Panel Summary: #BeingParents: The Challenges of Raising Digital Kids

Moderator: Shelley Prevost, Torch

Panelists: Peter Andrada, Intel; Paige Hanson, LifeLock; Renee Jackson, National PTA; Tory Joseph, Parent Encouragement Program; Meghan Leahy, Positively Parenting

Overview: A look at the biggest challenges parents face while raising their digital native children.

How should parents handle the screen time debate in their household? Panelist Peter Andrada, Intel, suggested screentime should be viewed as an award. In his household his kids earn screen time, 30 push-ups for 30 minutes in front of a screen. Other panelists had different takes on the matter. Paige Hanson from Lifelock, summed it up as "Every family is different, therefore every family has different guidelines and boundaries". Everyone on the panel agreed that parents should involve kids in creating screen time guidelines for their home. Parents should ask their children what it is that they need to be on the screen for and how long the child thinks they need to accomplish screen related tasks. When making the guidelines they should take the child's response into consideration. After the agreement is set, let your children know that the agreement can be adjusted and revisited in an established period of time.

When it comes to screen time the panel also expressed a need to teach kids that there is more than just life in front of a screen. Tory Joseph from PEP shared that when parents are teaching our kids about setting aside device free time, that they need to set the example and carve out device free time for themselves as well and that it is important to spend device free time with with your kids.

Renee Jackson from the NPTA, shared with the audience that when it comes to tech in schools it is the job of the parent to advocate for what they want, and to ask questions about how tech is being used within the school. If a parent doesn't know something they need to speak up and ask. Parents need to ask the simple questions and not ignore them because they are feeling overwhelmed.

While it was evident that each of our panelists had different approaches and concerns when it comes to digital parenting everyone agreed that importance should be placed on teaching kids how to respect themselves online. Meghan Leahy said one important thing to stress to our children is that if they are always sharing everything online and uploading selfie after selfie, they won't be able to recreate themselves in the future. Putting something online means that it is permanent, and people will always be able to reference it. Andrada said that when it comes to digital reputation and respect online, we need to teach kids that likes are not life and followers are not friends. He also shared his tagline "self worth before selfies" and stressed that as parents we need to make sure our kids know that their worth isn't tied up in how many likes a picture gets online.

As parents, our panelists were excited that technology is giving their kids a voice and empowering them to learn and explore. They showed the audience that there is no one right way to parent digitally, but that parents are collectively facing the same needs and issues.