DO YOU NEED PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP?

Don't be afraid to reach out

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im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej

rok założenia 1922

Akademicka Poradnia Psychologiczna (APP)

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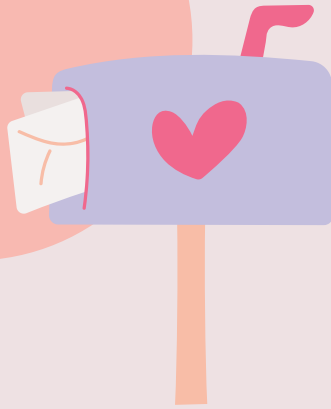
Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fourth issue of this magazine. This month, we touch on an important issue, as always. But this one is of particular importance because it's where everything begins – childhood. We explore the problems of raising children, including their development and disturbances, the fast-developing technology and how it affects them, and the difficulties of institutional education.

We will also take a closer look at the child's mind and how it works and then explain it briefly. Additionally, we want to direct your attention to needs that have always been there, like being a child and not a public domain or part of an advertisement campaign, which sometimes happens to be the case.

Of course, this is just the tip of the iceberg of childhood development, with fluctuations and educational, institutional, biological and ideological changes. It is impossible to cover everything; there is too much of it. However, we hope to arouse your curiosity and concern about our feature – the little ones.

I want to thank my mom, a special needs educator working in a kindergarten for children with special needs, who saved this issue's interview at the last minute by giving it when two people got sick just a few days before the interview. Lastly, I want to thank the whole team for their hard work and effort.

Editor-in-Chief

What's so Beneficial
About Reading to Children?

By Daria Fruń

Did you know that a child learns around ten new words daily between the first and sixth years of life? As it is the fastest time humans learn during their lives, it is important to stimulate language development during that time. We should allow the opportunity to be fully exploited before it passes.

One of the best tools to do so is literature. Children can greatly benefit from being read aloud to and from shared book reading. This practice especially helps improve children's emergent literacy ability, which consists of oral speech, phonological awareness, knowledge of written material, letter knowledge, and print awareness concepts. Acquiring those skills leads to learning to read and write and directly impacts children's later success in this field.

During shared book reading, children are especially able to familiarise themselves with the shapes of letters and print concepts – idea that symbols can be associated with sounds and the process of reading a book itself (dividing into chapters, page-turning, etc.). Reading aloud supports the development of phonological awareness – the ability to manipulate speech sounds and listening comprehension. It may help improve children's concentration, as understanding a story requires focusing on it and remembering already gathered information. Furthermore, people often pay less attention to using correct grammar while speaking, and written language tends to be stricter.

But reading is not just about language and learning. Contact with literature has other great benefits. This includes stimulating children's imagination and creativity, as stories allow them to explore experiences beyond their own. The same thing can also be instrumental in supporting the development of empathy, as children are presented with perspectives, behaviours and decisions of characters that significantly differentiate from their own and are crucial to the story's direction. Moreover, reading to or with a child can be a wonderful time to spend together.

Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

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Glossary

emergent – just beginning to appear or develop
exploit – to take advantage of something in a way that's not fair or ethical
literacy – knowing how to read and write

NURTURE
Assumption

By Kazimierz Kwiatek

Why do people behave the way they do? Why are they the way they are? Is their behaviour determined by biology or environmental factors? These questions may seem trivial, but they are the core of many fields of study; finding the right answers is crucial for psychotherapists and psychiatrists, but also lawyers, teachers and – last but not least – parents.

The question of whether people are influenced more by natural traits or more by the social and cultural environment is quite old. It was asked and answered in the works of many philosophers. John Locke's idea of tabula rasa proposes that humans are born with no innate habits, talents, or traits, likening them to a blank slate. On the other hand, René Descartes asserted the existence of an inherent idea of God that is universal to all human beings.

The problem took its modern shape somewhere around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Francis Galton – a cousin of Charles Darwin – is often said to be the author of the catchphrase "nature vs. nurture". He was most likely inspired by William Shakespeare, who probably got the idea from a British priest and pedagogue, Richard Mulcaster.

Most of the time, the nurture theory was the preferred one (Locke, for example, was harshly criticised for his ideas). That was probably the derivative of the way of life; since parents bring their children up, they are also responsible for what kind of people children turn out. However, the real father of the nurture assumption (the idea that the upbringing of children is a decisive factor in shaping their personality and character) is Sigmund Freud. According to him, every psychological illness or disorder can be traced back to one's childhood or adolescence. Even though the behaviourists disagreed with Freud on the vast majority of issues, they perpetuated that idea.

In 1998, Judith Rich Harris published a book called "The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do." It featured a critical review of the dominating theory based on a few key points. Harris challenged the idea that adults' personalities are mainly influenced by their upbringing.

Photo by Amy Humphries on Unsplash

She claimed that studies which are supposed to show the effect of the parental environment usually fail to control genetic factors. Imagine an aggressive child. The child may have learned aggressive and dominating behaviour from parents, but it may also be an effect of the genes the child and the parents share.

In addition, studies of identical twins show that they share many traits; identical twins who live in the same environment share up to 86% of personality traits, whereas identical twins who live in different environments share up to 76% of them. In comparison, biological siblings reared together share 47% of traits, and those reared separately – approximately 24%.

There is another, rather drastic, example of the importance of genes in human psychological development. David Reimer had been born a man, but he lost his penis due to a botched circumcision operation. David had a twin brother, Brian. Their case was found interesting by an American psychologist, John Money, who decided to persuade Reimers' parents to raise David as a girl, as he believed that sex was malleable in the first two years of life and sought scientific proof for his theory.

When David was fourteen, his parents told him the truth about his sex, and he decided on de-transition. Reimer went public with his story to discourage other scientists from such unethical research. He committed suicide at the age of thirty-eight due to severe depression.

Harris not only highlighted the importance of genes in personality development but also partially defied the role parents supposedly play in it. Think of a family of immigrants. The parents usually speak with a strong foreign accent, behave somewhat differently and generally stand out from the crowd. On the other hand, children seem to be well integrated into the local society; they speak without an accent, they behave quite normally, and one can hardly tell whether they are children of the "natives" or the newcomers. Why is that? Harris wrote that it happens because the major role in the child's development is played by the child's peers rather than the parents.

The author also pointed out that it's a mistake to associate the environment with nurturing, as nurturing is done by parents, and the environment is a much more complex thing than just family.
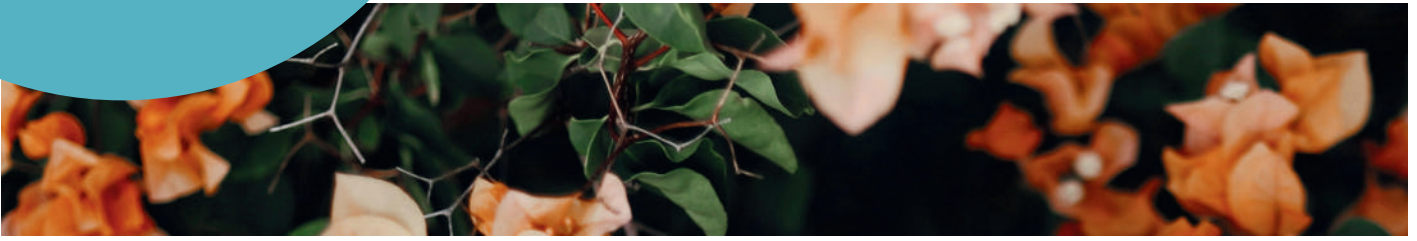
The book received mixed reviews. Some predicted that it would become a turning point in psychology. Some, however, criticised the book for overinterpreting some of the data and accused Harris of being inconsistent in her conclusions.

Despite the negative feedback, the book reached the final round of the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction and influenced many modern psychologists.

Even though Harris made some good points and her hypotheses are worth checking, she and other scientists who decided to challenge the "nurture assumption" were mostly misunderstood. Think of all the articles that say, "American scientists discovered the aggression gene" or "First speech gene identified" or "Two genes linked with violent crime"; they are all wrong and absurd. Even though the answer to the question of what makes us – ourselves is still inconclusive. We have some knowledge about the topic, we should think of human beings as the canvas where the influences of both genes and the environment interfere and create a unique person rather than perceive it in terms of a fight for dominance between those two.

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Glossary

blank slate – a concept that people are born with no innate characteristics or predispositions, and their development is shaped by their environment and experiences
botched – messed up, badly done
defy – to openly resist or refuse to obey
de-transition – the process of reverting to one's original gender identity
inherent – existing as an essential characteristic or quality within someone or something
malleable – adaptable or easily influenced
nature vs. nurture – the age-old debate that considers the impact of genetics (nature) versus environmental factors (nurture) on human behaviour and traits
rear – to bring up and care for (a child)

By Gabriela Gawłowska

THOU CHILDHOOD SHALT BE BEIGE!

THE PHENOMENON OF "BEIGE" PARENTING

In the sea of never-ending social media content, filled with eye-catching images and displaying different aesthetics, a particular trend among mothers has emerged not so long ago. Filled with different shades of beige, children dress in linen or cashmere clothes of the same colour and play with wooden toys. These women have decided to share their perspectives on raising children in a very different environment than we've grown to know. But is it a good change?

Tracing back to when this trend was given a name, many people point at Hayley DeRoche – a writer, social media content creator and a mother of two. Known on TikTok as That Sad Beige Lady, she was the one to point out how nowadays marketing for children's essentials seems to focus more on cream-coloured palettes instead of the usual vibrant and primary colours used to catch attention. With humour, she dubbed this move a "sad beige" aesthetic, highlighting how melancholic and bland children in those pictures look like.

So what exactly is "beige" parenting then? "Beige" parenting is when a mother who enjoys a beige aesthetic lifestyle pours it onto the lives of her children. It includes painting their rooms in creme and generally toned-down colours, exchanging plastic toys for those made out of wood or other natural materials and doing the same with their clothes. Some mothers even go as far as pouring their children's shampoos and cosmetics into aesthetic-looking containers or painting children's toys to match the overall aesthetics. But it is worth keeping in mind that those are extreme cases, and it doesn't mean every mother does that.

Photo by Paige Cody on Unsplash

This move raised many concerns from mothers all around the world. Many claims began to appear from different sources, but the most concerning was how it can be harmful to children by stalling their development. However, in September 2022, the Wall Street Journal pointed out that there was no proof supporting those claims. Thus, it comes down to parents' preferences.

Despite this, Dr Sally Augustin, an environmental design psychologist, stated her opinion during the interview for the article titled: "What is 'sad beige,' and why do some parents love it so much?" for TODAY.com that:

children need primary colours in their lives to produce "higher generated energy levels" required for things like exercising, for example

On the other hand, "beige moms" and some parents not belonging to this particular group don't seem to see harm in a child's exposure to this type of decor preference. This party focuses on the fact that toned-down colours can have a calming effect not only on children but also on the rest of the household. Additionally, it promotes eco-consumption, it's genderless, and materials are safer for children.

Dr Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, a psychologist and professor at the University of Delaware, also spoke about this subject in the same article as Dr Sally Augustin, giving her opposing view by saying:

"This is not a trend that I can endorse, but it's not a trend that would be harmful to children."

This recent trend paints parenting in beige and still leaves so much uncharted waters to explore in the future. As calming as the colour is, it certainly brought some controversy among the people, who are ready to throw in their own few cents. Is there a right or wrong side to stand on? Ultimately, it all comes down to parents knowing boundaries and not crossing them.

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Photo by Sigmund on Unsplash

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Glossary

boundary – the limit of what is acceptable

dub – to give an unofficial name or nickname to someone or something

endorse – to declare one's public approval or support of something

essentials – necessary personal belongings, such as toiletries or clothing items

exposure – the state of being exposed to, e.g. risk or harm

genderless – not conforming to traditional gender roles or distinctions

stall – to stop making progress, typically due to a lack of movement or activity

uncharted waters – a situation or area that is unfamiliar

Unmonitored Internet Access
and its Effects on Children

By Amelia Anielska-Mazur

The Internet is an incredible tool of our current reality. Worldwide availability is quite literally at our collective fingertips, anytime, all the time. It provides us with such a wonderful variety of uses! Whether you need a quick way to access a paper for reference in your work, check the weather, or simply shoot the breeze and relax a little by entertaining yourself is one of the many ways you can do so, thanks to the World Wide Web! Or one would think so.

Reality is harsh when you peer through the visage of greatness that envelops the Internet. Unfortunately, not enough people acknowledge that side of it, and most tragically, plenty of them are parents. In this article, I would like to shed some light on how exposure to unrestricted Internet usage affects children – strongly based on my personal observations and experiences, as well as research on the topic.

Social media, "cringe culture", parasocial behaviours

It is hard to deny that most Internet traction focuses on social platforms. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok dominate the scene. While most of them mainly target an adult audience, children under the age of 13 – who are below the minimum age requirement for most platforms – are active users.

Their activity varies from simple viewership to engaging in various communities, sharing posts and interacting with other users. By being active in

Internet spaces, children easily notice trends and terms exclusive to online user bases, including Internet slang. I would like to discuss one instance, which is the phenomenon of "cringe culture".

> **Cringe** – by Cambridge Dictionary's definition – is a state of embarrassment about something.

Cringe culture, however, is an online phenomenon of stigmatising certain things (whether it is a behaviour, interest and so on) and considering them to be embarrassing to indulge in. Some of those things may be perceived as childish and, therefore, "cringe".

An example of this is taking an interest in media targeted towards children, having a hobby which is not deemed "cool" by the masses, simply enjoying a trend, or something as simple as being considered "basic" (a term describing a person who lacks interest or appeal because they do not stand out based on their hobbies, appearance, etc.).

Truth be told, there could be a separate article written about the logistics behind cringe culture, but I digress. Once children are aware of this phenomenon, they actively modify their behaviour and interests, fearing to be perceived as "cringy". That leads to them abandoning things meant for their age to appear cooler or more adult-like. This, unfortunately, results in children consuming content that is not meant for them – in the worst-case scenario, one that might ultimately be harmful.

In the case of minors being a part of an active user base, especially one that is centred around a content creator – that being a person creating some sort of media which they share with an audience – they might form an unhealthy, parasocial relationship with their idol. While parasocial relationships are not exclusive to well-known people, they most commonly happen with such personalities. A parasocial relationship is a bond involving a person and someone they do not know personally. A child is prone to developing deep emotional bonds with things and people who bring them comfort, thus making this a common occurrence in online spaces. It is important for a guardian to discuss online personalities, such as content creators, with children and explain how to maintain a healthy distance between them as a persona and the child as a viewer.

Exposure to sensitive and pornographic content, exploitation, grooming

Regretfully, unmoderated content, including that on popular social media platforms, exists across the Internet. The most common type of sensitive media is shared for shock value for the unknowing viewer. That includes, but is not limited to, content containing gore, graphic violence, terrorism, explicit footage released by soldiers partaking in gruesome behaviour towards hostages and more. The last example is notorious for a website known as "LiveLeak" founded in 2007. "LiveLeak" hosted real political, war and citizen journalism footage. The website's purpose has been severely abused throughout the years of its functioning, earning it a notorious reputation as one of the most well-known gore sites on the surface web (a portion of the Internet we use in our day-to-day lives), ultimately leading to its shutdown in 2021. Being exposed to triggering sights as depictions of real-life violence impacts children's mental development, increasing their chances of becoming desensitised to real-life tragedy.

Pornography is yet another type of media that minors risk encountering online. In recent years, the over-sexualisation of internet content has been on the rise. While this content may be accessed through specific websites, it also finds its way to platforms where it is prohibited as well. It is not that uncommon for a child to encounter pornography for the first time by being exposed to it by a friend their age, whom they trust. A trusted adult should discuss what content is not safe for the child to witness online. When hearing about media that is not meant for their age from a peer, a child should be assertive enough to refuse the content and notify trusted adults on the matter.

Grooming consists of befriending a minor and gaining their trust, intending to abuse the dynamic between the perpetrator and the abused. It can come in the form of requesting pictures, recordings, and even planning to meet up with the victim's child; all of this usually involves sexual content or is intended for sexual satisfaction. A predator can try to talk with the child about their personal life and try to show that they are trustworthy adults. They will gradually start bringing up sexual topics, influencing the child's perceptions and behaviours. By doing so, they desensitise a child to sexual content, making any attempts at sexual misconduct easier for the perpetrator. Grooming is a tactic used by predators both online and offline. It is a crime and should be taken seriously in all regards.

When a situation of that nature arises, the minor should immediately notify their trusted adults about it; legal action should be taken in any case of sexual exploitation of a child. Educating kids about Internet safety and what behaviours to watch out for ensures the detection of criminal behaviour and prevents the situation from escalating further.

Oversharing of personal information, Internet safety

In the early days of the Internet, information about cyber security and safe Internet use was everywhere – websites, PSAs (Public Service Announcements – a form of spreading awareness about a certain topic), and lessons dedicated to safety on the information superhighway. For our Polish readers, some of you might remember an early 2000s Internet safety programme – "Sieciaki". They were promoting safe and responsible Internet usage among children.

One of the most talked about matters was, "Do not share information about yourself with strangers". Rightfully so! Anyone, let alone a child, should never give away their personal information to an unfamiliar Internet user. All information can be used against you, whether it's for blackmail or identity tracking. In the era of online personalities, people more often steer towards using their full names on social media. They also share a plethora of information about themselves and their personal life. While that is their own decision, a child should never, under any circumstances, share their personal information online.

Sexual exploitation is a hard yet crucial topic to discuss. Online anonymity allows ajplethora of deviants to target others on various platforms, most commonly on social media. Children may be easy to target by their demeanour, making them one of the most susceptible groups to manipulation and exploitation. Exploitation happens when a person takes advantage of someone in almore vulnerable position than them, using the fact that they are in a better power position than the other party. Exploitation can happen in many ways, sexual exploitation being one of them. A child can be sexually taken advantage of online by an adult conducting a strategy called grooming.

What about spaces for children?

The early 2000s – something I can vouch for – provided children with an overflow of websites with simple entertainment – web browser games. Names like "Cool Math Games", "Club Penguin", "Neopets", and more are cult classics for English-speaking Internet users. "Gry.pl" and "Friv" or games on the portal "Nowa Klasa" are much more recognisable in the Polish communities. Most of these Internet sites hosted "Flash games" – deriving their name from Adobe Flash Player's plugin, which were a fundamental part of children's Internet usage. In January 2021, Adobe officially stopped supporting the plugin, leaving many of these childhood relics behind.

The truth is children nowadays do not have spaces dedicated to them. There are no websites that allow children to interact with one another in a safe, moderated environment. Social media platforms dominate the Internet. That is the root of the problem. Kids are exposed solely to social media, bombarded with trends, consumerism, and daily short-form content. Instead of engaging in fun platforms tailored to their entertainment needs, their brains are being essentially fried by the fast-paced, adult-targeting content. As a result, they become users in a sea of strangers, surrounded by sensitive media that will impact their psychological growth. Kids may become isolated and depressed because of the time they spend online, choosing the Internet over quality time with their peers and family. This may affect their need for socialisation and stimulation from the outside world.

As adults, we must speak up about the state of the Internet that is available to children. They deserve spaces made for them where they can utilise the possibilities the Internet can provide them with for their development. Nowadays, the Internet is just as convenient as it is dangerous. It is easy to forget how crucial it is to monitor children's access to this tool. They risk developing unhealthy online and offline relationships and being exposed to inappropriate or even dangerous content, especially when with strangers. While all of that is true, the key action, besides proper moderation and monitoring your kid's activity, is educating them. Adequate knowledge about the dangers of the Internet and the situations in which they should say "no" to peers should be the starting point for all children on the Internet.

Additionally, speak out on the importance of safe spaces for children online! Do not forget that the Internet gives kids the potential for self-expression, indulging in their creativity and developing skills such as critical thinking.

Children are and always will be the future; let us educate and aid them!

Glossary

bond – a strong connection or relationship between people

desensitise – to make someone less sensitive or emotionally responsive to something, often through repeated exposure

explicit – clearly stated or shown

gore – graphic and bloody violence or content

gruesome – extremely unpleasant or horrifying

indulge in – to allow oneself to enjoy something, often considered luxurious or pleasurable

Internet traction – a level of attention, interest, or popularity that something gains on the internet

notorious – widely known, usually for something negative

parasocial – relating to a one-sided relationship, typically between a viewer or fan and a media personality

plethora – a large amount of something.

quality time – dedicated and meaningful time spent with someone

shoot the breeze – to chat casually or have a relaxed conversation

stigmatise – to unfairly label or mark someone or something as shameful or undesirable

INTROJECTION

The Mechanism of (un)Fortunate SpongeBob Impersonation

By Joanna Łukasiewicz

Last year, the winter did not rebel against the rules of reality. It brought the darkness surrounding the university during my last Thursday lecture. The symbiosis between my professor and Mr. Freud was knocking on the doors of perception – my perception. Fortunately, I managed to let them in and learn about defence mechanisms. One of them, introjection, was particularly memorable and reminded me of a book I reviewed in this issue. Today, I invite you to learn about introjection – the curious mechanism reminding me of books, sponges and a quote from a minister of propaganda for the German Third Reich.

Sigmund Freud came up with the idea of the defence mechanisms in the 19th century. His daughter, Anna Freud, continued his work and increased their number by ten, including the **introjection**. During an introjection, you adopt the behaviours and beliefs (feelings, ideas, etc.) of another person, who is usually an authority figure to you, without realising it.[1] This unawareness of a person makes me think of a sponge – it mindlessly absorbs the liquid.

Now that we know what introjection is, the time has come to extend our definition to include key elements of Sigmund Freud's theory. You might wonder what you would defend yourself from something like this. The answer is anxiety. One of the reasons you feel anxious is the constant conflicts between the parts of your mind representing different needs. The **id**, **ego** and **superego** constantly argue inside you, willing to become a primadonna.[2]

Photo by Valeriia Neganova on Unsplash

The **id** is the wild one! You can associate this structure with all your memories of severely drunk people you've seen when returning from... the study session in the library on the weekend. The id is always willing to get involved in sexual activity or use violence against somebody. Its priority is to feel the pleasure as soon as possible. The **superego** is the one that focuses on ensuring that you behave in compliance with societal norms and moral standards.[3] The superego can be associated with a gossip girl – always willing to point out any flaw of yours to the extent that you're afraid to breathe too loud around her. The poor **ego** does its best to balance the demands of the id, superego, and reality.[4] The id and superego are the extremities that are unable to acknowledge the reality surrounding them without this hard-working part of you.

The story of Allan is a great example of introjection. During therapy, he wanted to learn how to talk to other people. On the hiking trips, he was able to be a part of the group during activities like cleaning, etc., but he avoided getting involved in conversation with others. He felt stuck when he wanted to talk about himself. Turns out, he introjected his mother's criticism. She did not provide a safe space for him to express his feelings during his childhood. She believed he was a naughty and incorrigible child, even though he was a kid who caused an average amount of trouble.

> *"A lie told once remains a lie, but a lie told a thousand times becomes the truth"*
>
> – Joseph Goebbels

Allan learned that the best option for him would be to stay alone. Introjecting his mother's voice helped him with his parent's emotional neglect but kept him from following his dreams and getting involved in deep relationships.[5] Fortunately, the therapy helped him. Even though he did not eliminate that voice completely, he learned how to live his life despite hearing it.

Although introjection helps us deal with an excessive amount of anxiety, it can also cause us to adopt a behaviour that is harmful to us or even to others. Fortunately, one is not sentenced to spend their whole life unable to enjoy it. I encourage you to consider whether or not you have introjected some of the beliefs or behaviors of the people that were important to you. If yes, what are the results?
Feel free to share your experience in an email to psychlingo@aps.edu.pl

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Glossary

authority figure – a person who is seen as having power, influence, or control, such as a parent, teacher, or boss
defence mechanism – ways people unconsciously protect themselves from uncomfortable feelings or situations
flaw – imperfection
in compliance with – following rules, regulations, or standards
incorrigible – incapable of being corrected or improved
introject – to internalise or take in the ideas, beliefs, or attitudes of others, usually without conscious awareness

Sharenting and Artificial Intelligence

THE PROBLEM OF DIGITAL AGE PARENTING AND HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN RUIN MODERN FAMILIES IN CONSEQUENCE.

By Martyna Lekan

Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash

With the digital age came the Internet, the incredibly versatile tool nobody knew was going to take over the world. Almost every single aspect of our lives is already connected to the Internet or is going to be in a span of a few years. From contactless and online payments, digitalised bureaucracy, many companies having employees work remotely, streaming services to interpersonal interactions slowly moving into social media, almost completely phasing out other forms of communication. Even family time is now transferred into the online universe – nowadays, the world is "supposed" to know every detail of its existence. Even things, I guarantee, you have never anticipated to see online.

The phenomenon I just mentioned has been caressingly called sharenting, derived from the words sharing and parenting, which accurately represents what is at the core of the issue. With vlog (video blog) culture becoming immensely popular over the past dozen or so years, the urge to casually show the daily aspects of our lives has raised so significantly that even ordinary people with little to no social media following now regularly share their experiences with others online. It almost became a race of who will appear to have the most exciting and desirable life in comparison to other "marathoners". This need to stand out, desire to be recognisable, and the fear of missing out on things that are currently trendy and considered cool, aesthetically pleasing, or beautiful (when it comes to beauty standards) have infiltrated parenting as we know it, elevating it to an entirely new level beyond recognition.

What is this *sharenting*, again?

Sharenting is a fairly new term used to describe a very specific phenomenon regarding parents who choose to show excessively and often monetise their children online. It's mostly common among popular Internet personalities who start their families and recognise that they not only create a new life but also a new influencer, someone who they don't have to pay to star in their videos but will surely make them more clickable.

To help you understand it more, imagine this: you are just a 3-year-old child of, just so happened, a couple of successful influencers. Like every baby in existence, you have your needs. You cry, eat, digest, have temper tantrums, play, make a mess, and do all the completely normal things for your age. Your parents decide to record

all the moments of your united journey, create a sort of diary, and take the opportunity to show it to the Internet regardless of what it consists of because they know people love family content. It's ALL out there: the happiest and cutest, but also the most distressing, embarrassing, vulnerable scenes of your life are now streamed and available for everyone who wishes to see them. You may not realise this just yet, but this will possibly have dire consequences on your future mental health and safety. You don't understand yet what it means to be popular, to be recognised on the streets, to have people know everything about you while you don't know them at all. Well, even if you did realise all that, what were you supposed to do? You're just a child who has no power over your parents, who own the rights to your image as well as every other matter regarding you. You and your privacy are supposed to be protected, but instead, not necessarily with bad intent. You're used for views and monetisation of content revolving solely around you, and you have no say in it whatsoever.

That seems absolutely terrifying if you look into it deeply. And it all often starts even before the birth of the "main character". Countless videos of pregnancy announcements, gender reveals, baby showers, decorating nurseries, all the way to the birth itself. Not exaggerating, many women filmed and published their birth stories and footage online, sometimes with thorough details. This means that some kids start their Internet career before they even get to experience their first breath. And indeed, birth experiences are important to share and hear. It's valuable knowledge I am not opposed to.

With article limitations, although it's surely deserving of a whole book about it, let's dissect this issue into smaller bits because it's too important and not talked about enough to only rush through it briefly.

As a Polish saying goes, "*If you don't understand what something is about, it's about money.*"

When influencers are asked why they even show their children in the first place, they often reply that they wish to create that sort of video diary I mentioned earlier for their offspring to have and be able to look back on in the future. While this may be true most of the time, when you actually take a closer look at their social media accounts, you can very clearly tell that this is not only about memories. A great portion of their content includes paid partnerships, even when it's just a photo of them holding a baby, and the promoted product is very difficult to spot immediately. So sometimes it's a little bit more on the subtle side of how parents monetise their children or the fact of being a parent. They may not necessarily vlog the

Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

entire existence of their kids but show them here and there in videos that regard some unrelated matters, put them on thumbnails and in titles, so the video seems way more appealing and generates tons of views. Based on that viewership, creators get paid from the YouTube ad revenue system and frequently accept brand deals from companies producing baby clothes, toys, carriers, furniture, etc., which are included whenever possible. Obviously, new parents are excited to welcome a new addition to their family, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's difficult to value whether or not any of these practices are concerning, as it seems to be quite a grey area. Certainly, many people have mixed feelings about children being included in these ads and often very reasonably when they are almost treated like free actors ready to promote one product after another.

Other times, it gets quite overwhelming, and children are literally portrayed as cartoonish characters who not only play a leading role on those channels but also very effectively advertise every toy under the sun to millions of other kids.

There are many very popular parents, however, who decide to show their children on their own terms before other people do, especially fanatic fans, who may possibly lurk around their homes and schools just to find out how their kids look, what their names are, etc.

This may sound absurd, but the fourth-highest-earning creator on YouTube in 2023 was a child-led channel – Ryan's World. The face of the brand is 12-year-old Ryan Kaji, while his parents manage the channel behind the scenes. Most of the videos include the boy showcasing his new toys, playing with them, play-pretending, and doing sports or science experiments. All of this is obviously catered to other kids, generating hundreds of thousands of views, especially with YouTube Kids available nowadays and the unhealthy amount of unmonitored screen time parents allow their offspring. His account's net worth is estimated to approx. 100 MILLION dollars. What's interesting, running shortly after with 90 million dollars, is Vlad and Niki, another child channel whose main stars are two brothers with content similar to Ryan. This phenomenon sparks a lot of discussion about whether it's even ethical to, at least to some extent, use your children for money in this nuanced way. Because we need to understand that young kids not only can't decide for themselves but also don't understand what they actually partake in. Child labour is cruel and highly prohibited in most countries. Many argue that what parents of those child stars do also falls under that umbrella, although not to the same extreme as hiring children in factories.

Photo by Vanilla Bear Films on Unsplash

On the other hand, there are unquestionably simply harmful ways parents approach their offspring. One mother with a successful family-focused channel recorded and uploaded a video announcing their family dog passed away and showing her children mourning to her 500,000 subscribers. The disturbing part was when she aimed the camera at her crying son and, with complete seriousness, said, "A*ct like you're crying, make a face like this*," then proceeded to demonstrate an exaggerated expression, to which the child replied: "*Mom, I'm actually crying*." She kept ignoring him and posing for the video thumbnail instead of comforting her own child in such great distress after his first loss. This absurd behaviour didn't go unnoticed, and soon after, people fired at her. Later on, she actually admitted her fault and said she deleted her whole channel, losing all the monetisation, and got her and her son into counselling. Still, the scarring such prolonged treatment could leave on this boy's mental health is only to be imagined.

There are many sad and terrifying stories like this. Still, I want to share this one more particular example to paint the picture of how money-driven individuals who probably also struggle with mental health may hurt innocent children for content and views. A mother of six who gave online parenting advice via a popular YouTube channel, whose name is easy to find but I won't share it, verbally and physically abused her children on camera and willingly posted it on YouTube. Footage included her denying those kids food as a consequence of their allegedly bad behaviour, forcing them to clean floors, sleep off beds, denying them school access, and much more other unsettling treatment. It kept happening and gaining popularity, for some inexplicable reason, until one day, one of the boys escaped, ran to their neighbours' house in a malnourished state, and begged for help to be freed from his abusive mother. Only then did the police step in, and the woman was arrested, subsequently losing her parental rights. The channel has been deleted, the woman pleaded guilty to second-degree aggravated child abuse and was recently sentenced to four prison terms of between one and 15 years each. When police came to their doors, her oldest daughter posted a now-deleted picture on her Instagram with the caption, "Finally."

It's more common than you think

The problem we face now is way broader than expected because the publication of children's images doesn't only apply to popular and rich parents – ordinary people do it, too. You've probably already seen pictures of your cousins on your aunt's Facebook profile, maybe your friends spam your timeline with loads of baby photos, or even you posted pictures with your siblings, children, or other family members, not thinking of it twice. It's not a coincidence.

According to a report commissioned by Clue PR, 40% of Polish parents share content starring their own offspring online. On average, it accounts for 72 photos and 24 videos annually. The even more worrying part is that not many of them, maybe you included, realise they might own a public profile that everyone can access. Maybe it seems completely harmless – just some pictures on someone's random page, right? Who would consider this information valuable or misuse it? Paedophiles do, scammers do, and anyone possibly could.

It doesn't mean you should lock up in an isolated house with no internet connection and, under no circumstances, ever show yourself and your loved ones online. However, being mindful and aware of your internet presence and the footprint you permanently leave is essential for your safety and those around you.

Is it even legal?

The short and disappointing answer is "*yes*". At least for now, while the legislative world is still crawling in the Internet reality. Many countries hand over the rights to children's image to their respective guardians, which seems logical at first. However, in our case, it only leaves room for the abuse of these laws and potentially even the exploitation of those children. Parents don't question it either, and an astounding 57% declare that if the parents decide on the child's privacy, there's nothing wrong if they post those pictures themselves. Of course, legally speaking, they have every right to do so, but just because you have that right, does it make it right?

Consequences of online upbringing

Most adults are not able to healthily handle fame and everything that comes with it. It's even difficult to comprehend that thousands and millions of people watch your every move and know who you are. We can only imagine how bizarre this concept is to a child who probably still believes in Santa Claus. Personally, I don't even have any idea how I would begin to explain to a 5-year-old that such enormous numbers of strangers know not only their name, which would probably already blow their mind, but also very private and fragile details about their life. We also sometimes forget that children eventually grow up and become more and more aware of

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the world and its principles. They may eventually decide they do not agree to be publicly shown and do not wish to participate in their parents' channels. What then? What has been done cannot be undone. The digital footprint has already been left permanently. Once something enters the Internet, it never leaves it again, and young minds like to dig, gossip, and, unfortunately, bully, especially pushed by peer pressure.

Imagine your whole school having seen your almost fully naked bath photos, your first poop, or how you cried before the doctor's appointment. Those are real examples I have seen myself. It's uncomfortable enough to even think about this, but that is the reality of the children that some parents now actively create for them. And they have little to no say in it.

Artificial Intelligence: a double-edged sword

It may be a bit confusing why AI has its own passage in this whole story, but this topic is unbelievably important to discuss and spread awareness about.

Limitations of artificial intelligence will soon be reduced only to the imagination of its users. And believe me, some scammers are incredibly creative in their ways. By now, you have probably heard about some grandparents falling for the "by grandchild" fraud scheme. Most of the time, it is a real person pretending to be a relative in need of a quick cash infusion. Now, the rules have changed. They no longer need to enact anything, AI does this for them. The newest technology (let's remember it's constantly and rapidly developing) allows for generating whole speech prompts based on very small samples of a person's voice; a few photos are enough to teach the program and create a video of any human in any desired scenario. It's safe to say that we currently witness the beginning of the sci-fi nightmare that many futuristic writers pondered about for decades. There have already been instances when many women who have never shown their bodies online are being depicted in a sexual manner and posted for the world to see. Families are getting calls from their supposed loved ones, hearing their voices as clear as day, trembling in stress and fear, and begging for help, usually monetary, sometimes even appearing as their real number, while it's the AI text-to-speech generator they communicate with.

Sharenting is essentially hand-feeding the Internet with enormous amounts of content, including your and your child's voice in various tones, emotions, and volumes, as well as your body and face in all imaginable angles. By doing this, we are giving up the child's right to privacy and exposing them to dangerous AI-based attacks, identity theft, and potentially compromising your safety as well. Someone may utilise it to extract your children's voice that is present in these *publicly uploaded* videos and use it to vocalise any message they wish your child to

tell you. The Internet is not a safe playground anymore where all your actions could escape consequences because "*It's only Internet, not real life*", and nothing is so serious here. I believe it's better to learn from others' mistakes, and the sooner we realise that this has already become a huge part of today's world and it's not possible to separate from it anymore, the more aware and subsequently safe we can be navigating this new reality. However, the upsetting part is that you may still, maybe with lower risk, become a victim of such a scam even if you have never participated in the hardcore sharenting yourself.

While saying all this, I don't mean to demonise Artificial Intelligence. After all, it's just a tool. It is an excellent, state-of-the-art tool with limitless possibilities and completely revolutionary for many fields, which, unfortunately, is being used with malicious intent, by the wrong hands.

There are ways to protect yourself and your family to minimise the risk of getting involved in such precise fraud:

Create a password. Find a word simple enough for every family member to remember in stressful situations but niche enough for strangers to be impossible to guess. Under any circumstances, DO NOT disclose this password to anyone outside your closest family. When an emergency happens, you can ask for the password and make sure it is the real person. Many banks and companies use this strategy to verify their client's identity.

Hang up and call again. It is possible to overwrite your number to show up as any given one, such as your mother, child, bank consultant, or internet service provider. It is often advised even by those companies to just simply hang up. Find the correct, trusted number and call again to make sure you know who you are talking to.

Moderate your Internet presence if that's possible. Especially protect the privacy of those you are responsible for. Don't spam your child's pictures on social media, don't post videos of every word they say and everything they do. Cherishing those achievements in the safety of your home, where you can invite only trusted individuals, is always the best option.

If you are unsure of something or someone's credibility, *ask your trusted ones for help.* If you are the younger, more digitally fluent person, educate your family, have a serious talk with them, and remind them not to trust everything they see. It may be very difficult for older generations to comprehend that their own eyes fail them and that what they see is only a fraud. Have compassion, patience, and care for them so they don't become victims of such crimes.

Photo by Maik Jonietz on Unsplash
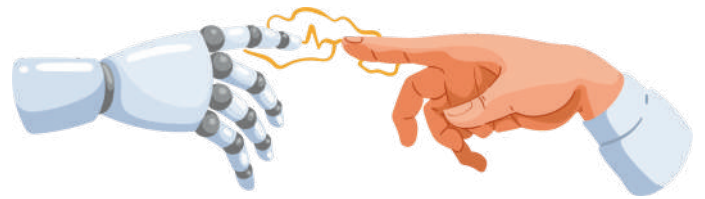
On ending note

I want to summarise this by saying that nothing is black and white, and neither is this matter. It is doubtful that any of those parents had bad intentions when starting and running those channels. Most parents want the pure best for their children, and that's the moral value that leads to many of their choices, but good intentions don't always make the action good itself. There are many potential dangers that sharenting may result in, and most people don't even take that into consideration. Many influencers get very defensive when confronted about these matters, and it's neither productive nor any better for those kids. Eventually, we need to spark a larger conversation, including specialists, and find the safest middle ground because the voices that are currently rising are highly polarised and critical towards each other, with little to no actual understanding. Meanwhile, the children's safety is still being compromised.

I also believe it needs recognition; all respect is due to parents who create family-oriented content that aims to be educational and excludes or minimises the kids' image. The amount of knowledge many women would have never acquired otherwise about birth, postpartum, and early motherhood that these creators share is undeniably the positive side of this whole story. Also, sharing one or two pictures, here and there, on special occasions such as birthdays or holidays is absolutely not a vicious thing to do. I want to leave you with many doubts, questions, and concerns because I believe that's the only way we can stop the mindless digitalisation of our lives without us even knowing when we have nothing left to be only ours.

In order to stay consistent with the message of this article and true to what we stand for, as a design team, we decided to include only pictures of kids where their faces aren't directly shown, even if the licence and law allow us to do so.

Glossary

baby shower – a party thrown to celebrate and prepare for the arrival of a new baby

digitalisation – changing information or activities into digital form, using devices such as computers or smartphones

dire – very serious or urgent

dissect – to carefully examine and analyse something by taking it apart

distress – extreme anxiety, sorrow, or pain

inexplicable – something that can't be explained or understood

malicious – intending to hurt or be mean

malnourished – not getting enough food or nutrition

monetise – making money from something

nursery – a special room in a house where babies or young children sleep, play, and are taken care of

offspring – kids or babies of a certain parent or animal

peer pressure – feeling pressured by friends to do something or act a certain way

postpartum – relating to the period of time after a baby has been born

scarring – emotional marks left on someone's feelings or memories after a difficult or traumatic experience

showcase – to display something to show off its best parts

spark – to create a sudden burst of energy or inspiration

temper tantrums – a sudden period of uncontrolled anger

unsettling – causing feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or unease

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Parentification

When *a child* becomes *a parent*

By Julia Nowakowska

Growing up in a dysfunctional family can cause many problems – especially mental health issues, such as depression, GAD (General Anxiety Disorders), trauma, and a lot more, leaving kids with struggles in adulthood. Sometimes, children are left on their own and have to deal with their troubles without any support. This can happen due to various circumstances. For example, some adults find life's problems more difficult than they thought and just can't handle them. Some parents may also be absent because of work or other obligations. Then, the kids have to take care of themselves, and in cases where there are younger siblings, the oldest child often takes on the role of a parent.

What exactly is parentification, and when can it happen?

In a typical family system, a parent is responsible for a child – adults must provide kids with food, shelter, and safety. Unfortunately, sometimes it is not that simple. Some parents just can't take responsibility due to various conditions. For example, a parent's illness may force a child to care for an adult instead of living their own life. This case doesn't depend on the parent, but there are many more! Sometimes, a parent can be absent due to working hours or even being in prison! There are also situations connected to a parent's addiction. For example, parents addicted to alcohol, which is common and easily accessible, can struggle with basic household chores. Then, a child can automatically take responsibility for the family's functioning and care for younger siblings. The case of growing up too fast can cause excessive damage to a child's psyche, leading to problems in teen and adult life.

Types of parentification

When discussing the phenomenon of parentification, we can face different types of it. The first one, **emotional parentification**, is strongly connected to fulfilling a parent's emotional needs. In this case a child comforts a parent instead of focusing on their feelings. Their emotions are put on the back burner, making them less critical. This can include situations where a child is required to provide comfort to their parent, solve their conflicts or care for them during and after fights. As a result, the child's emotions are often ignored.

The second type, **instrumental parentification**, occurs when children take on not age-appropriate responsibilities, such as paying bills, taking care of siblings, or doing weekly shopping. It is perfectly normal to assign age-appropriate chores to school-aged children or even preschoolers), such as cleaning their room or washing the dishes. Moreover, they can observe and help adults in more demanding activities, depending on the type and difficulty of the task.

The family behind a parentified child

We've already discussed the conditions among parents that can lead to parentification. But what about other family members? What roles do they play in parentification? Parentification can be categorised into two types, which do not exclude each other. They are based on the primary focus of parentification. When one child takes care of their sibling due to illness or disability, we are talking about **sibling-focused parentification**.

On the other hand, when a parent makes a kid their caretaker, it is an example of **parent-focused parentification**. But what about a more distant family? Unfortunately, the phenomenon we discussed is not always apparent. From the outside, some issues are not obvious, even worse ones – for example, alcoholism. To an observer, the family might appear to be functioning well. Nobody expects that a child could be credited for this.

The consequences of parentification

The consequences of parentification can vary depending on a person's age. A **child** may experience severe anxiety, stress, and fear often caused by concerns about the family's dysfunction coming to light. Children need family so much that usually, to such an extent, they may choose a dysfunctional family over none at all. Additionally, parentified children may suffer from physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach pains without any discernible cause, sometimes described as neuralgia. Parentified kids can also show disruptive behaviour, such as learning difficulties, social issues, and aggression. Some children may develop slower than their peers.

As a **teenager**, a person realises that their family problems are more complicated than they thought as a kid. The sense of a lost childhood is pervasive in this case and can even lead to depression. As we discussed before, a parentified child learns to ignore their feelings, which can result in the inability to express their emotions. It can also lead to feelings of self-blame, guilt, and low self-esteem. All of these factors can contribute to depression, the development of addictions, and many other struggles.

What about **adulthood**? When a parentified child becomes an adult, they can suffer from many long-term problems, such as trust issues, relationship problems (which are caused by the lack of knowledge of how they should work) or severe mental and physical health issues that may have an impact on the rest of their life.

Prevention and treatment

BE AWARE! Sometimes, it is hard to acknowledge something, but we should always be careful (for our children and others). Allow your children to see your feelings and explain that such emotions are perfectly normal, even if they are hard. But what if parentification has already occurred, and we have to deal with its consequences? Well, the best treatment in this case is psychotherapy (especially CBT *[read about it in our January issue!]*, which can help you with harmful patterns). There are also many exercises to take care of your inner child, such as writing a letter to them and talking to them in a friendly way. Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy – a method for recovering from trauma – can also be beneficial.

Let a kid experience childhood

As we can see, parentification is a phenomenon that can harm a child, leaving them with severe problems for the rest of their lives. Good for us, professional methods are available to help people overcome their problems and ultimately heal. What can we do? We should be aware of these issues and exercise caution for every child. But, if you think that you might have been parentified during childhood, don't be afraid to reach professional help. You deserve to be healthy and happy.

Glossary

acknowledge – to recognise or admit the existence, truth, or validity of something
discernible – something you can see, hear, or notice easily
disruptive – messing up or stopping things from going smoothly
neuralgia – a medical condition characterised by intense, stabbing, or shooting pain that follows the path of a nerve or nerves
parentified – a parentified child is forced to take on the role and responsibilities of a parent
put on the back burner – postpone or delay something, usually because it's not currently a priority

Photo by Max Goncharov on Unsplash

How do Children Learn Language so Fast?

Genetic Rules of Speech

By Weronika Piebiak

About 30 years ago, in Nicaragua, a group of experts made an effort to create the first Nicaraguan school for deaf children. While they were debating how to communicate with them effectively and what language they should use (sign languages differ per country), the kids invented their own. It took only three generations for it to have a fully-formed grammar. As it passed from one generation to another, the language progressed and became more sophisticated. Today, it is an official Nicaraguan sign language that is taught to deaf Nicaraguan children all around the country. As the language was still developing, it became fancier, and its original creators had difficulties with later versions. As they aged, they lost their exponential ability to learn and create a language.

Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

How is it that kids can invent a new language and learn it faster than adults? In the 60s, the leading theory suggested that kids learn language by being conditioned to do so. For example, when the child says, "milk", it is usually rewarded with what it asked for, and that's how it learns how to speak. The theory has limits, such as how can you condition a child to generate a sentence it has never heard before or tell their parents about their day? An alternative theory proposed by a renowned linguist Noam Chomsky suggests that language is innate. He says that our brains are programmed to learn and understand language. Chomsky hypothesised that there are genetically coded rules of speech. He called it "universal grammar". All the languages follow those rules in the world, there can never be one that doesn't follow them.

They determine what kind of words we can build, what type of sentences we can make, and what sorts of interpretations we can come up with. Every language has nouns, verbs, and ways to ask questions. It indicates a difference between singular and plural and has a list of obligatory distinctions like male-female or light and dark. Those are only a few examples of universal grammar rules.

So, the kids are born with a set of rules that help them learn pretty much any language out there. But what about adults? Why do they lose this ability? When a baby starts to learn a language, he or she specialises in it. It starts to lose its ability to hear subtle differences in certain sounds. Young children can differentiate between the tones in Mandarin, although you won't be able to do that.

Photo by Marisa Howenstine on Unsplash

It's an indication of a broader phenomenon of general neuronal loss. Young kids go through something called pruning. It's a process in which they lose most of their brain cell connections. The ones that aren't used as much degenerate, leaving only the useful ones. This is a reason you won't be able to speak with a perfect Mandarin accent and why Japanese people have difficulty differentiating "R" and "L".

Moreover, the second language (learnt after a child is 12) is coded in a different place in the brain than a native one. When a baby grows up bilingual, both languages are coded in the centre of Broca's and Wernicke's area. Those are our "language centres". One is responsible for language generation, and the other for language comprehension. When the language isn't getting coded in the centre of those structures, learning it becomes less effective.

All those factors make up for the fact that children better understand, comprehend, and learn a new language. Remember, if you want your child to be fluent in it, it's better to start as early as possible.

scan and see some language statistics!

Glossary

degenerate – to decline or deteriorate physically, mentally, or morally
differentiate – to recognise or ascertain what makes someone or something different
distinction – a difference between two similar things
exponential – growing or increasing at a very fast rate, often becoming much larger or more over time
innate – existing in one from birth
pruning – removing or cutting out

SEPHORA KIDS & THE RED PILL

How Does Social Media Influence Young Children?

By Karolina Tomczak

According to Digital Voices' study, 55% of Gen Alpha want to buy something their favourite star promotes, and 49% of kids trust influencers as much as they trust their friends and family.[1] Young girls in the USA are rushing to Sephora to buy hundreds worth of products that are typically marketed towards much older consumers. It is almost satirical to see young kids showing their collection of anti-ageing and exfoliating products. On the other side, we see boys exclaiming, "Fuck women!" As we all know, children are the easiest to influence. Mature individuals would stop for a second and think, "Do I really need this product?" "Are those the virtues I want to claim?" Unfortunately, a child's brain cannot sense manipulation or rationally evaluate the content they see. But what exactly is the problem? How can Gen Z and Gen Alpha be so deeply influenced and harmed by social media?

Sephora Kids

At the beginning of 2024, we brought a wave of 9-12-year-old girls showing off their skincare routines to the social media platforms. Children are now investing in expensive creams, serums and cleansers. It involves products potentially dangerous to young, inexperienced kids, like retinol or heavy exfoliating acids. Kids, while not knowing how to use such substances properly, end up having heavy burns and causing damage to their young (and frequently flawless) skin. Retinol is used to recreate lost collagen cells that disappear with age. However, dermatologists point out that the substance used as a child can damage this process, which naturally occurs in the teenage body without any external support.[2] The Young body produces enough collagen. It doesn't need help. Apart from that, immature skin has a lot of thinner skin barrier. It's more susceptible to irritation and damage.

Selling insecurities

Where does the root of the problem lie? The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry states that children aged 8-12 spend up to 6 hours on their electronic devices (phones, tablets, etc.). However, teens' screen time can reach as much as 9 hours per day.[3] By scrolling through social media, kids and teens are exposed to overly edited pictures or clips. Naive children will look at a highly edited skincare vlog and think, "I wish I had skin like that!' not knowing it is fake. Fortunately, the influencer shows his whole routine, so they are advised to buy overpriced products that will guarantee clear skin like that, right? Well, not really, but how are they supposed to know that? Indeed, the UK's one third of teenagers report shame connected to their body image, and 40% say that the stuff they see on social media is the reason they have doubts about themselves.[4] That would explain the never-ending pursuit of the (so-called) perfect appearance.

Photo by Juliane Liebermann on Unsplash

Boys swallowing the Red Pill

Have you ever seen a TikTok or an Instagram reel showing little boys screaming how they hate women? Well, the Red Pill epidemic has also reached the youngest audience. A few months ago, a clip went viral of a famous Red Pill influencer, Sneako, meeting his adolescent fans. Boys during the meeting started saying, "Fuck women!". Sneako, agitated, corrects him by saying, "What? No, no, wait, wait, we love women!". It purely shows how harmful the Red Pill ideology can be to young boys and how it can distort their thinking.

The movement itself and its effects

But what exactly is the Red Pill movement? It focuses on promoting self-improvement, highlighting physical or psychological differences between genders and encouraging men to adhere to more traditional roles. It points out the physical strength of men (often pictures them as more decisive and more intelligent than women) and encourages them to pursue it and, all in all, progress. The Guardian titled its article about the movement as a "heart of modern misogyny".[5] Unfortunately, the title is not far from the truth, especially for the most radical voices. The ideology often states women are less competent, suited for running the household, and deep down, being submissive to the stronger (both physically and mentally) men. However, aside from promoting healthy lifestyle and physical activity, the movement is filled with sexual topics and contributes to the rape culture. As the icon of the movement, without names, the "top G" said, "Women don't really want freedom. They say they do, but they don't. Women want to be led, they want to be dominated, they want to be guided." Aside from any feminist sets of beliefs, I think we can all agree that exposing young kids to topics related to sex and objectification can be highly damaging. These ideas teach boys to view not only women but also sex in general in an objectifying manner.

Do boys really hate women?

As mentioned earlier, there is an example of a young boy saying horrible things about women in general to his somewhat of an ideological mentor. It doesn't prove that boys do hate women. It just shows how easy it is to influence kids. They see things online and mindlessly repeat them. An adult will have the intellectual capacity to think, "This cannot be real" or "I don't think it's true". Adults will have the ability to analyse or find the middle ground critically. Kids can't do that. The brain fully develops between the ages of 25 and 30. We're not here to shame children for that. We simply should acknowledge it and protect them from the dangerous materials seen online. Those ideas about women, sex and relationships could deeply damage young people's beliefs in that field. Entering adulthood, they could face many difficulties when forming intergender relations. How can we expect boys to have the ability to form healthy relationships when growing up when they've seen messages on social media suggesting that women are inferior to men?

In conclusion, the emergence of Gen Z and Gen Alpha on social media platforms has unveiled concerning trends in their behaviour and beliefs. Does this mean that everything found on social media will cause harm? Absolutely not. However, parents should watch their children and not abide by everything they take from TikTok or Instagram. The situation in which the children rush to follow their favourite star and influencer is alarming. We should be aware of the psychological toll that social media has on the youngest. The overly edited images and videos on social media platforms contribute to distorted body image perceptions among children and teens. Additionally, harmful ideologies like the Red Pill among young boys show the importance of parental monitoring of online content that the kids consume daily. We should educate the children about critical thinking or media literacy and limit their exposure to negative role models.

Sources:

[1] https://www.digitalvoices.com/blog/report-the-power-of-influencers-and-gen-alpha

[2] https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/anti-ageing-skin-teen-children-retinol-products-b2480162.html

[3] https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx

[4] https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/millions-teenagers-worry-about-body-image-and-identify-social-media-key-cause-new-survey-mental

[5] https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/14/the-red-pill-reddit-modern-misogyny-manosphere-men

Glossary

adhere (to) – to stick firmly to something, such as a rule, belief, or principle

capacity – the ability to do a particular thing

distort – to change or affect something, especially in a way that makes it worse

irritation – slight pain and discomfort of the skin

objectifying – treating someone as an object rather than as a person with feelings, thoughts, and autonomy

overly – too much or excessively

pursuit (of) – chasing after or trying to get something

screen time – the time spent in front of a screen

submissive – doing what others say without arguing

suited (to) – appropriate for a particular purpose or situation

susceptible (to) – likely to be affected by something

toll – the bad effects of something

Photo by charlesdeluvio on Unsplash

Interview

with a special needs teacher

By Jan Wolicki

This month, conducting the interview was not easy. Two of my interviewees got sick, one of them just a few days before the scheduled interview. (It's often said that when one teacher gets sick in preschool, it's not long before others follow suit.) So, I panicked a little bit, but then I remembered someone who helped me out of a few tight spots in the past: my Mom. She's a special needs teacher who has been working in a preschool for children with special needs for several years. She also has experience working with people with disabilities ranging from 0 to 30 years old. I thought that she might have some valuable insights for me. This short interview is what came out of it. I hope you find it interesting.

Jan Wolicki: Who is a child for you in a professional context?

Małgorzata Wolicka: Well, it is an individual who requires guidance and direction to understand their needs and solve their problems. Above all, it is an individual who needs to be loved and accepted.

JW: And what do you consider most important for the youngest children?

MW: Emotional development and acceptance in every possible environment, including family, school, and so on. Motivation, well to motivate them and praise them. Developing all functions: physical, mental and manual. A preschool-aged child is a very absorbent being who has the potential for tremendous development of these functions, and we need to ensure that.

JW: What are the biggest challenges in working with the youngest children?

MW: I mainly work with children with disabilities, intellectual, physical, or multiple. With children, there usually isn't a problem; children usually actively participate in all activities. The problem usually lies with the parents, who often do not understand the child's way of functioning and setting their boundaries. If a preschool education teacher sets certain requirements for the child and the child is able to learn certain norms and rules, often this work is thwarted at home where the rules and norms we have taught them are broken, and the work becomes somewhat desynchronised, incomplete. The child divides preschool and home into two worlds mixed in an incomprehensible way.

JW: So, is this difference in rules at home and preschool caused by parents?

MW: Parents look at the child completely differently. After all, it's their child. Of course, it sometimes happens due to a lack of knowledge. However, the parent perceives the child's needs differently emotionally because they love their child. The person who cares for the child in the institution (especially a child like the ones I work with) wants to develop action patterns to help the child function better. And that means a different dynamic in perceiving their needs. If we don't develop these patterns in the child, the child will have difficulties in functioning in society. So, the biggest challenge is not working with the child but with the parent.

JW: What exactly does working with a child entail, because, as it turns out, it's not just working with the child?

MW: Working with a child is working with a parent, with a group of specialists, with the educational system, and each child is an individual entity. You want to enable the child to function well while also realising yourself – your goals and ideas, and incorporating them into one. The classes have to be conducted in a way that they do just that. At the same time, these classes should allow the child to develop in all possible areas. Working with the parent involves making them aware that the child should be given as many opportunities as possible, offering a wide spectrum of options to meet their needs and for the parent to spend time getting to know and developing together with the child.

JW: You have worked in institutions where you have dealt with both young children and adults. What characterises the dynamics of working with people of different ages?

MW: The preschool programme provides the child with the opportunity to develop in many areas, allowing for creative development. In the first grades of primary school, it's not bad, but then you work schematically. There is a lesson plan, a programme. The teacher often forgets that there is a child there. From my experience working with people with difficulties, I know that this programme is different and there is room for creativity. Many areas are being developed. The problem is also the size of the classes. It is difficult for the teacher to approach each student individually. Each is an individual entity. This sometimes leads to conflicts between teachers and students. There is no understanding.

JW: Has this changed over the years?

MW: In preschool, it is evident that children are being raised with technology. They get a phone, tablet, or laptop and can operate them. You can see that they spend a lot of time with these devices.

JW: And how does it impact the teacher's work?

MW: Children are definitely overstimulated. They can't focus. But I haven't noticed any drastic problems. However, these devices are really helpful when it comes to working with children with disabilities. For example, someone who doesn't speak communicates with us via tablet. Some children wouldn't be able to function without these devices. They have become routine for them and part of their lives. Of course, we don't allow children in preschool to use mobile phones, etc. However, we use them at work, even for mundane things like playing music.

JW: What motivates you to work or demotivates you? What burns you out?

MW: I encounter new challenges every day. Each day is different, and you have to adapt or even change. Adjust the classes and conduct them according to children's needs. In preschool, children are eager to participate. In older grades, it looks different. There is resistance. Not burnout, but rather fatigue. Working with children, where each is different and needs slightly different activities requires flexibility and is mentally exhausting. However, it's also training. I like to look at it that way. Discouragement sometimes appears when, after a long time working with a child, there are no results or even regression occurs. Such things happen, it slightly demotivates.

JW: And what then motivates you?

MW: The need to be there for them, to make them aware that they are needed. Also, help.

JW: What is the most important?

MW: That the child is happy, that they want to participate in activities, and that they cooperate with the group. The child says they want to have classes with you. It's a relationship that develops after some time of working with the child when I accept the child, and they accept me.

JW: What is lacking, on the other hand?

MW: Teachers who are passionate about their work. There is a big deficit of that. Of course, it's not a job for everyone. There is also a lack of equipment – audiovisual, toys specifically adapted to the needs of children, playgrounds adapted to the needs of children with difficulties, and green space, one that would allow working with children outdoors. Also, in my opinion, innovation is needed to meet parental needs. For example, I see a lack of flexibility. It's unnecessary to drop off the child only from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., but for example, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There is a lack of additional activities offered by preschools in one place, so parents have to travel across the town. It's also difficult for children to adapt to a new group and place. I think that's all.

JW: Thank you very much.

MW: You're welcome. It was a pleasure speaking with you.

Glossary

entity – something that exists as a separate and distinct unit
guidance – help or advice given to someone to help them make decisions or show them the right way to do something
mundane – ordinary, routine, or not particularly exciting or interesting
regression – a return to an earlier or less advanced state or condition
thwart – to prevent someone or something from achieving their goal or purpose

Photo by Sigmund on Unsplash

LIFESTYLE CORNER

DOOMED
Generation

Throughout history, elders have criticised younger generations, a tradition dating back to Aristotle or even earlier. My generation was criticised by the older, so I decided to stop this never-ending cycle and not criticise youngsters. They are raised in different conditions than we were, and some of these changes may present unique challenges for them.

So-called Generation Alpha, or those born after 2010, are often referred to as iPad Kids. In short, it means these kids were growing up using new technologies – smartphones, tablets, laptops. While watching a cartoon from time to time is not bad, when it comes to Gen Alphas, they seem to be going too far. They are more likely to play games or watch game plays, which are often inappropriate for their age and don't really teach them anything new. Also, concerning the consumed content, it's often meaningless, inane and incorporates harmful or suggestive themes.

Surprisingly, in an age when information is widely and universally accessible, and it's relatively easy to learn new things, Gen Alpha struggles with reading and writing. Here's an example from my friend's sister and her peers. The girl is having problems with learning due to her disabilities, but she still does her best to read and write at a level that is appropriate for her age. It's definitely not easy for her. She and her family are investing much effort and time into practice. And, well, it works. However, some children in her school have much more trouble with basic academic skills. Of course, everybody has their own limits and pace. Nevertheless, children at the age of 8 or 9 failing their classes and struggling to pass to the next grade is concerning, to say the least.

Maybe the parenting styles of Gen Alpha's parents are to blame? Maybe we need a balance between criticism and acceptance? Watching every step a child takes isn't the best idea. The same goes for leaving a child without any care, which can lead to educational problems. As Aristotle said – it's best to find the golden mean.

Wiktoria Wiśniewska

Pun Please

My therapist told me I have problems expressing my emotions. Can't say I'm surprised.

I can tell when you're lying just by looking at you. I can also tell when you're standing.

DAD JOKE
Loooooooading...
please wait...

Whimsical LANGUAGE

Idioms

A close-knit family
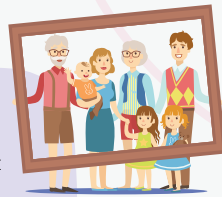A family that is very close and supportive of each other.

A chip off the old block
A child who is very similar to their parent in personality or behaviour.

(Own) flesh and blood
Someone's (own) flesh and blood is that person's close relative.

To run in the family
If something like an illness or quality runs in the family, then members of that family are prone to it.

A shoulder to lean on
Someone who provides emotional support and comfort in difficult times.

Skeletons in the closet
Hidden or secret problems or embarrassing facts about a family.

Babe in the woods
An innocent, naive, or inexperienced person in a dangerous or challenging situation.

Proverbs

Blood will tell
A person's true character or qualities (often bad ones) will eventually become apparent over time.

It takes a whole village to bring up a child
For a good upbringing, a child should have positive and nurturing interactions with people outside their immediate family as well.

Love makes a family
The belief that love and care truly define a family, regardless of blood relations.

Like father, like son Like mother, like daughter
Said when a son is similar to his father and a daughter is similar to her mother.

Where there's smoke, there's fire
If something seems wrong, it probably is; there is usually some truth to a rumour.

Parenting Types

by Julia Nowakowska

According to studies made by Diana Baumrind, there are 4 main types of parenting. What are they about and how do family relations look in those cases?

The authoritarian type refers to a situation when a parent wants a child to obey their strict rules without any discussion. Also, this type includes severe punishments for breaking those rules.

The permissive parents let children do what they want and don't set any limits at all. They usually seem like they are not controlling the situation.

The neglectful type involves not interacting with children much. These parents don't give children many rules and also don't show much attention.

The authoritative type is the most beneficial one. In this case, parent provides children with support and understanding but also sets some rules that are well thought out.

# INTRODUCTION TO MOTHER-TONGUE
Glottodidactics

Mother-tongue glottodidactics has been developed by the remarkable Polish speech therapist Prof. Bronisław Rocławski who specialises in preschool and early childhood education.

Glottodidactics foundations are based on scientific research and had their beginnings in the 1970s. It aims to give children the most efficient and enjoyable learing experience to equip them with neccecary skills of writing, reading and counting.
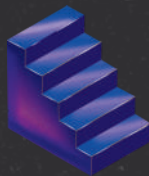
Glottodidactics postulates include for children to enjoy learning and be eager to acquire new knowledge, for teachers to recognise the right time and way to teach their pupils, every small step and success of the child is reinforced which supports their development. Teachers who fail as pedagogues blame only themselves – never the children, and there shouldn't be any homework because everything the child should learn is taught at school.
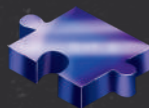
Teachers following glottodidactic's objectives are often called modern or "teachers of the 21st century" because, indeed, these ways are "cutting-edge" in comparison to long overdue pre-war education system that still functions in Poland today.

By Martyna Lekan

Two Glottodidactics

"Glottodidactics" is a term used in science with at least two different meanings. The name is derived from ancient Greek: "glotta" – language, "didaskein" – to teach, didactics – knowledge about teaching and learning methods.

Firstly, glottodidactics – a subfield of applied linguistics developed in Poland (as written by Prof. Magdalena Olpińska-Szkiełko in the article "Anthropocentric Glottodidactics") in the early 1960s of the last century at the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the University of Poznań. Since 1966, a scientific periodical, *Glottodidactica. An International Journal of Applied Linguistics* has been published in English by the University Press.

The development of linguistic glottodidactics was significantly contributed to by Professor Franciszek Grucza (a full member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and recipient of honorary doctorates from Polish and foreign universities). According to the Professor, "the subject of glottodidactics constitutes those skills of people, based on which they can learn and teach (foreign) languages". The Professor's understanding of the subject, tasks, and research results of glottodidactics is presented in volumes 5 and 6 of his *Collected Works* titled "On Language Learning and Glottodidactics I, II".

As part of an individual course of study, I had the opportunity to participate in a fantastically-conducted seminar by the Professor dedicated to general linguistics, applied linguistics, and glottodidactics. The Professor was very demanding when examining students. To score well in linguistics, one had to be prepared for a thorough examination – primarily of the theoretical views of de Saussure and Chomsky.

Secondly, "mother-tongue glottodidactics" about which more is written by Martyna Lekan in this issue is associated with broadly understood speech therapy and related fields. The author of the idea of mother-tongue glottodidactics, Professor Bronisław Rocławski, focused mainly on teaching reading and writing. Obviously, in its development, he used the achievements of linguistics, especially phonetics and phonology.

Barbara Borowska, PhD, briefly presents the said concept as follows: "In B. Rocławski's method, learning to read and write requires meeting two fundamental conditions, i.e., a good, passive knowledge of the entire alphabet and the ability to synthesise and analyse the phonemic structure of words".

Professor Rocławski was the head of the Department of Speech Therapy at the Maria Grzegorzewska University from 1994 to 2003. You can read about it in an interesting article, "Warsaw Speech Therapy. History and Contemporary Times", co-authored by Danuta Emiluta-Rozya, PhD.

It's worth mentioning that *PsychLingo* magazine draws inspiration from anthropocentric glottodidactic within the meaning of the Poznań School and Professor Franciszek Grucza.

BT

Culture Club

"Captain Fantastic"

In 2016, Matt Ross gave us a fantastic drama *Captain Fantastic* that unfortunately went unnoticed by many. The film raises some thought-provoking questions, which is rare in today's film industry. It is not a conventional story but rather about an old hippie who raises his children outside of society in a way that would make Rousseau proud. However, when the mother dies, problems arise. The beauty of this film lies in its simplicity. It doesn't force overcomplicated meanings onto its viewers through dialogue or scenes that one must catch to make sense of the story. It is what it is, and because of that, it gives us time to ponder the questions that arise. Is this the way we should be living our lives, raising our children? Are we robbing mankind of its natural way of living and thinking? Or is it all just a big disaster?

From the perspective of the knowledge that the father instils in them and the critical thinking he nurtures (if not coerces), it would seem so. However, upon closer observation, we notice subtle hints of uncertainty, surprise, and struggle when they try to reenter society. This uncertainty makes us question whether our way of life is merely a necessity or whether it is disastrous. Is knowledge more important than socialisation? Is morality learned through reading about it, or is it shaped by living in a diverse society and learning from others every day?

Captain Fantastic isn't a masterpiece that leaves *Titanic* far behind, but it is a movie that invites contemplation, a reminder that nothing is black and white. All of this unfolds in the context of raising six children by one man, illustrating the dilemmas of both approaches to guiding children into adulthood – the "normal" and the "abnormal". It leaves you without an answer but with a call to find it.

By Jan Wolicki

"Trapped in parents' words"

How to break free from the spells cast on us in childhood

I am a bookworm, so when I find the right book, I become so immersed in reading it that I can't help devour the text for hours or even days. I'm (not so) afraid that the condition is incurable, so there are just a few circumstances in the world that can stop the process and even fewer that can inhibit my favourable review to my friends... Well, today, my friend, I'm encouraging you to read a book written by a psychologist, Agnieszka Kozak, and a sociolinguist, Jacek Wasilewski. The magical title of it is "*Trapped in a parent's words: How to break free from the spells cast on us in childhood*". According to it, words formed in sentences act as a charm. It might influence you even for decades without you realising it, acting as a trap.

The first part of the book revolves around those who have a negative effect on your life. The author of a chapter gives you valid reasons to acknowledge the harmful influence of the saying or should I say, belief that is, at a glance, well-known and harmless. Before you receive the explanation, you get to read a story of a person under the effect. For me, it was a moment to think about the topic and remark on the feelings I experienced from what I read. I took my time and continued reading. At the end of a chapter, you receive the promised ways to break free. The tips make it easier to stand up for yourself and encourage you to stop ignoring the signals from your body and your needs.

The second part of the book teaches you to consciously use words that break the spell, such as "sorry" or "please". You could call it the rules of white magic. This type of spell can help you maintain valuable relationships and strengthen the bond between you and others. The book comes with multiple cultural references, which must result from a vivid imagination and the great intuition of the writers. It surely makes the reading more enjoyable.

I think the book is a great invitation to become a philosopher for a moment and rethink some of our choices, focus on the sources of our beliefs, and ponder the words we tell the little ones. I believe everyone should make a place for it on their bookshelf. Especially if their plan is to expand the family. Break free, my friend.

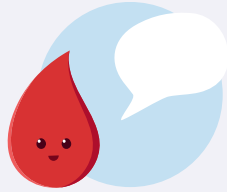**By Joanna Łukasiewicz**

Language Exercises

Exercise 1.
Guess the idioms and proverbs based on the given images.

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

4. ....

5. ....

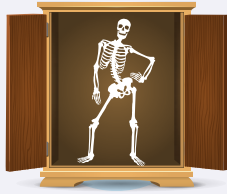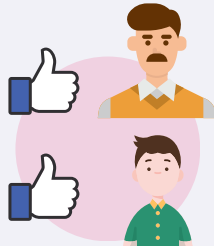6. ....

Exercise 2.
Complete the sentences below using the appropriate verb forms from the list provided.

stigmatise   desensitise   introject   indulge   rear   stall

1. Exposure to aggression in media may _____ kids to real-life violence and make them less considerate of other people.
2. Parents should create healthy and safe environments for children to explore and _____ in their creativity to ensure their emotional and cognitive development.
3. By not addressing mental and psychosocial issues, parents can involuntarily _____ children's development by depriving them of resources to do well in the world outside.
4. Ted _____ his parents' demands, internalising their expectations and choosing a medical school instead of drama college, which he truly wanted.
5. Kids who don't have the latest gadgets or appear worse in any way may be _____, as well as those who behave awkwardly due to their shy nature.
6. Children _____ in nurturing environments usually exhibit greater empathy and compassion.

Exercise 3.
Complete the sentences below using the adjectives below. Some adjectives are redundant.

malnourished   submissive

gruesome   parasocial

susceptible   parentified

incorrigible   innate

1. When faced with challenging situations, some children may become _____ and assume the role of their parents.
2. Young minds are highly _____ to negative influences. Therefore, it is crucial to instil the best behaviour patterns in them.
3. Paul grew up spoiled by his parents and, as a result, turned out to be a(n) _____ teenager. He frequently disobeys requests and, at times, does the exact opposite.
4. Katy was evidently _____, with her ribs and hip bones sticking out. However, she ate a little because all her friends were slim.
5. Despite limited interactions, many people form a(n) _____ relationship with their favourite media personality, feeling as if they were close friends.
6. Exposing children to _____ content on TV or the Internet can harm their mental health and produce insensitive and selfish adults.

Exercise 4.
Complete the crossword puzzle using the provided clues. The solution is indicated by the numbers in the pink squares.
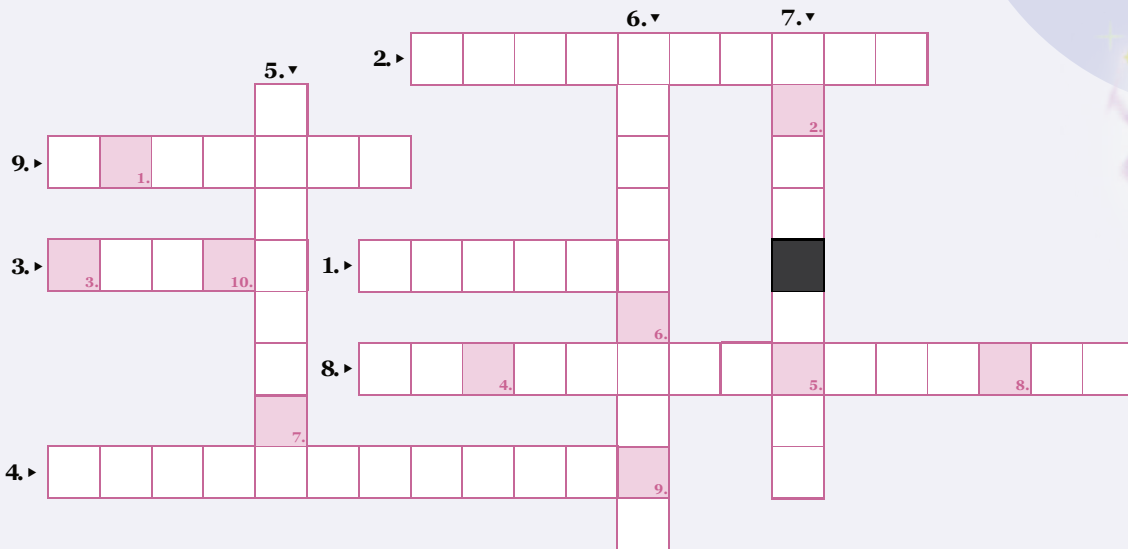
Solution

1. [...] culture is an online phenomenon of stigmatising certain things (whether it is a behaviour, interest and so on) and considering them to be embarrassing to indulge in
2. [...] relationship is a bond involving a person and someone they do not know personally
3. [...] parenting is a trend among mothers who use toned-down colours instead of vibrant and primary ones in their child's decor
4. a defence mechanism causing one to unknowingly adopt the behaviours and beliefs (feelings, ideas, etc.) of another person.
5. a part of your mind that focuses on ensuring that you behave in compliance with societal norms and moral standards
6. is a phenomenon regarding parents who choose to show excessively and often monetise their children online; mostly common among popular Internet personalities
7. Generation Alpha, or those born after 2010, are often referred to as [...]
8. a phenomenon of a child taking responsibility for the family's functioning and care for younger siblings
9. [...] assumption – the idea that the upbringing of children is a decisive factor in shaping their personality and character

Exercise 5.
Pair the words from each column to form collocations, and then use them to fill in the blanks in the sentences provided below.

A	B
temper	mechanisms
intellectual	parentification
authority	tantrums
defence	toll
blank	capacity
psychological	figure
emotional	slate

1. Experiencing traumatic events or situations during childhood may take a heavy _____, affecting their mental health later in life.
2. _____ occurs when a child is forced to emotionally care for their parents when they are unable to take care of themselves.
3. The concept of a child as a _____ suggests that they come to this world without any inborn content and that they are yet to be shaped by their environment.
4. Usually, children use immature _____ when they can't otherwise defend themselves against pain or anxiety.
5. Children with oppositional defiant disorder typically have no regard for their parents, teachers and other _____.
6. As they grow older, children's _____ expands, allowing them to use adult-like logic and understand complex concepts.
7. Many people frown upon children throwing _____, not realising that they are a normal part of child development.

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Glossary

What's so Beneficial About Reading to Children?

emergent – just beginning to appear or develop

exploit – to take advantage of something in a way that's not fair or ethical

literacy – knowing how to read and write

Nurture Assumption

blank slate – a concept that people are born with no innate characteristics or predispositions, and their development is shaped by their environment and experiences

botched – messed up, badly done

defy – to openly resist or refuse to obey

de-transition – the process of reverting to one's original gender identity

inherent – existing as an essential characteristic or quality within someone or something

malleable – adaptable or easily influenced

nature vs. nurture – the age-old debate that considers the impact of genetics (nature) versus environmental factors (nurture) on human behaviour and traits

rear – to bring up and care for (a child)

Thou Childhood Shalt be Beige!

boundary – the limit of what is acceptable

dub – to give an unofficial name or nickname to someone or something

endorse – to declare one's public approval or support of something

essentials – necessary personal belongings, such as toiletries or clothing items

exposure – the state of being exposed to, e.g. risk or harm

genderless – not conforming to traditional gender roles or distinctions

stall – to stop making progress, typically due to a lack of movement or activity

uncharted waters – a situation or area that is unfamiliar

Introjection

authority figure – a person who is seen as having power, influence, or control, such as a parent, teacher, or boss

defence mechanism – ways people unconsciously protect themselves from uncomfortable feelings or situations

flaw – imperfection

in compliance with – following rules, regulations, or standards

incorrigible – incapable of being corrected or improved

introject – to internalise or take in the ideas, beliefs, or attitudes of others, usually without conscious awareness

Unmonitored Internet Access and its Effects on Children

bond – a strong connection or relationship between people

desensitise – to make someone less sensitive or emotionally responsive to something, often through repeated exposure

explicit – clearly stated or shown

gore – graphic and bloody violence or content

gruesome – extremely unpleasant or horrifying

indulge in – to allow oneself to enjoy something, often considered luxurious or pleasurable

Internet traction – a level of attention, interest, or popularity that something gains on the internet

notorious – widely known, usually for something negative

parasocial – relating to a one-sided relationship, typically between a viewer or fan and a media personality

plethora – a large amount of something.

quality time – dedicated and meaningful time spent with someone

shoot the breeze – to chat casually or have a relaxed conversation

stigmatise – to unfairly label or mark someone or something as shameful or undesirable

Sharenting and Artificial Intelligence

baby shower – a party thrown to celebrate and prepare for the arrival of a new baby

digitalisation – changing information or activities into digital form, using devices such as computers or smartphones

dire – very serious or urgent

dissect – to carefully examine and analyse something by taking it apart

distress – extreme anxiety, sorrow, or pain

inexplicable – something that can't be explained or understood

malicious – intending to hurt or be mean

malnourished – not getting enough food or nutrition

monetise – making money from something

nursery – a special room in a house where babies or young children sleep, play, and are taken care of

offspring – kids or babies of a certain parent or animal

peer pressure – feeling pressured by friends to do something or act a certain way

postpartum – relating to the period of time after a baby has been born

scarring – emotional marks left on someone's feelings or memories after a difficult or traumatic experience

showcase – to display something to show off its best parts

spark – to create a sudden burst of energy or inspiration

temper tantrums – a sudden period of uncontrolled anger

unsettling – causing feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or unease

Parentification

acknowledge – to recognise or admit the existence, truth, or validity of something

discernible – something you can see, hear, or notice easily

disruptive – messing up or stopping things from going smoothly

neuralgia – a medical condition characterised by intense, stabbing, or shooting pain that follows the path of a nerve or nerves

parentified – a parentified child is forced to take on the role and responsibilities of a parent

put on the back burner – postpone or delay something, usually because it's not currently a priority

How do Children Learn Language so Fast?

degenerate – to decline or deteriorate physically, mentally, or morally

differentiate – to recognise or ascertain what makes someone or something different

distinction – a difference between two similar things

exponential – growing or increasing at a very fast rate, often becoming much larger or more over time

innate – existing in one from birth

pruning – removing or cutting out

Sephora Kids and the Red Pill

adhere (to) – to stick firmly to something, such as a rule, belief, or principle

capacity – the ability to do a particular thing

distort – to change or affect something, especially in a way that makes it worse

irritation – slight pain and discomfort of the skin

objectifying – treating someone as an object rather than as a person with feelings, thoughts, and autonomy

overly – too much or excessively

pursuit (of) – chasing after or trying to get something

screen time – the time spent in front of a screen

submissive – doing what others say without arguing

suited (to) – appropriate for a particular purpose or situation

susceptible (to) – likely to be affected by something

toll – the bad effects of something

Interview

entity – something that exists as a separate and distinct unit

guidance – help or advice given to someone to help them make decisions or show them the right way to do something

mundane – ordinary, routine, or not particularly exciting or interesting

regression – a return to an earlier or less advanced state or condition

thwart – to prevent someone or something from achieving their goal or purpose

Whimsical Language

a close-knit family – a family that is very close and supportive of each other

a chip off the old block – a child who is very similar to their parent in personality or behaviour

(own) flesh and blood – someone's (own) flesh and blood is that person's close relative

to run in the family – if something like an illness or quality runs in the family, then members of that family are prone to it

a shoulder to lean on – someone who provides emotional support and comfort in difficult times

skeletons in the closet – hidden or secret problems or embarrassing facts about a family

babe in the woods – an innocent, naive, or inexperienced person in a dangerous or challenging situation

Blood will tell. – A person's true character or qualities (often bad ones) will eventually become apparent over time.

It takes a whole village to bring up a child. – For a good upbringing, a child should have positive and nurturing interactions with people outside their immediate family as well.

Love makes a family. – The belief that love and care truly define a family, regardless of blood relations.

Like father, like son./Like mother, like daughter. – Said when a son is similar to his father and a daughter is similar to her mother.

Where there's smoke, there's fire. – If something seems wrong, it probably is; there is usually some truth to a rumour.

Photo by Thought Catalog on Unsplash

Last but not least...

TED

What do babies think?

Alison Gopnik, July 2011

"Babies and young children are like the R&D division of the human species," says psychologist Alison Gopnik. Her research explores the sophisticated intelligence-gathering and decision-making that babies are really doing when they play.

Watch here!

How can you check if a movie/show is children appropriate?

Have you ever been struggling with checking age restrictions of movie or a TV show? Or, if you are familiar with PG ratings, have you ever wondered why the movie is rated like that?

There is a useful website, *kids-in-mind.com*, where you can check movie's rates in several categories, like violence. Also, you can see in which way they appear in the film, because all of the scenes with, for example, violence are described!
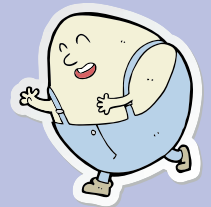
Scan and see!

Linguistic Tidbit

The term *"portmanteau word"* was conjured up by Lewis Carroll in the adventures of Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Humpty Dumpty, gave the following definition of such a creation:

> It's like a portmanteau –
> – there are two meanings packed up into one word.

Linguists, less poetically, refer to this phenomenon as a "blend", which occurs as a result of the merging of two linguistic elements. There are quite a lot of such well--established portmanteau words in English: for example, **vlog** — from video and blog, **smog** — from smoke and fog, **sheeple** — from sheep and people, that is, people are very easy to lead and manipulate.

Answers to exercises

Exercise 1.
1. babe in the woods
2. blood will tell
3. (own) flesh and blood
4. skeletons in the closet
5. like father, like son
6. a shoulder to lean on

Exercise 2.
1. desensitise
2. indulge
3. stall
4. introjected
5. stigmatised
6. reared

Exercise 3.
1. parentified
2. susceptible
3. incorrigible
4. malnourished
5. parasocial
6. gruesome

Exercise 4.
1. cringe
2. parasocial
3. beige
4. introjection
5. superego
6. sharenting
7. iPad kids
8. parentification
9. nurture

Solution: upbringing

Exercise 5.
1. psychological toll
2. emotional parentification
3. blank slate
4. defence mechanisms
5. authority figures
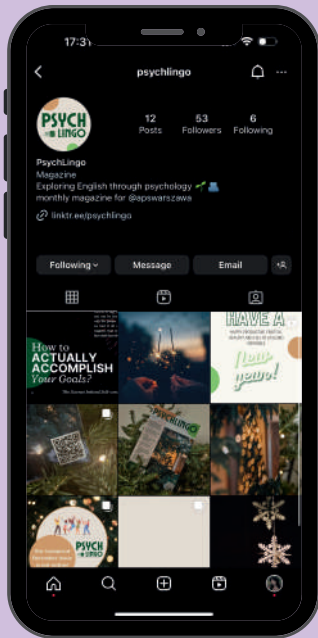6. intellectual capacity
7. temper tantrums

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Supporting text for the cover story goes here

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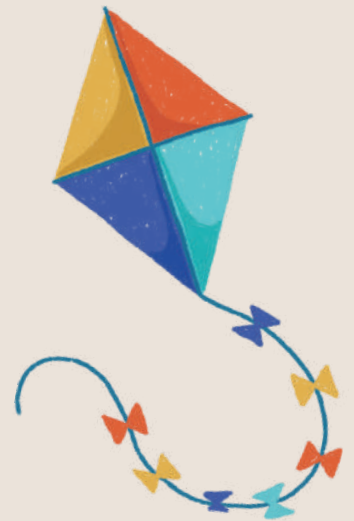
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