

## **AVG Technologies Digital Diaries: Life in your child's digital shoes, for parents of children ages 10-13**

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### **Introduction**

Between the ages of 10 and 13 your child's social, emotional, and school life will likely go through dramatic changes. According to AVG's Digital Diaries series, during these pre-adolescent years most kids will also reach digital maturity by having access to the Internet through a personal device and a profile on a digital social network. Combine the ups and downs of pre-adolescence with the freedoms that new technologies allow and it becomes clear just how much parents and kids need a strong relationship during these years.

The survey also suggests that a majority of parents (93 percent) feel they are savvier about the Internet than their children but it takes more than just an understanding of how the technology works to connect with your child. It also takes an understanding of your child's developmental needs and the impact that new technologies have on social, emotional and school life.

**Here is what life looks like in your child's digital shoes.**

### **School Life**

Your child in middle school will be asked to take more responsibility for his or her own learning. As a 21st Century learner, your child is part of the effort to integrate information and technology tools into the learning experience.

*The vision for 21st century learning includes:*

- *A more democratic relationship between teachers and students.*
- *More flexibility about where learning happens.*
- *Greater opportunity for communication that is both face-to-face and virtual.*
- *A larger role for interest-based learning.*
- *More room for experimentation, collaboration, and play.*

— Adapted from David Buckingham: *Introducing Identity*, 2008

### **Social and Emotional Life**

Between the ages of 10-13, peer relationships increasingly become the place where kids look for a sense of belonging and for answers about their changing bodies and strong feelings. In today's culture a great deal of this relating takes place via technology.

*Social and emotional life for today's pre-adolescent includes:*

- *A world where things move faster.*
- *A tendency for less empathy because more of life happens behind a screen where it is harder to read human emotions.*
- *More room for risks (both positive and negative) because of the ease of connecting to other people.*
- *Connection to a wider range of people who are further away.*
- *Readily available information to answer any question.*
- *A new and convenient way to become isolated by spending too much time with technology.*
- *Finding like-minded people in an online community, especially when they can't find a community near home.*

### **The Bottom Line**

Life in your child's digital world leaves plenty of room for risks that are both positive and negative. Never before have there been more opportunities for communication, gathering information, and

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*May all children be cherished*

learning about one-self and others. Help your child to make the most out of this time by being a good listener. Be a person who is easy to come to when life gets confusing.

### Resources

- **Common Sense Media** is dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in a world of media and technology: <http://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- **Kiwi Commons** is a late-breaking news, guides, and information weblog dedicated to providing readers with the most relevant and up-to-date resources available on youth Internet safety: <http://kiwicommons.com/>
- **MindShift** explores the future of learning in all its dimensions – covering cultural and technology trends, groundbreaking research, education policy and more. The site is curated by Tina Barseghian, a journalist and mother: <http://mindshift.kqed.org/>
- **Spotlight** covers the intersections of technology and education, going behind the research to show how digital media is used in and out of classrooms to expand learning: <http://spotlight.macfound.org/>

To learn about Jason Brand, visit <http://www.jasonbrand.com>.

To learn about Rona Renner, visit <http://www.childhoodmatters.org>.

