Digital Parenting among Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Challenges and Strategies

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Abstract
The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of society, including education. In recent years, the integration of digital tools in educational settings has gained momentum, presenting both opportunities and challenges for students with intellectual disabilities. Digital parenting, which involves guiding and supporting children's use of digital devices and online resources, plays a crucial role in ensuring a safe and productive digital experience. This study aims to explore the challenges and strategies related to digital parenting among students with intellectual disabilities.
Keywords: Digital Parenting, Students with Intellectual Disabilities, Challenges and Strategies etc.

INTRODUCTION

Digital parenting refers to the practice of guiding, supervising, and supporting children's use of digital devices, online platforms, and the internet. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into daily life, including education, entertainment, and communication, digital parenting has become a vital aspect of raising children in the modern world. This practice is especially important for children with intellectual disabilities, who may require additional guidance and support to navigate the digital landscape safely and effectively. Digital parenting among students with intellectual disabilities in the digital era is a complex and critical topic. The integration of digital technology into education and daily life presents both opportunities and challenges for these students. Digital parenting strategies must be adapted to meet the unique needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities, ensuring they have safe, inclusive, and beneficial experiences in the digital world. Digital parenting encourages the use of social media, online communities, and communication apps to facilitate social interactions. Parents can guide their children in cultivating virtual friendships, participating in group activities, and engaging in shared interests, leading to increased socialization and a sense of belonging. Online safety is paramount for individuals with intellectual disabilities, who might lack the discernment to recognize potential dangers. Digital parenting focuses on educating both parents and students about online risks, appropriate behaviour, and privacy settings. This knowledge empowers parents to create a secure online environment and establish guidelines that safeguard their children from cyber bullying, exploitation, and inappropriate content. In a world where digital technology is a fundamental part of daily life, the significance of digital parenting for students with intellectual disabilities cannot be overstated. By providing education, support, and guidance, digital parenting empowers these individuals to overcome challenges, access educational resources, communicate effectively, and engage with

their peers. Ultimately, the impact of digital parenting extends beyond the digital realm, contributing to the overall growth, development, and quality of life for students with intellectual disabilities. It is through this holistic approach that we can harness the potential of technology to create a more inclusive and supportive world for everyone.

Review of Literature

Even though there have been a number of studies that try to find new ways to think about digital parenting, they often "pave the cow-path," to use a phrase from the field of human- computer interaction. That is, they use old ways of thinking about problems instead of looking at digital parenting as a whole to re-evaluate it. For example, Chen and Shi (2019) did a meta-analysis of 52 studies that looked at how Valkenburg et al.'s (1999) three types of family mediation affect young people's use of media and exposure to online risks. They found that more than a third of the studies they looked at were about watching TV, and that the focus was only on reducing risks. As a second example, Jago et al. (2013) looked at 29 studies about how parents handle media and how students use screens (like TV, the Internet, and video games) and how that affects their weight. They found that most studies didn't show that the measures they used were true and/or consistent within themselves. Valkenberg and friends (2013) may have been the most well-known people to say that digital parenting needs to be measured in a new way. Based on Deci and Ryan's (2000) autonomy-support-in-parenting model, they wanted to make a scale that measured how parents were seen to help their children. At first, the scale was meant to measure Internet use as well as TV, movies, and computer games. The goal was to figure out what parents do and how they explain things to their students and how they react when students don't do what they're told. But later problems with the dependability and validity of some of the items led Valkenberg et al. (2013) to use only a smaller set of items, none of which had to do with how teens use the Internet.

Why Students with Intellectual Disabilities Need Digital Parenting

Digital parenting has become very important in a world that is becoming more and more digital, especially for students with intellectual challenges. These students need special help and guidance to safely and effectively manage the digital world. Digital parenting is a set of strategies for making sure that these people have a good and meaningful time online. This essay talks about how important digital parenting is for students with intellectual disabilities. It shows how it affects learning, communication, making friends, and general health and well-being. Digital parenting gives parents, carers, and teachers the tools they need to help students with intellectual disabilities gain more control over their lives through education. When digital technologies are used in education, they allow for personalised learning, adaptive tools, and assistive technologies that are made to fit each person's needs. Parents who know how to use these technologies can build a place for their students to learn that helps them reach their full potential and learn new skills and information. Students with intellectual disabilities often have a hard time communicating. Digital tools like visual aids, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, and speech-to-text apps give people other ways to communicate. Digital parenting helps parents learn how to use these tools, which helps them support their children's ability to express themselves and connect with others. This makes communication easier and helps them fit in better with their peers. People with learning disabilities often worry about being alone.

Challenges in Digital Parenting for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

1. *Access and accessibility:* Physical, sensory, or cognitive limitations make it hard for many students with intellectual disabilities to use digital products and online platforms. This can make it harder for them to learn and talk on the computer.
2. *Digital literacy:* Both parents and students may not have the skills they need to use online platforms and apps successfully. Parents might find it hard to give advice if they don't know enough about the digital tools their students are using.
3. *Safety and Privacy Online:* Students with intellectual disabilities may be more likely to be cyber bullied or exploited online. Parents need to make sure their students are safe when they use digital devices. This means they need to know how to use privacy settings and act responsibly online.
4. *Appropriateness of Content:* It can be hard to choose digital content that fits the learning goals and skills of students. Parents need help finding training materials that are appropriate for and interesting to their students.

Strategies for Effective Digital Parenting:

1. *Collaboration and Training:* Schools, teachers, and organisations should offer training workshops for the parents of students with intellectual disabilities. Some of the things that can be talked about in these meetings are digital literacy, staying safe online, and how to use digital tools to learn best.
2. *Personalised Learning Plans:* Creating personalised digital learning plans together can make sure that the digital tools and materials used are suited to each student's needs and skills.
3. *Monitoring and Talking:* It's important for parents and teachers to talk to each other often. Parents should be told to keep an eye on what their students do online, deal with any problems right away, and ask teachers for help when they need it.
4. *Interfaces that are easier to use and assistive technologies:* Digital tools and platforms should have easier-to-use interfaces and assistive technologies to help students with intellectual challenges use them. This can make it easier for them to get involved in digital learning.
5. *Parent Support Networks:* Setting up online communities or forums where parents of students with intellectual disabilities can talk about their experiences, problems, and solutions can be a great way to help them.

CONCLUSION

Parents of students with intellectual disabilities face unique challenges when it comes to digital parenting. To make sure that digital technology is used in a safe, meaningful, and successful way, parents need to come up with their own strategies. Teachers, parents, and lawmakers must work together to create an inclusive digital learning environment that addresses these problems and gives students with intellectual disabilities the tools they need to take advantage of the opportunities the digital age offers. Digital parenting is even more important when it comes to students with intellectual disabilities. These students may need more help to understand complicated digital ideas, stay safe online, and find the right tools for their learning needs. Parents, teachers, and professionals in the field of special education can work together to build a whole-person approach to digital parenting that helps students with intellectual disabilities deal with the unique problems they face.

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