

A red silhouette of a child's profile facing right, with a bird flying out of the open mouth. The text 'RECLAIMING CHILDHOOD' is overlaid in white on the child's face.

RECLAIMING CHILDHOOD

March 26, 2025

Agenda



I. Introduction & Welcome

II. Executive Order 43 and the Reclaiming Childhood Task Force

III. Workgroup Report Out

IV. Statewide Initiatives

V. Strategy Building for Statewide Initiatives

VI. Group Discussion

VII. Conclusion & Next Steps



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Snapshot of the Problem



- ~50% of U.S. children receive a smart phone by age 11 years old
- A poll of nearly 1,700 individuals aged 16 to 24 revealed that almost two-thirds believe that social media has become more toxic and addictive over the past 5 years
- The average teen spends over 33 hours a week on social media
- Prolonged screen time can impair executive functioning and academic performance
- Teens receive approximately 240 phone app notifications a day - a quarter of these during school hours

Social Media and Youth Mental Health

2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory



Excessive social media use poses a **profound risk" to the mental health of youth** , leading to calls for action from technology companies to restrict certain features that may exploit developing brains.

The advisory emphasizes the **need for a multifaceted approach to maximize benefits and minimize risks** associated with social media, targeting various groups including children, policymakers, and families.

The Surgeon General has labeled the effects of social media on youth as an urgent public health issue, urging parents to **be aware of the vulnerabilities their children face.**

RECLAIMING
CHILDHOOD



Overview of the Task Force & Executive Order 43



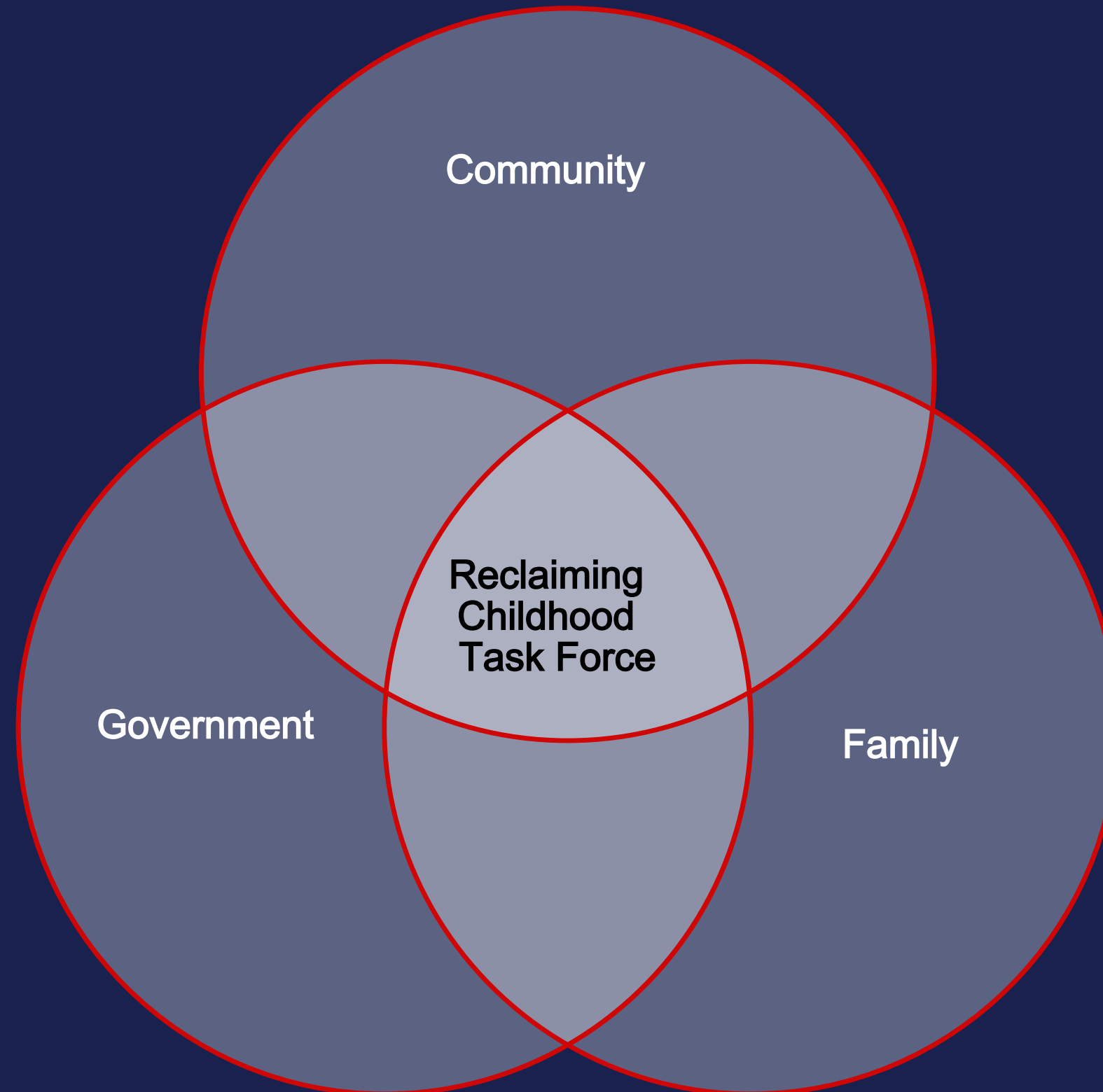
1. Raise awareness about the potentially harmful effects of social media on children's physical and mental health;
2. Recognize that government cannot solve this problem alone and therefore must collaborate and create opportunities and avenues for private sector cultural change to ensure healthy child development;
3. Convene experts and thought leaders to highlight best practices and approaches to improving children's mental health outcomes; and
4. Make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on additional government solutions.

Directives of EO 43



1. Send a coordinated dear colleague letter to physical and mental health clinicians to promote screening for unhealthy internet and social media use in youth and provide resources to address the issue.
2. Develop a plan for providing regional technical assistance to CSBs including specialized training for providers to support behavioral health treatment related to social media and problematic internet use.
3. Create and disseminate a Social Media and Mental Health Toolkit.
 - DBHDS shall collaborate with VFHY to develop materials related to substance use and obesity
 - VDSS in collaboration with OCS shall provide social media safety education to foster families, case workers, and FAPT members
4. Launch a public health initiative and strategy related to the impact of social media and screen use in youth.
5. Conduct listening sessions across the Commonwealth to gather best practices on managing social media and screen use among youth.

Task Force Structure





Workgroup Reports



Workgroup Report Out: Family



Workgroup Report Out: Community



Workgroup Report Out: Government



Statewide Initiatives



Virginia Screen Free Week
Commonwealth Day of Play



Social Media Opt Out Day

Strategy Building for Statewide Initiatives



Objective : Build a strategy for one or more of the statewide initiatives: Virginia Screen Free Week, Commonwealth Day of Play, or Social Media Opt Out Day

Instructions :

1. Divide into groups of 6-8. Groups will be assigned one of the three statewide initiatives.
2. **Brainstorm & Develop Your Idea** – Answer the following questions as a group:
 - What's the name of the activity/campaign? (Make it catchy and engaging.)
 - How does it work? (Describe the key steps and how people will participate.)
 - Who is the target audience? (Families, schools, workplaces, youth groups, etc.)
 - How can it be promoted? (Be specific—community events, social media, local organizations, contests, partnerships, etc.)

Prepare a 1-Minute Pitch



Group Discussion

Wrap Up and Next Steps



- Virginia Screen Free Week
- Next Task Force Meeting TBD
- Evening Event (open to the public): Community Conversation with Arthur Brooks, author of *The Art and Science of Getting Happier: Build the Life You Want*, hosted by the First Lady of Virginia, Suzanne S. Youngkin



#ReclaimChildhood

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