

A photograph of a man with a beard holding a baby in his arms. The man is looking down at a colorful children's book he is holding open. The baby is wearing a green patterned onesie. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a living room setting.

NAVIGATING A NEW NORMAL

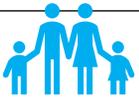
PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0-17

March 2020

As families around the world are hunkering down at home, the Smarty Pants team has been hard at work identifying what the new day-to-day looks and feels like for parents with children under 18 in the home.

We spoke with [138 US parents](#) (and some of their children) [via an online survey to understand their new normal](#). We hope the creativity, optimism and resilience in families' responses lift your spirits.

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THE FAMILY FOCUS

While many parents of minor children started their time at home with schedules and guidelines for their kids, many have quickly abandoned the rules and adapted an “anything goes” mentality to get through their days.

Parents are leaning on brands that their kids know and love to bring comfort, and many are thankful for niche brands and organizations that

have an eye toward enhancing education and entertainment.

Virtual playdates are keeping kids connected with friends, and game nights, nature walks and family dinners are a welcome silver lining as kids and parents spend more time than ever hunkered down at home.

Learn about 8 key insights into parents' new normal.



1

FINDING THE FAMILIAR

Especially true of families with kids 10 and under, parents are leaning on the familiar brands kids love. Netflix, Apple, Disney+, LEGO, Melissa & Doug, Xbox and Crayola are keeping families entertained, while Jell-O, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese and Oreo are keeping kids' bellies full.

"We've been lucky to find all of our 'normal' food brands in the supermarket. Keeping their food preferences stable has been great for us."
- Mom of 4- and 7-year-olds, NY

"Familiar books, foods and toys give us comfort. This isn't the time to try something totally new." - Mom of 1-year-old, NY

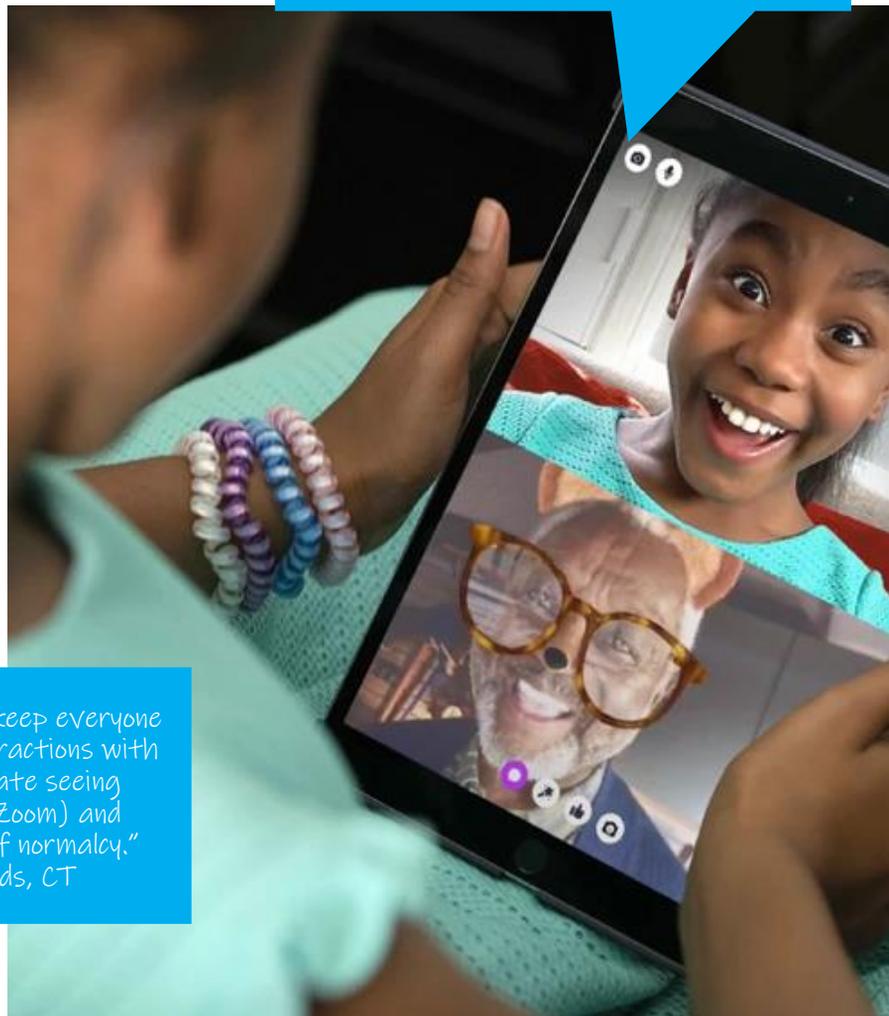


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ISOLATED BUT TOGETHER

Parents are doing their best to stay connected and ensure their kids are socially connected, too. Thanks to FaceTime, Zoom, Skype and several other video platforms, a quarter of kids are scheduling virtual hang sessions, chatting with grandparents, having remote birthday parties and actively staying connected with their friends and relatives.

"Tech brands get all my love right now! My Dell Laptop keeps me working from home. Google Classroom and Zoom Call are enabling my son to keep up online classes and Boy Scout troop. Facebook, Instagram, Gmail are keeping me and my son connected to friends and family. Grateful to my Samsung phone, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger video chat and Instagram for keeping me in touch with my daughter who has remained in her college campus apartment." – Mom of 15-year-old, CT



"So far the most helpful thing to keep everyone sane is the face-to-face video interactions with others. The kids really appreciate seeing their friends (via FaceTime or Zoom) and it lends at least the tiniest bit of normalcy." – Mom of 10- and 15-year-olds, CT

3

DIGITAL RESOURCES ABOUND

A third of parents are giving shoutouts to small brands and organizations — like zoos, Cosmic Kids yoga and Mo Willems Lunch Doodles — for [saving the day with live streamed content](#) as they keep in touch with the "real" world.

Many parents are also thankful for [edtech platforms](#) like Google Classroom, Bloomz, Canvas and Remind that are helping kids stay connected with teachers and classmates.

"We're relying heavily on Cosmic Kids (themed yoga that keeps them busy/active for at least 10-15 minutes), PBS KIDS (game apps & streaming shows which they can do on their own and I don't feel too bad about), Amazon Prime (ordering reinforcement activities...even if delivery is super delayed), Facebook (live streaming from our local library storytime, local zoo, etc.)."
— Mom of 4-year-old, PA



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A TEEN SIGH OF RELIEF

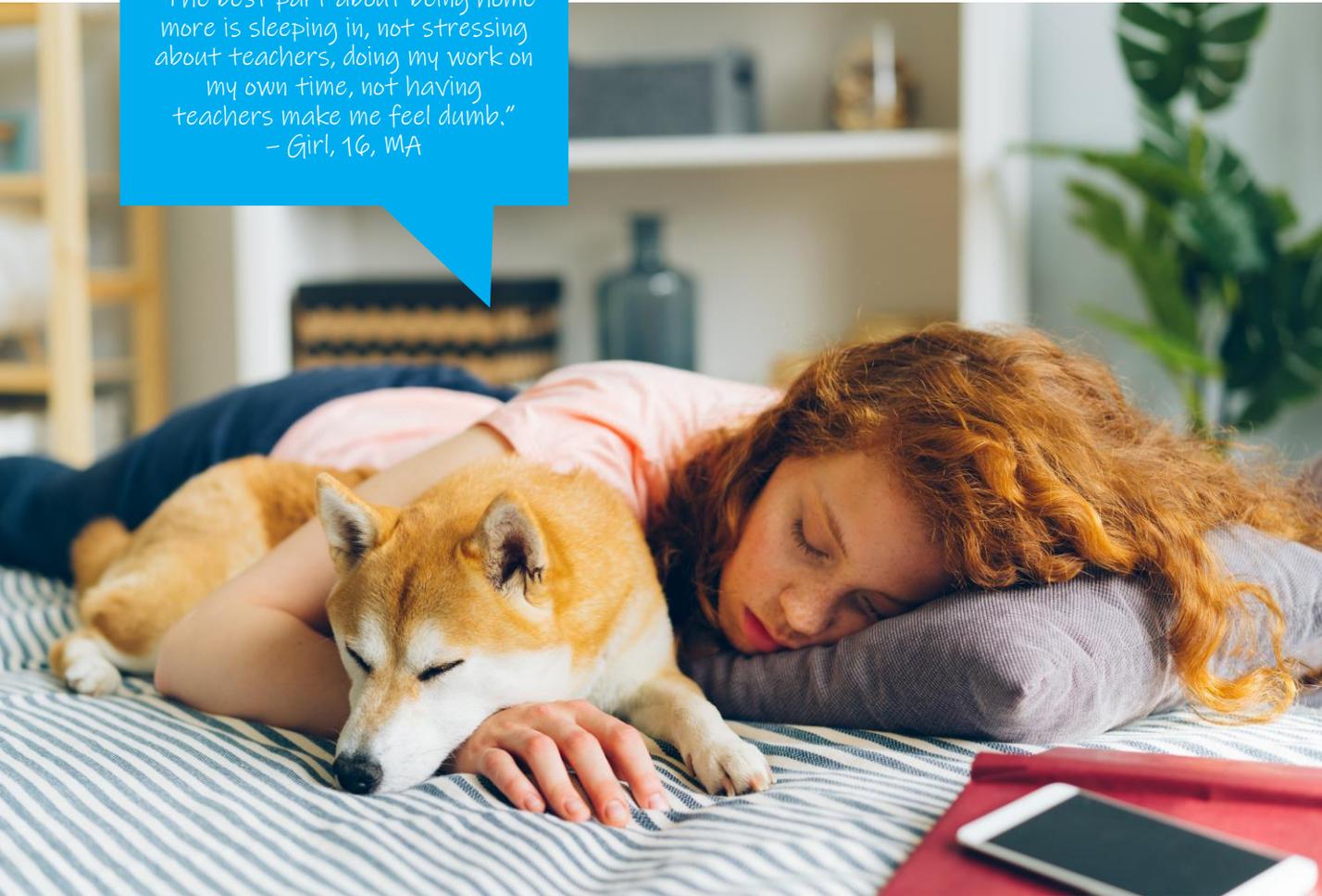
Amidst the family upheaval, a bright side is that many teens have a break from the intense schedule and workloads they have been enduring. Sleeping more, working at their own pace, taking as many breaks as they need — the change is welcomed, and many feel they're actually working more efficiently than ever. Parents welcome the respite, too.

"I get to pace my work and I don't have to deal with long lectures, busy work and things like that. I also get to take brakes periodically, and usually at school Netflix and Xbox aren't allowed but at home they are."

— Boy, 15, CT

"The best part about being home more is sleeping in, not stressing about teachers, doing my work on my own time, not having teachers make me feel dumb."

— Girl, 16, MA



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LOWERING THE PARENTING BAR

Although social distancing for families with kids started with color-coded schedules and ambitious home-schooling plans, many who normally pursue perfection are giving themselves a break and embracing a less-controlled life.

Painfully aware that they'll never be the perfect teacher, chef or activity director, parents have abandoned the need to overachieve, and instead are just doing the best they can.

"It's OK if our kids aren't learning as much as they should - they'll still graduate high school, go to college and be productive members of society, even if they don't finish this school year. We need to lower our expectations for what we're going to accomplish at home. Just keeping three kids happy and three adults sane is enough of an accomplishment."

- Mom of 1-, 3- and 7-year-olds, MA



"Being surrounded by external chaos means that the 'little chaos' inside our home (dishes sitting in the sink for example) needs to be ok."

- Dad of 4-year-old, WA

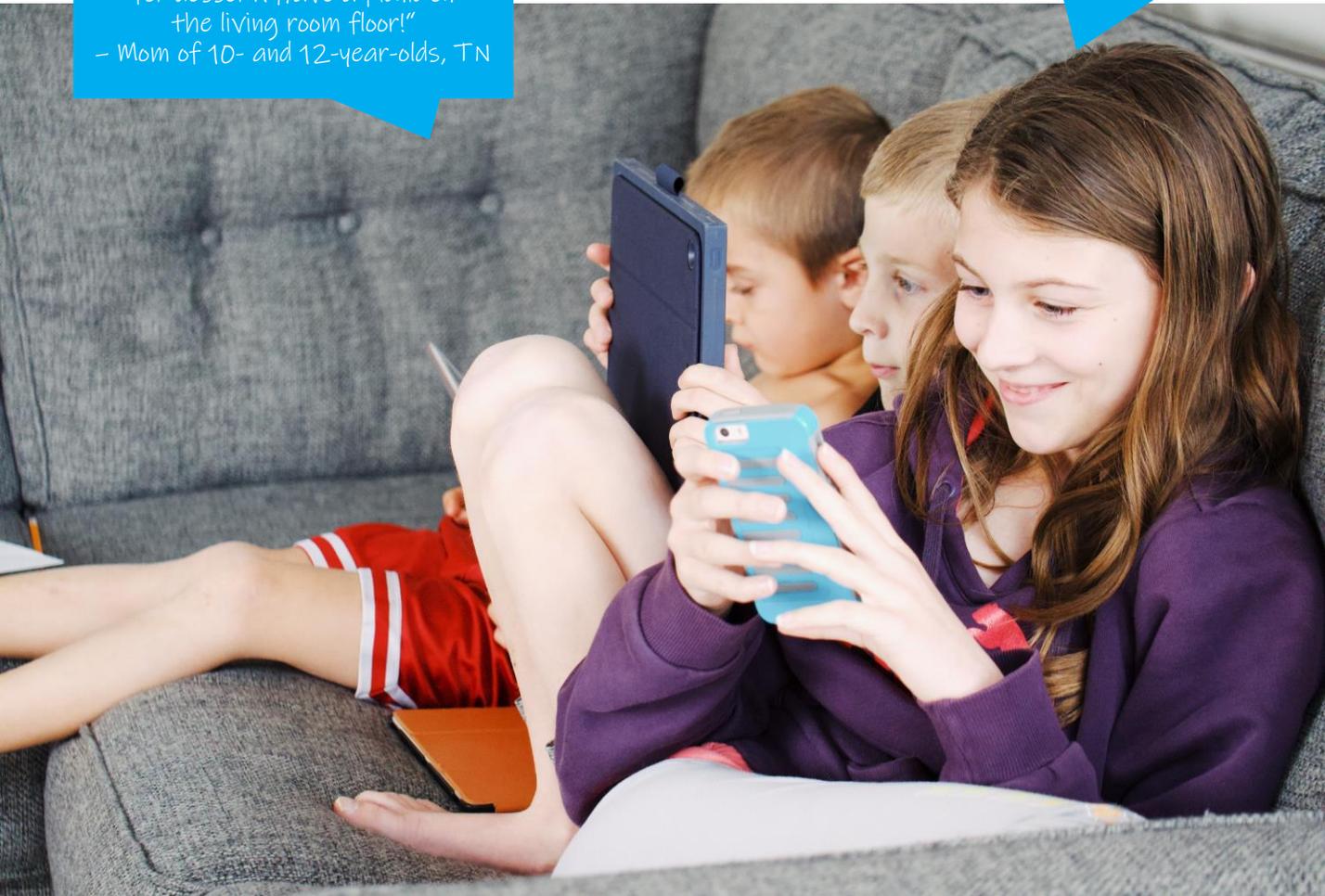
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BREAKING THE RULES

In this time of a new parenting paradigm, over a third of families have given themselves permission to bend and break pre-existing household guidelines. Rigid schedules are easing, forbidden treats are no longer so elusive and screen time is at an all-time high — and that's OK.

"I'm trying not to be hard on myself if I need to turn the TV on for them. And letting them climb up rocks and trees. I normally wouldn't let them but with the lack of playgrounds open or gym classes I want them to move around so, whatever works!"
— Mom of 1- and 2-year-olds, NY

"Eat dessert for dinner and dinner for dessert. Have a picnic on the living room floor!"
— Mom of 10- and 12-year-olds, TN



7

PRESSING RESET

As concerned as they may be, a majority of families are loving the chance to slow down and enjoy time with one another. Family dinners, movie nights, board games, walks, backyard play, making messes and "Pinterest mom" activities have become the primary source of entertainment for families. Those with children under 18 in the home are relishing the slower pace and making the most of it.

"I'm actually loving this reset. There is no more crazy running around to activities. The kids are actually learning at home and they seem to love it as well."
- Mom of 4-, 7- and 11-year-olds, FL

"Enjoying this unexpected chance to be together as a family without all the usual distractions."
- Mom of 4- and 12-year-olds, MA

"I love getting to spend all of this time with my little guy. I'm usually at work and he's at daycare. Now he just lights up my day."
- Dad of 2-year-old, CA



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PARENTING UP AND DOWN

Parents aren't just taking care of their kids, but they're *creatively taking care of their own parents in new ways* — running errands, setting them up with new technology, making sure they are staying at home and keeping them occupied during these trying times.

*"In addition to working from home and helping my kids through their online schooling, I'm juggling the needs of my 78-year-old mother. She's an extremely social, active senior and is not weathering her new isolation well - so I spend a lot of time just keeping her company over the phone."
- Mom of 5- and 9-year-olds, CO*



If you're interested in learning more about Smarty Pants' ongoing [Navigating a New Normal](#) study, drop us a line at info@asksmartypants.com. Our panel of consumers ages 2-92 is ready to help keep your organization connected to your core users during this unprecedented time.

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