

## Kids Mental Health and Online Safety Action Team Transition Report

According to the [Transition Report](#), an initiative should be developed to assist children in navigating technology safely. Creating school cell-phone policies, technology curriculum and a public awareness campaign, as well as the creation of a first-of-its-kind Social Media Addiction Observatory to bring together public health experts, public interest technology researchers, parents, and the private sector to share data and expertise to develop recommendations for promoting safer online experiences.

The Kids Mental Health and Online Safety Transition Action Team propose the following recommendations for overall key priorities:

- Kids' Online Safety: Protect our kids from the harm of social media and AI by holding Big Tech companies accountable and providing stronger guidance and education for kids and families
- New Modes for Student Health: Expand access to mental health education, prevention, and treatment within schools, empowering educators and parents with the right knowledge, and bolstering New Jersey's mental health workforce
- Community Schools: Implement Community Schools strategies that leverage local partnerships to increase academic and social success by providing additional resources and support to meet the needs of students and families
- Other Policy Considerations

The Transition Action Team proposed the following recommendations:

Implement an age-appropriate online safety design code, drawing on models from Maryland, Nebraska, and Vermont, and include a right of private action.

Legislation currently under consideration in the Assembly would establish a New Jersey Age-Appropriate Design Code that would be enforced through the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act, making violations an unlawful practice subject to enforcement by the Attorney General. Resources for enforcement would be provided via the Attorney General's office, potentially requiring additional staff that could be offset by penalties of up to \$50,000 per violation won from noncompliant online platforms.

Support legislation that prohibits providers of social media services that include addictive features from establishing user accounts for those under the age of 16 that is carefully constructed to withstand First Amendment scrutiny that has challenged similar legislation in other states.

The Action Team additionally recommends the expansion of existing child pornography laws by adding AI-generated depictions of minors to the definition of "child sexual abuse or exploitation material" (CSAEM) and extending criminal penalties to include fines and jail time for people who create, possess, or distribute this AI-generated content.

To build on these efforts to combat online fraud, the Administration should also consider directing the Attorney General to conduct a comprehensive study on the role of social media platforms in facilitating scams. The study should:

- Map how scams originate and spread on social media and online platforms including mechanisms such as targeted advertising, direct messaging, and algorithmic amplification
- Evaluate the extent to which platforms profit from scam-related content and advertising
- Evaluate current reporting, detection, and takedown procedures used by platforms and the extent to which they share scam-related data with law enforcement and consumer protection agencies
- Analyze demographic and loss data for New Jersey residents to identify most impacted populations (e.g., seniors, veterans, job seekers, etc.)
- Identify potential legislative reforms to strengthen oversight, consumer protections, and enforcement

The Action Team also recommends New Jersey residents to monitor and delete personal data collected by data brokers, ensuring data collected about children and teenagers is not associated with them for life, modeled after California's Delete Act.

Require warning labels on social media platforms to note that social media is associated with significant mental health harms for adolescents. As well as creating a social media addiction research center that compels online platforms to share data critical to safeguarding the health and safety of New Jersey's young people.

Implement bell-to-bell limits on cell phones in schools and expand prevention and education programs and increase treatment options for students. Barriers to insurance billing for school-based mental health services should be addressed and increase workforce for mental health professionals.

Provide targeted support for vulnerable populations and consideration of an Office of LGBTQIA+ Student Affairs within the Governor's Office, with a Youth Advisory Council, also modeled on the current Department of Children and Families' NJ Youth Advisory Board and design a state model for Community Schools rooted in community-driven design, flexibility, trusted partnerships, and a clear standard of practice.

Establish a state-level office for Community Schools to provide a framework for implementation and sustainable funding. The office would provide policy support and coordination across state agencies whose programs are able to support students. The office can also make use of existing support from organizations like the New Jersey

Institute for Community Schools that are well positioned to offer training, technical assistance, and data collection and facilitate nonprofit partnerships to share resources and improve IT infrastructure for grant management, purchasing, and data collection