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Social Media, Social Kids: Researchers Examine How New Forms of Media Affect Social Skills, Values, Relationships

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PRESS RELEASE

Screen time has changed dramatically in the 21st century. Although most people still watch television and work on computers, social forms of media are expanding rapidly, in part due to the growth of the Internet and cellular networks. These interactive and social media include social networking sites, online video sharing, virtual worlds, mobile phones, and video chat. Starting as early as ages 1 or 2, many children start using these tools, increasing the likelihood that social media will influence the development of social skills, interpersonal dynamics, and social-emotional learning.

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) will host a symposium during its Biennial Meeting that presents research on children from early childhood to young adulthood, addressing how social media are connected to social skills, values, how people experience emotion, and relationships. This symposium brings together interdisciplinary research that draws on a variety of research methods from the fields of psychology, medicine, education, and communication.

Among the questions to be addressed:

- How are new forms of media such as virtual worlds related to the social skills of 3- to 12-year-olds?
- What is the relationship between social media and the value systems of preteens and teens ages 9 to 15?
- What emotional relationships do adolescents ages 12 to 15 have with different kinds of media, based on data from electronic personal digital assistants (PDAs)?
- How do young adults ages 19 to 22 connect and bond with friends through various digital media, and how does this compare to bonding in person? Can their previous experiences with digital media help them more effectively connect with friends in online environments?

The symposium will take place in the Washington Convention Center, Room 4C-4, on Friday, April 19, from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Researchers: B. Bradford Brown, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Stephanie M. Reich, Rebecca W. Black, Ksenia Korobkova, Anthony Wheeler, University of California, Irvine; Yalda Tehranian-Uhls, Patricia Greenfield, Eleni Zgourou, Tiffany Truong, Lauren E. Sherman, Minas Michikyan, University of California Los Angeles; Kara G. Liebeskind, University of Pennsylvania; David Bickham, Lydia A. Shrier, Michael Rich, Children's Hospital of Boston.