

Technoference in NJ Caregivers

Connecting with your children in an age of constant technology



Research tells us that technology plays a large part in parent-child interactions.

Technoference describes the distraction from interpersonal activities that can occur due to mobile screens.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

01.

Even as early as infancy, technoference can cause children to engage less with their mothers and negatively effect their vocabulary development.

02.

Across adolescence, technoference decreases quality and quantity of parent-child interactions.

03.

It also influences child social and emotional development.

“My children have started to mimic my phone habits, and I worry about how it will affect their relationships in the future.”

–Caregiver Respondent

WHAT DO CAREGIVERS SAY?



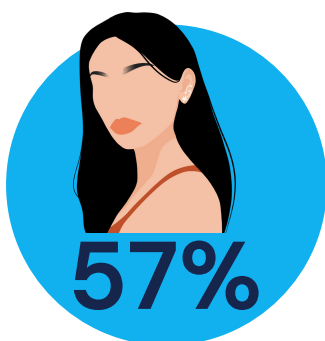
To examine technoference in NJ...

In 2024, DCF conducted a study of NJ caregivers to:

- Explore if NJ caregivers engage in Technoference.
- Examine their desire to change problematic cell phone use.

We gathered data from 2,447 parents and caregivers.

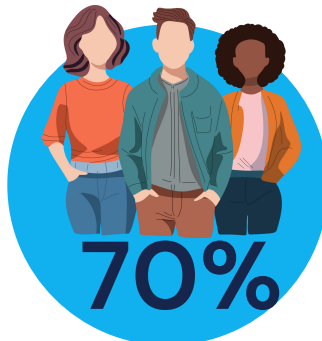
ABOUT OUR RESPONDENTS



identified as female



identified as non-White



were 24 – 44 years



spent 2–5 hours on their phone daily



DISRUPT YOUR DISRUPTIONS.

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More respondents are **contemplating** changing their cell phone use *and* putting thoughts into **action** than **pre-contemplating** their use of technology.

STAGES OF CHANGE

Precontemplation

Contemplation

Action

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

"There's no need for me to think about changing my phone use."

"Sometimes I think I should cut down on my phone use."

"I am actually changing my phone use habits right now."

CAREGIVERS ARE USING TACTICS TO COMBAT TECHNOFERENCE

96%

of caregivers used at least 1 **tactic** to limit cellphone use

52%

of caregivers used **2-3 tactic** to limit cellphone use.

CAREGIVER TACTICS TO COMBAT TECHNOFERENCE



Turning off notifications for certain apps



Seeking social support or accountability from friends or family



Using physical barriers to keep the phone away (e.g., placing the phone in another room)



Setting specific times or places where phones are not used (e.g., during meals, before bedtime)



Using digital well-being features on the phone



Using apps or software to block access to certain apps or websites

"We use my cell phone together! For example, I subscribe to the NYT games and my 13-year-old loves to start the Spelling Bee for me and play Wordle."

—Caregiver Respondent

DATA-INFORMED TACTICS TO COMBAT TECHNOFERENCE

Mindful Technology Use

Encouraging mindfulness when using technology can reduce its negative impacts. Mindfulness involves being present and conscious about how and when technology is used.

Set Boundaries and Guidelines

Establishing clear boundaries and guidelines for technology use within relationships can help manage expectations and reduce conflicts. This can include rules about phone use during conversations or shared activities.

Increase Awareness and Communication

Openly discussing the impact of technology on relationships can increase awareness and facilitate mutual understanding of each partner's needs and concerns.

Prioritize In-Person Interactions

Valuing and prioritizing face-to-face interactions over digital communication can strengthen relationships and reduce the sense of technoference.



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