

A Big Problem - Sharenting: Is it Possible to Turn a Big Problem into a Small One?

Tuğba OLUÇ^{1*}, Emrah DURSUN²

¹Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Child Health and Disease Nursing, Erzincan/Turkey

²Bitlis Eren University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Child Health and Disease Nursing, Bitlis / Turkey

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1. Introduction

The integration of technology into our lives today brings with it many problems. Today's parents use this technology recklessly and share every moment of their children and make them public, so to speak. (Brosch, 2016). Growing up in a digital-first environment, these children may face significant privacy issues that will shape their future lives. (Fox & Hoy, 2019).

2. Why do parents share?

Traditional family photo albums have been replaced by digital family albums. While family photo albums are shared with the immediate environment, these created digital albums are open to everyone. In a study examining why parents share, parents stated that it is to get approval and social support, to demonstrate their skills in how they care for their children, and to accumulate memories. (Latipah et al., 2020). Parents also mentioned the positive and negative aspects of sharing. While making friends, accumulating memories, and providing support were shown as positive effects, negative effects included feeling insecure under negative influences, experiencing negative emotions such as hostility, and comparing one's child to other children. (Latipah et al., 2020).

3. To what extent is children's privacy protected?

Nowadays, increasing human interactions are turning into fast data sets through social platforms and forming large databases. It forms the data self or, in other words, digital footprints. These digital footprints record the processes of the individual from infancy to adulthood and cause concerns in their future lives. (Brosch, 2016; Livingstone et al., 2019). In an article investigating child data privacy in 50 countries, it is seen that 33 of these countries have legal regulations, while 17 countries do not have any legal regulations and the legal regulations that have been made are incomplete. (Bischoff, 2023).

Various suggestions for parents to consider when using social media

Parents should pay attention to some points when sharing (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2020; Minkus et al., 2015). These;

- ☐ Do not share naked or inappropriate images of children,
- ☐ Do not share videos or photos of children having temper tantrums or food crises,
- ☐ Do not share data about the child's location,
- ☐ When sharing, one should consider how it may affect the child's future life,
- ☐ They should frequently check the privacy settings of social media.

4. Suggestions

Life in the digital age aims to increase individuals' use of social media and motivates them to share. With parents joining this trend, we come across the concept of sharenting. Parents' non-malicious sharing can be malicious to others or negatively affect the child's future life. When these innocent needs of parents are taken under control, it

*Sorumlu yazar: tugba.oluc@erzincan.edu.tr

will cease to be a dangerous situation for children. In this context, it is very important for local governments to make and put into effect various regulations. It is very important to raise awareness of parents and provide various trainings in order to turn this big problem into a small one. The best interests of the child should not be ignored. Perhaps it would be safer to return to traditional family photos.

Authors Contributions

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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