



Growing up digital: skills, safety, and resilience in an always-on world

Insights from Bark's 2025 Annual Report —
and what comes next

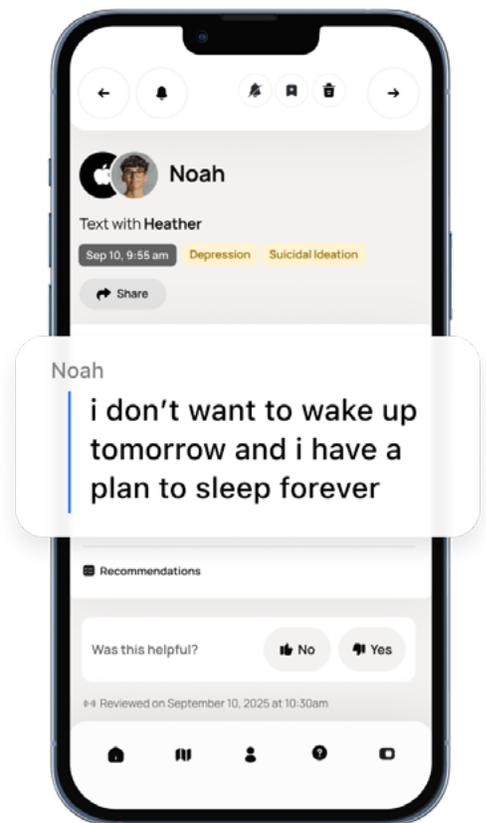
Bark's 2025 Annual Report on Children and Technology analyzed a staggering 11.1 billion digital activities from teens and tweens, spanning texts, emails, and over 30 of the most popular apps and social media platforms among young people.



Executive summary

A shift from “don’t do this” to “here’s how to do this safely” became increasingly clear in 2025. Digital citizenship efforts moved toward empowering students with the skills and judgment needed to navigate online spaces as they grow more complex, confusing, and AI-driven. Artificial intelligence now represents both a critical skill that will shape postsecondary success and a powerful tool that, when misused, can contribute to stress, confusion, and mental health challenges for young people.

At the same time, the 2025 Annual Report underscores a difficult reality: students continue to experience concerning situations online at rates that would surprise many parents, educators, and community members.



Key considerations for schools and 2026 online safety efforts

Parents remain essential partners.

Many online interactions that later impact school culture begin after hours. Supporting parents with education and tools to help **keep students safe on devices at home** is critical.

Digital resilience and mental health must stay front and center.

Year over year, alerts related to depression, anxiety, and emotional distress increased. Students today experience social dynamics around the clock, making it **imperative that schools help them build digital resilience**: recognizing emotional triggers, managing online pressure, and developing healthy coping strategies.

Two practical approaches include applying core SEL concepts to students' online lives and acknowledging the emotional weight of likes, comments, and direct messages. Students need strategies to pause, reflect, and protect their mental health, supported by regular opportunities for conversation and check-ins.

Culture and education matter.

Modeling healthy technology use, encouraging open dialogue, and making room for discussion are essential as technology continues to evolve. While removing phones during the school day may or may not reduce online incidents, it does create distraction-free time to talk about media balance, intentional technology use, and digital well-being.

Ultimately, empowerment is the long-term goal. **Early investment in skill development** — critical thinking, media balance, digital resilience, and AI literacy — helps create environments where students can feel both physically safer and mentally well.



Bark's 2025 Annual Report on children and technology



Self-harm/suicide

37% of tweens and **64% of teens** were involved in a self-harm/suicidal situation.



Anxiety

23% of tweens and **48% of teens** used language or were exposed to language about anxiety.



Sexual content

62% of tweens and **80% of teens** encountered nudity or content of a sexual nature.



Drugs/alcohol

61% of tweens and **81% of teens** engaged in conversations surrounding drugs/alcohol.



Bullying

70% of tweens and **79% of teens** experienced bullying as a bully, victim, or witness.



Depression

45% of tweens and **51% of teens** engaged in conversations about depression.



Disordered eating

15% of tweens and **34% of teens** engaged with or encountered content about disordered eating.



Predators

4% of tweens and **7% of teens** encountered predatory behaviors from someone online.



Violence

68% of tweens and **84% of teens** expressed or experienced violent subject matter/thoughts.



33

Activities analyzed
last 7 days



Oakland Jr/Students/Class of 2030

Bullying

Review issue

About Bark

Bark provides a comprehensive digital safety ecosystem that empowers districts to protect students across school-issued devices and accounts. Our AI-driven content monitoring, web filtering, and anonymous tip line solutions address real-time threats such as bullying, self-harm, violence, and online predation, using advanced contextual analysis, not just keywords. With 26 alert categories and manual review of severe cases, Bark supports timely, appropriate intervention aligned with your school safety goals.

As online threats evolve rapidly, Bark partners with educators, parents, and communities to equip students with the tools and digital literacy needed to thrive safely in today's connected world. Bark for Schools includes technology with monitoring as well as preventative education and training with Bark's new product, Connected Communities.

Connected Communities offers in-person education and training for 4th and 5th graders. At the time when they are getting their first phone, it is critical to align all parties on what digital wellness looks like. This means staff training, education for parents, and interactive learning for students.

Why schools trust Bark:

3500+

schools served

7+ million

children protected
each year

100 million

activities analyzed
per week

7.6+ million

severe bullying
situations detected

10 years

protecting kids
online