

Children and Media Research Advancement Act

Legislation to study the impact of technology and media on children's health

[S 971/HR 2161](#), co-authored by: Sens. Markey (D-Mass.), Sasse (R-Neb.), Blunt (R-Mo.), Schatz (D-Hawaii), Collins (R-Maine), and Bennet (D-Colo.), and Reps. Raskin (D-Md.), Gonzalez (R-Ohio), and Trahan (D-Mass.)

CAMRA amends the Public Health Service Act to authorize a program within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to facilitate a greater understanding of the health and developmental impacts of digital media use on infants, children, and adolescents.

Why we need to know more: The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home orders have left kids and families relying on screens even more than they already did. Meanwhile, the relationship between screen time, social media, and mental health among kids and teens continues to be extremely nuanced. As kids increasingly seek to harness the power of technology, it is vital that families, technologists, and lawmakers have independent, longitudinal research to take an evidence-based approach to ensure the safe use of digital media and technology for young people.

- Media use among teens (up to 17% from 11%) and tweens (up to 17% from 3%) has grown faster in the last two years than it did in the four years prior to the pandemic.¹
- Use of social media is growing among 8- to 12-year olds. Nearly one in five now say they use social media every day.²
- Nearly 38% of teens and young adults reported symptoms of moderate to severe depression in 2021, up substantially from 25% in 2018.³
- Parents are increasingly worried about the effects of screen time on kids: Over 70% of parents listed overuse of screen time/social media as their top child health concern in 2020.⁴

How does CAMRA work?

CAMRA authorizes **\$15 million** per year for the first three years and **\$25 million** per year for the remaining two years, and would require NIH to:

- Conduct and support research on the developmental effects of digital media -- including but not limited to social media, websites, television, motion pictures, mobile devices, computers, and video games -- on children of all ages
- Develop a research agenda and program on the health & developmental effects of digital media on infants, children, and adolescents to inform research made possible under the proposal; and
- Submit a preliminary progress report to Congress within one year

Benefits to the research community

CAMRA is designed to assist behavioral experts to better understand the relationships between digital media use and early and adolescent development in the following research fields:

- **Cognitive:** child and adolescent language development, executive functioning, attention, creative problem-solving skills, visual and spatial skills, literacy, critical thinking, and other cognitive abilities
- **Physical:** diet, exercise, sleeping and eating routines, and other areas of physical development
- **Social-Emotional Development:** relationship skills, empathy, distress tolerance, perception of social cues, bullying, depression, anxiety, addiction, obsessive behavior, and suicidal ideation

Common Sense is the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of all kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in the 21st century.

¹ Rideout, V., Peebles, A., Mann, S., and Robb, M. B. (2022). [The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens, 2021](#). San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

² Ibid.

³ Rideout, V., Peebles, A., Fox, S., and Robb, M. B. (2021). [Coping with COVID-19: How Young People Use Digital Media to Manage Their Mental Health](#). San Francisco, CA: Common Sense and Media and Hopelab.

⁴ Clark, S., et al. (2020). [Top Health Concerns for Kids in 2020 During the Pandemic](#). C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.