

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR US AND OUR CHILDREN IN CYBERWORLD

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ABSTRACT

Technological developments have indirectly changed the fabric of society, especially related to communication. Sukaresmi Village, Sukamakmur District, Bogor Regency, is one of the villages that previously experienced difficult internet access, now has easier internet access. Therefore, it is important to involve families in monitoring family members in cyberspace. The aim of this activity is to provide education to women as part of the family in accompanying children during the growth and development process. The activity method is through lectures, discussion, practical exercises and study digital literacy. The activity's outcome is that the role of families in creating a safe space for us and our children in cyberspace is very important, especially considering the increasingly broad and complex digital world today. In today's digital era, the internet has become an inseparable part of everyday life. Children and adolescents grow up in a highly connected environment online, from learning, playing, to socializing. This condition demands an active role for families as the front line in guiding and protecting children from the dangers of the digital world. Families are not only responsible for supervising, but also creating a safe, open and supportive environment for children to be wise in using technology.

Keywords: Family Role, Safe Space, Cyberspace, Digital Literacy

1. INTRODUCTION

Smartphone use worldwide has become an inseparable part of everyday life. From communication to digital transactions, these smart devices play a vital role in various aspects of life. According to Exploding Topics, Indonesia ranks fifth in terms of smartphone users in 2025, with a population of 275.5 million. Sukaresmi Village, Sukamakmur District, Bogor Regency, is a village that is quite far from the Regency Capital. In its development, Sukaresmi Village now has internet access. This certainly provides potential for the community in seeking information access. On the other hand, the presence of the internet encourages people to use cellphones to access the internet, but it can also be used for other access such as games and YouTube. According to Wahyunto (Astriningsih, 2024), one of the biggest problems faced by parents in this digital era is the difficulty in understanding and controlling their children's behavior that is influenced by technology use.

In today's digital era, advances in information and communication technology are developing rapidly and having a significant impact on daily life, including for children. The use of digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and computers has become a part of children's lives from an early age. Through these devices, children can easily access a variety of information, entertainment, and social media.

However, this convenience also carries risks if not accompanied by adequate digital literacy. Children who are unable to distinguish between true and false information, or who do not understand the dangers of online interactions, are highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of the digital world, such as inappropriate content, cyberbullying, gadget addiction, and misuse of personal data.

In this context, the role of parents is crucial. Parents are the first and foremost companions for children in understanding and using technology wisely. Parents are not only responsible for limiting device usage time but also guiding children in understanding how to use the internet safely, responsibly, and productively. In other words, parents must be an active part in shaping their children's digital literacy, through education, supervision, and by being role models for digital behavior. In everyday life, almost all levels of society cannot be separated from the use of technology, starting from smartphones, computer devices, tablets, to television (Subarkah, 2019).

Currently, many parents still don't understand the importance of their role in supporting their children in the digital world. Some even lack awareness of potential digital threats or even allow their children unsupervised access. Therefore, it is crucial to examine and strengthen the role of parents in improving children's digital literacy so that the younger generation becomes not only technology users but also able to utilize it critically, creatively, and responsibly. Parental ethics or the way they educate their children influences their daily use of digital media (Supartiwi, 2020).

Some may view providing electronic devices as a way to calm children or a means to improve problem-solving skills through digital play. The objectives of this paper are: 1) to analyze the strategic role of parents in shaping children's digital behavior, 2) to identify the challenges parents face regarding children's technology use, and 3) to provide solutions and strategies that parents can implement to effectively improve children's digital literacy.

2. METHOD

The training activities were conducted in three stages, as follows:

- a. Sharing and Discussion/Needs Identification
 - Conducting observations and/or interviews with the community to understand women's needs and challenges in creating a safe space online.
 - Brief exploration of understanding and practice of cell phone use
 - Learning media
- b. Training on the Role of Parents in the Online World, where parents act as digital role models, how to establish rules for gadget use at home and build open communication between children and parents
- c. Discussion and Q&A, in the form of a simulation of cell phone use and child supervision
- d. Research by distributing questionnaires related to cell phone use

The data analysis used descriptive analysis, a data collection technique using questionnaires. The data collected through research instruments and processed in a statistical or numerical manner (Sugiyono, 2022). The data was presented in statistical summaries, such as tables, graphs, or dashboards, for easier understanding. The data was distributed to training participants for further processing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the initial phase of the activity, material was presented on the role of parents in creating a safe space for children online. This material covered what and how to protect children online. By providing parents with the knowledge and tools needed to face the challenges of the digital landscape, this guide aims to empower families to make informed decisions about technology use (Gairah Rizki H, 2024). Gadgets include several types of portable electronic devices, such as smartphones. Gadgets can make it easier for people to find a variety of information and meet all their needs through internet access (Anggraeni, 2019).

The presentation also explained the roles that parents can play, including:

1. Becoming a Digital Companion: Families, especially parents, need to actively accompany their children when using the internet.
2. Building Digital Literacy: Families need to ensure that children and all family members have good digital literacy.
3. Open and Non-Judgmental Communication: Families should be a safe place for children to share their stories.
4. Limit and Direct Technology Use: Not just prohibiting, but also regulating and guiding.
5. Set a Positive Example: Children imitate what adults do. Therefore, it is important for parents to do so.
6. Build Trust and Openness: A safe digital space can only be created when there is trust between children and their families.

Kenali Upaya Melindungi Anak di Ranah Daring

1. Apa itu Internet Sehat?
2. Tips agar orang tua dan anak agar aman di ruang digital
3. Menggunakan aplikasi yang tepat dan terbaru secara rutin



Figure 1. Training Materials

The training was attended by 15 members of the Sukaresmi village community. The training also provided games and case studies related to children's cell phone use, which parents are required to be aware of. Parents' roles in children's digital literacy include:

- a. As Supervisors
Parents need to know what their children are accessing when using their cell phones or the internet, including apps, games, and social media platforms. Supervision can be done through parental control features, using shared accounts, or by checking their children's search history and digital activity.
- b. As Mentors
Parents need to be more than just supervisors; they also need to guide their children in understanding how to use technology wisely. For example, they can explain about hoaxes, cyberbullying, and the importance of protecting personal data. With this guidance, children will be better prepared to face digital risks.
- c. As Role Models
Children imitate their parents' behavior. If parents use their cell phones wisely (not playing with gadgets too often, not spreading hoaxes, not oversharing), their children will follow suit. Therefore, parents must set examples of healthy digital behavior.
- d. As Rule-Setters
It's important for parents to set time limits on cell phone use and clear rules, such as not using cell phones during meals, before bed, or while studying. These rules help children develop discipline and prevent addiction.



Figure 2. Training Participants

Based on the questionnaire, children generally (78%) can access their parents' cell phones. This means that if they don't have their own, children use their parents'. This is understandable, as some may view providing electronic devices as a way to calm children or a means of improving problem-solving skills through digital play (Utami Niki, 2025).

Some common challenges parents face in improving their children's digital literacy include:

- a. Parents' own lack of understanding of technology.
- b. Work commitments that prevent parents from being directly involved.
- c. Social pressure, such as children's peers having free access to cell phones.
- d. Lack of education about digital parenting in the community.

To address these challenges, here are some steps you can take:

- a. Participate in digital literacy training for parents, both online and offline.
- b. Form a parent community to share experiences and tips on supporting children in the digital world.
- c. Establish open communication with children about what they see and experience online.
- d. Work with schools to align digital education between home and educational institutions.

Children generally use their mobile phones to access YouTube (39%) and occasionally (33%) to play games. While gaming has positive impacts, such as developing problem-solving skills, creativity, and English language skills, it can also have negative impacts, such as addiction, decreased academic performance, eye health problems, social problems due to excessive online use, and the risk of aggressive behavior and exposure to harmful content.

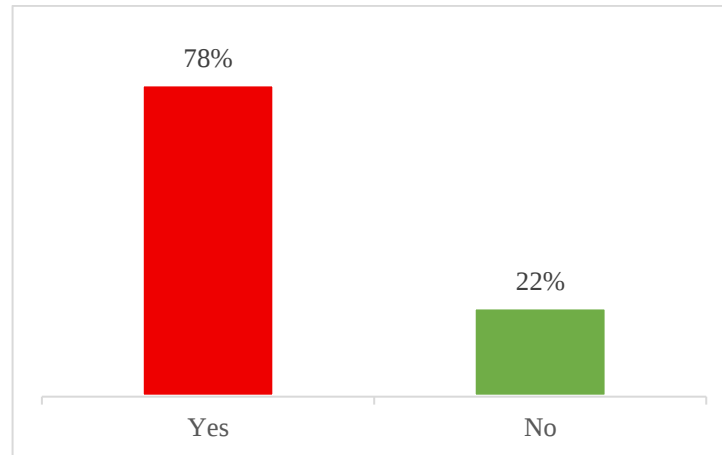


Figure 2. HP Android can be Accessed by Children

In addition, it's important to consider the negative impacts of prolonged game use, particularly on emotional and social issues in children. Children can become irritable, frustrated, and aggressive when unable to play (withdrawal symptoms). Social isolation due to preferring gaming over interacting with family or friends is also a concern. And the risk of exposure to violent or negative content can influence behavior.

Table 1. Using HP for Children

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Very Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Never</i>
Using HP for Game	6 %	33 %	39 %	22 %
Using HP for Youtube	39 %	28 %	22 %	11 %

According to one parent, when their child is fussy or their parents are busy working, they are given a cell phone so they don't interrupt their parents' activities, such as cooking or attending religious studies.

"Rather than having a fussy child disturb their parents, they are given a cell phone so they can enjoy themselves"

Many parents rely on digital devices to calm or entertain their children without considering the long-term impacts of their use. Permissive parenting styles lacking control and direction often result (Utami Niki, 2025).

Effective and responsive parenting styles in the digital age are crucial to ensuring children grow up in an environment that supports their optimal development (Saman, 2023).

The use of digital media and technology not only has positive implications, but can also have negative consequences if children and adolescents use it excessively and out of control (Nur, 2019). Furthermore, internal family communication and the role of parents are dominant and determining factors in protecting children and families from digital device use and exposure to digital media. A child's success in later education is largely determined by the educational process within the family.

One way to address this is by creating a schedule or agenda for children's cell phone use.

Tabel 2. Agenda for children's cell phone use

<i>Day</i>	<i>Maximum Time of Mobile Phone Usage</i>	<i>Description</i>
Manday-Friday	1 hour/day	After studi
Saturday	2 hour/day	Game or Entertainment
Sunday	1.5 hour/day	Time of Family

Protecting children from negative content, on the internet and in apps, there is a lot of content that is unsuitable for children, such as violence, pornography, hoaxes, or misleading information. Rules help parents control their children's access to harmful content.

Meanwhile, the rules for using cell phones at home are;

Tabel 3. Rules for using cell phones at home

<i>Can Use Mobile Phone</i>	<i>Can't Use Mobile Phone</i>
• Learning (accessing Google, YouTube Edu, learning apps) • Communicating with family (chatting or calling parents or siblings) • Watching age-appropriate entertainment videos (e.g., YouTube Kids, educational cartoons) • Playing educational games approved by parents	• Accessing social media without permission (Instagram, TikTok, etc.) • Playing games for longer than the specified time • Opening websites or applications without parental permission • Using a cell phone while eating, studying, or before bed • Chatting with strangers or accepting friend requests from strangers

In the increasingly digital era, the challenges children face navigating the online world are increasingly complex. One increasingly disturbing threat is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying attacks on victims can take the form of disturbing messages or images that are then shared, embarrassing the victim to others who see them (Jalal, 2020).

Parents play an active role in protecting children from the negative impacts of cyberbullying on their mental health. With an informed and caring approach, parents can be powerful agents of change, protecting children from the risks of cyberbullying and helping them grow into mentally resilient individuals in an ever-evolving digital world (Sanusi, 2021). Similarly, research findings demonstrate the different impacts of internet addiction among young children on shaping online culture. The first case resulted in psychological problems in a child who was temperamental toward others/playmates, while the second case had the opposite effect. The child in the second case became more withdrawn from those around him and lacked self-confidence due to his lack of socialization (Junida, 2019). In maintaining children's behavioral development, parents play a crucial and primary role in monitoring, accompanying, and providing children with an understanding of the significant influence of technological developments, particularly the use of social media (Putu, 2021).

Millennial parents must be agile in the digital age, meaning they must be able to think quickly and prepare their children for the current era. Discipline is a crucial mechanism in guiding children's development. Parents play a crucial role in supervising their children, especially when using gadgets. Therefore, parents are expected to be more concerned about their children's development by taking the time to help them learn, discuss, ask questions, and most importantly, provide motivation.

4. CONCLUSION

In today's digital era, the internet has become an inseparable part of everyday life. Children and adolescents grow up in a highly connected online environment, from learning and playing to socializing. However, despite the convenience and benefits offered, the virtual world also carries various risks, such as exposure to negative content (violence, pornography, hate speech), the threat of cyberbullying and grooming, the risk of gadget addiction, and the misuse of personal data and other cybercrimes.

This situation demands an active role for families as the frontline in guiding and protecting children from the dangers of the digital world. Families are not only responsible for supervising but also for creating a safe, open environment that supports children in using technology wisely. With good understanding and cooperation within the family, we can create a digitally safe space that allows children to grow healthily, physically, emotionally, and socially in the virtual world. The family is the first and most important bulwark of digital protection. By creating open communication, providing good examples, and equipping children with digital literacy, families can be the main pillars in creating a safe space in cyberspace for children and themselves.

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