anything.

All of this is super important.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I completely, completely agree.

Good points.

So what are some of the

biggest mistakes parents

make when it comes to
managing their child's technology use?

Yeah, I'd say there are two extremes.

Number one is they don't
really know anything to do
with technology and they
don't put an ounce of effort into it.

And their child runs circles
and their child,
they don't even know what
their child is doing on their phone.

And it spirals way out of control.

It's a mess.

And then the other side, per usual,
the other side of the road is

Their parents are like, you know,
nothing till they're eighteen.

Everything is locked down.

And so the child is super isolated.

They don't really have a
good sense of the world,
anything like that.

And you kind of need some of these skills.

You need to know how to type
on a computer in order to
function in society today.

Right.

You need to know how to use Google.

And so it's having really
sheltered people or really,

I want to say broken people.

So you want to be in the middle.

You want to know technology.

You want to know how to
protect your child.

You know how to set up parental controls.

But still,

I don't want to say immerse your
child in the culture,

but the child still needs

to learn how to use these

tools in a safe manner and a controlled,
healthy manner.

Absolutely.

Yes.

Yeah.

You, it's better that they,
they make a few bundles
inside your home and you can have those,
those healthy discussions, um,
then to have them
completely restricted and
then go out and
everything's open to them
and then make really major decisions,
bad choices.

And if the repercussions are,
can be life-changing for
your child yeah I know I
knew someone like that who
just went out to college
and you know she went from
fifty minutes a day on her
really heavily restricted
phone to now five or six
hours a day and so she
didn't build up any of the
mental um habits or or um discipline
Right.

Yeah.

And it has to be an internal
discipline that you do develop.

But I know a lot of parents, you know,
they really struggle with
setting digital boundaries
because they feel like, oh,
I'm just going to be over
restrictive or else I'm
going to be not restricted enough.

How do they strike that
healthy balance in between?

A great way to sort of
figure out what that healthy balance is,
is to have good
communication with your child.

If your child.

Yeah.

It's great to have, you know,
if you want to protect them
from pornography,
make sure that you know why
exactly you're doing this.

If you want to restrict their games,
you know,
have a good conversation with them.

Now you're ultimately the
parent and you should draw
the final line.

You should hear out the child and sort of,
you know,
hear what other parents are saying,
hear what other sources are saying,
and kind of take these and
discuss it with your child
or your spouse.

Right.

Yeah, absolutely.

And yeah,
it's it has to come from the top down.

I mean, kids will respect what you have,
especially if you share
with them your heart,
your heart for them.

They may not agree with it,
but they will come to

respect it over time.

Yeah, exactly.

Yeah.

So what about gaming

platforms and online

interaction and games?

Because, you know,

kids can have discussions

with other kids and like

Minecraft and Roblox and Fortnite.

And there's there's a lot of them.

My kids are on Discord.

They you know,

they they're all over the place.

They're adults now, though.

But, you know,

they're always making friends.

And so what do you do as a

parent to kind of make sure

that those are safe?

Yeah,

it gets a little dark and murky when

you talk about those games.

A lot of the articles written,
especially about Roblox and Minecraft,
I feel like a lot of that
is a little bit overdone.
especially about the predators on Roblox.

But again,
there still are predators on Roblox.
I'm sure some of these cases are true.
So it is important to be aware of that,
especially Minecrafters.

guess a lot of a lot of what
this comes from are kids on
these apps who on certain
chats will start talking to
older people and whatnot um
but at that point I feel
like it's less to do with
the platform itself like
minecraft and roblox are
designed for kids and they
have a lot of kids games
and they're really fun for
kids and they're good for

kids um as far as games go um

Just like you would educate
your child not to get in a
car with a random stranger
or not to send their
information with a random stranger.

Same thing with these games.

Because the discussions
aren't necessarily required
for the games.

No, they're not.

They're not at all.

Okay.

Yeah, especially...

Like Fortnite,
maybe a little bit because
they have voice calls,
but a child really
shouldn't be playing Fortnite.

It's more of a teenager.

I'd say fourteen till six to
sixteen age age game.

But Roblox and Minecraft, you can.

I'm not sure about Minecraft,
but I know especially in Roblox,
you can restrict the chat
so they can't talk to people.

OK.

And Minecraft is not not a
lot of chat stuff on Minecraft either.

Yeah,
because I know a lot of parents use
Minecraft as part of their homeschooling.

So that would destroy some
of our families that are like, yeah,
that's the only time I get
my child to do school.

minecraft is mostly a single
player game um or just with
two or three people on the
game um the only times
you'd be talking to um
people on the road or on
servers and not a lot of
people play these servers
so minecraft I think a lot

of the bad publicity in
minecraft is overdone just
because it's so rare you'd
actually be talking with a
person around the world right

And I think there's some
homeschool specific servers
as well that are for that game as well.

I remember my kids talking about that.

They were kind of on the
forefront of all of that
when it was coming out.

So I think it's really good,
important to address to
these mental health issues.
aspect of of just overuse of technology,
social media.

I know a lot of new reports
have been coming out and
just how to navigate parent
safety for kids as a parent.

What advice do you have for
parents in that area?

In terms of managing your
child's mental health.

Well, yeah,
just mental health and in general and,
and what, I mean,
maybe even just as far as
here's some concerns that
if you don't put those
restrictions in place,
if you don't take this as a
kind of a red flag subject,
then here's what, you know, is good.
More than likely going to happen.

Yeah.

Yeah,
I totally see what you're saying there.
Just recently, I'd say about a month,
maybe a month and a half ago,
but I interviewed a mom
whose name is Tammy.
and whose daughter died,
I believe at age twelve of
suicide because of social

media and because of she
developed a social media addiction.
And then she got cyber
bullied and then tricked into sending
photos and then just
brutally harassed online
it's just it's just like
this the slow fade from
here right down to here and
at first the mom didn't
really know what she's
doing but towards the end
she knew something was
wrong but you can't really
blame her she's right mom
who had no idea it was a
really tragic story and
it's almost it brought
tears in my eyes hearing that
So there's a lot of risks like that.
Now, of course,
not everything is going to
be that tragic and that drastic.

But there's a book out
called The Anxious Generation.

It sheds a lot of light on this.

As soon as smartphones were adopted,
there goes a sharp spike in
anxiety and depression in
teenagers and a sharp spike
in suicide with kids.

Yeah.

So a lot of times kids will
see stuff on Instagram or
other social medias and
they'll compare themselves
to those people on Instagram.

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So unhealthy.

We just we don't it doesn't
even have it's just subliminal.

It's not even like doesn't
have to be straight out

forward people attacking you.

This can just be I can't

even imagine growing up in

this day and age, you know,

without technology when we

didn't have computers when

I was that age.

Yeah.

Nowadays,

I'll never be good enough because

I'm comparing myself with

the person who's the top, top, you know,

zero point one percent in

any given hobby.

Like if I like skiing,

I'm comparing myself with

like the world class skier.

And so instead of like the

local the local person who is, yeah,

the expert.

Exactly.

Yeah, exactly.

Yeah.

And then there's the whole
cyberbullying and
sextortion stuff that's
coming out now where, you know,
like a school tricks
someone to send nudes and
then they'll go around the
whole school or something.
That's just like a small case.
There's lots of stuff like that.
And then now you have these new AI stuff.
There's stories of kids
being driven to suicide
because of these AI chatbots.
you know,
AI girlfriends or whatever they
are who are like tricking
kids or telling kids to
kill their parents.
It's just like a lot of messed up stuff.
Wow.
Yeah.
There's a lot of darkness

out in our world.

And unfortunately that we're

just bringing it into our

homes by not filtering and

not being proactive to,

to come against it.

So lots of good things, reminders,

definitely.

Yeah.

So as a homeschooler,

you had a lot of

flexibility with technology.

How did that shape your

education and your learning experience?

You know,

it's interesting to find out

because you kind of you

were schooled in that age

where everything was

changing from very much

homeschool from the books.

I remember when I bought

went to my first homeschool conference,

it was all like, you know,

There was maybe two or three

major curriculum companies and then,

you know,

everything else was mom and pop

type of things were.

And now there's so much online.

You can take classes from

people across the world and all of that.

So so how did as as being

homeschooled yourself,

what was that experience like?

Yeah, it was very interesting.

I sort of got two sides of the story.

Like when I first got into school,

I did everything through

classical conversations all

the way up till challenge B, I think.

So I got a lot of the, you know,

learned how to read books,

like physical books,

not learn how to read.

I read physical books.

I did all that sort of stuff.

But towards the end of my
high school or during high school,
we switched to a lot of online stuff.
So I had a lot of online chemistry,
online math.

In fact, all my math was online,
which I used to cheat.

Now that I'm
but online was interesting.

I,
I probably would say the in-person stuff
would have been,
is better because it's more
real and you can't cheat as
easily with the physical
stuff as you can on like a computer.

Right.

And I feel like it's easier to learn.

It's hard to,
it's hard to learn on a
computer because you're one
click away from watching, I don't know,

YouTube, or it's just very distracting.

You're on like the most

distracting device ever.

And you're trying to learn

and you're trying to study for a test.

It's just, it's a lot harder on a computer,

but it is a lot more practical,

a lot more,

a lot easier and cheaper on a computer.

Yeah,

I found my kids going back and forth

with that, too,

because they were the same age as you.

Actually,

my my youngest is older than you.

But we we went a lot back

and forth and sometimes

they would come back to me

because they had grown up

so much on the books.

They're like, can you just teach this?

Because they were so frustrated with,

I mean,

and that was kind of the beginning
age of people creating online curriculum.

So it was kind of a mess.

You know,

they didn't write their tests quite well.

And so sometimes their tests

weren't even lined up with

the curriculum that they had learned.

It was maybe the next weeks

and they're like, oh,

we got the answer now.

Yeah.

So, yeah, I, yeah, they just are like,

can you just teach it to us?

But, but sometimes we would get like CDs,

which was so nice because

then it was an isolated thing.

They didn't have to be on the internet.

And we, yeah, I remember CD-ROMs.

Yeah.

Oh, the day.

Yes.

When you could actually

really filter content.

Yeah.

Well,

you mentioned that kids can use

technology to cheat in

subjects like math.

Can you share some examples

of how this happens and how

parents can maybe be aware

of what they can do about that?

Yeah, so I mean,

especially in math, I was pretty bad.

I shouldn't be,

I feel bad to talk about this now,

but I was a big cheater.

Your wisdom is,

is educating a lot of people.

So just look at it from that perspective.

God uses everything.

It comes around.

Definitely.

Yeah.

I mean,

Even in like grade seven math, right,

which is just like

multiplication and basic algebra,

it was so easy to use a

calculator the whole time

during tests and during

math because I was alone

and I was just on my

computer and I got my work

done for the day.

la-di-da or then um I mean

all all till pre-algebra I

was able to cheat in math

and just use calculators

you can use this app called

photomath and you could

scan a problem on the

computer screen and it

takes one second and it

gives you an answer so if

it's like if it's like a

calculus problem you can

scan it and then it you can

ask for the derivative or to solve the x

You can do everything with math,

with just photo math.

Wow.

So now for parents,

that would be a great tool, though.

Yeah.

You need to give them step by step.

Does it give them step by

step instructions on how

the solution comes about or

just the solution?

Yeah.

Free version.

It does not give you step by step.

If you pay three dollars a month, it will.

So that's a great piece of

tech for parents who struggle in math,

I think.

Yeah, it's really nice.

Yeah.

In fact,

I use it occasionally just on my

own if I ever do need to do math,

which is probably goes to

show that you probably didn't.

I didn't need to learn

calculus in the first place.

Foundation.

Yeah.

It comes back.

Yeah.

Or it's or it's chemistry or

other classes like really

any class I had to do on my

own and there was no

oversight whatsoever.

it's just super easy to

cheat and look up for like

a chemistry class.

All the answers are on Quizlet,

which is a pretty popular

platform for that sort of stuff.

Or like a chemistry class,

all the answers are on

Quizlet or like a literature class.

So if your child is doing a
test or has tests due,
make sure they do it in
front of you and to proctor
them just like you would in
any normal classroom.

They need to be around when
your child's doing the test.

I mean, if my mom did that,
I would have known so much
more about chemistry and
hydrogen and all that sort of stuff.

Yeah.

Very good point.

So what are some of the best
tech tools or apps that
homeschool families can use
then in a positive way to
enhance learning?

Yeah, I mean,
that photo math app would
probably be one of my top
recommendations.

You can use, funny enough,

you can use ChatGPT a lot.

That could be really useful for learning.

I use ChatGPT myself or not just ChatGPT,

other apps.

AI products.

Absolutely.

And I think it's really good for kids.

We had a whole two-part

series on AI a while ago.

And to not be afraid of it

because it is being used so much now.

If kids know how to make it work for them,

instead not do the work for them,

but how to use it to

enhance what they want to do.

um it can really be helpful

especially for our audience

if you want to succeed in

this world you kind of have

to use ai now because

you're competing with

people who are using ai

exactly and so yeah I mean
ai is just great for
explaining like your child
is stuck on a problem ai
can explain it all I mean
ai can probably work better
than photomath if you know
how to use ai it's just a
great way for explaining
things or if like your
child is stuck on a problem
you know, ask ChatGPT or ask an AI,
maybe that's Claude or something,
but yeah, great, great tool for that.
Now, of course,
they can just take ChatGPT
and have it write them a paper.
So you want to be careful
and ask for stuff as well.
Right.
Yes.
And I think we have to try
to be as discerning as we

can about those things.

You know,

you get those AI calls now and I

answered the phone and I'm like,

you are a computer.

And it goes, oh, you caught me.

And I was like,

Oh, my.

I had to laugh because I was like, yes,

I do know.

The inflections just weren't quite right.

And a year or two, though,

you won't be able to catch it.

I know.

Yes.

Yeah.

It'll change.

So you offer Zoom-based

services to help parents

set up parental controls.

Can you tell us more about how that works?

Yeah.

So I have a little service that's online.

that I walk parents through
how to set up printer
controls on iPhones and
Macs and Apple devices,
especially for right now as
I get started.

And they can sign up for
that on my website at parenttech.support.

And it's forty seven dollars per device.

And so I get on a gym call with them.

I take my phone out and I
plug into my computer and I
kind of walk them through
step by step and how to set
up screen time to protect the child.

And I explain, you know,
the common workarounds and
how to prevent those.

and answer any questions they might have.

And then once after that call,
they're opted into my, um,
nine dollars a month, anytime, um,
tech support.

So ongoing tech support

where if you have a problem come up,

if they have a question,

they just text me or the

email me or call me.

If I can pick up during that

time and then I will

respond to them within

twenty four hours or something like that.

Or if I need to get another call with them,

I can also do that as well.

So that's awesome.

Yeah.

And your website is parent

tech that support.

And I have that in the show notes.

So if you don't want to figure out.

how that is all put together a lower cap,

you know, or cabs, whatever,

that's the link is right there.

So don't worry about it.

Just click on on that.

And we'll make sure that you

get connected.

So you just published a book
called the definitive guide
to protecting kids online.

What are some of the key
takeaways from your book?

Funny enough,
the book just went live like
an hour before the show started.

I haven't even posted that
on my socials yet.

So your audience is the
first people to hear about it.

It's a quick little book I typed up.

It's less to do with a step-by-step.
guide on how to set up controls.

It kind of gives you an
introduction on the digital
world and sort of my
expertise and a little bit
of what I know.

So it does cover how to set
up effective printer controls.

Um,

but also explains how predators will
target, um, kids, or it explains, uh,
why screen time limits
matter or open communication,
how that's how all that's important.

Um, you know,

the hidden risks of online
gaming and social media platforms,
all that sort of stuff that
that books book covers.

So right now it's, it's, um, eight,
ninety-nine on Amazon.

Um, it's called the, um,
the definite guide to
protecting kids online.

And it's only going to be
eight ninety nine for a little bit.

And the Kindle version is
also ninety nine cents right now.

So pick it up while you can.

Yeah, yeah, definitely.

So so that's exciting that

that just came out.

Congratulations.

It's it's quite an

accomplishment to to produce a book.

I know I have one and oh, my goodness.

Everybody keeps I keep

thinking I need to revise that thing.

And I'm like, oh,

I don't want to touch it.

But yeah,

I did not expect publishing it

would be that would be that like.

confusing and intensive.

Yes.

Amazon.

It is absolutely confusing for sure.

So you also run the parent

tech support show podcast

and you have a newsletter

that I saw that you can

subscribe to from your, your website.

What kind of content do you share?

And yeah.

Yeah.

So my parent tech support show,

I sort of do,

I want to get into more interviews,

hopefully in the future when I get more

more credibility but as for

for now I cover certain

topics like this week

tomorrow I have a pop

episode releasing on how to

block YouTube off your

child's phone I also have

another episode on how to

block porn just just last

week so I cover certain

topics or like what are the

top twelve Gen Z terms

today um and the newsletter

is also very similar to

that on newsletters like a

it'll give you a short um I

don't know a thousand word

uh guide on like you know

the top uh slang words that
kids use or it could be the
um new found dangers of of
ios so it's hard all like
our one one covers how to
set up parental controls on snapchat

And once you sign up for the
Parent Tech newsletter,
you'll receive my free guide on the...
essentials of screen time.

And that's like my little
cheat sheet that I
recommend for a lot of parents.

And they'll kind of give you
a quick explanation of how
to use screen time.

That's one of my prized,
like one of my favorite
things I like recommended
to people because it's
super simple and it's super
easy to follow.

And when you sign up for the newsletter,

you'll receive that as well,

that little free download.

And they can find that on

your website at parent tech that support.

So if you are wondering

about that or just caught

us in the conversation and going,

what are you talking about?

Where can I find that?

So, so yeah.

So if you could give parents

just one piece of advice on

when it comes to protecting

their kids online as we wrap up,

what would that be?

Hmm.

Okay.

It's hard to distill.

I know.

Hmm.

make sure you know what

you're doing when setting

up parental controls and

monitor what your child is doing.

So a lot of times parents

will set up parental

controls and they won't

that that that'll be it.

They'll set them up and then

they'll make your child safe.

They don't monitor.

yeah is an active thing you

know I recommend doing

quarterly checks on their

script on their screen time

or on their search history

kind of glancing through

their phone now maybe don't

go looking through all

their texts with their

friends because that might

be invasion of privacy

depending on their maturity level

and all that sort of stuff.

But a general check through

is a great idea.

A quarterly change of the
screen time password so
they can't just change it.

I know when I was growing up,
I would always figure out
the screen time password,
whether that was guessing
it or that was setting up a
camera and having it record
as my mom typed in the password.
I was a little espionage.

Well,
it all prepared you for what you're
doing now.

And I think a lot of parents
are appreciative of your
willingness to share and to
help their kids be safe.

So I just thank you for this
interview and all the great
content that you shared with us.

It's been very insightful for sure.

Awesome.

Thank you.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But nice having you on the show.

And yeah,

I hope a lot of parents will

reach out to you.

And so make sure that you,

you check out Jack's website,

parent tech dot support and

all the resources that he has.

And again, those,

all that information is in

the show notes for you.

So we'll keep up the good work.

This definitely got a work ahead of you.

Yes.

So, yeah.

Yeah.

All right.

Well, yeah,

I know a lot of parents will

walk away from this episode

feeling a lot more

confident and equipped to

protect their kids online.

And I just want to thank you

for that firsthand and

practical knowledge that you shared,

not just like book knowledge, for sure.

So and for those of you that are listening,

if you'd like to learn more from Jack,

make sure you do check out his podcast,

The Parent Tech Support Show.

Sign up for his newsletter

and grab a copy of his new book,

The Definitive Guide to

Protecting Kids Online.

And if you need hands on

help setting up parental controls,

don't forget that Jack

offers those on personal

Zoom sessions to guide you

through the process.

We'll include links to all

those things in the show notes.

So be sure to check those out.

And always, everyone,

thank you for tuning in to

Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

If you found this episode helpful,

be sure to subscribe and

leave a review and share it

with other homeschooling

parents that could benefit

from this information.

Plus, if you're looking for more resources,

support,

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homeschooling journey,

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homeschooling superpowers
with our resources, articles,
and supportive community.

Until next time,
keep homeschooling boldly
and with confidence,
and we'll see you all next week.

Bye, everybody.

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