

[FAMILY]



LIGHTS, CAMERA

On September 14 and 15, the Florida Film Academy (a visual arts school in St. Augustine) hosts its first **International Student Film Festival**. The Academy has received more than 100 submissions of documentaries, animated and short films from students all over the world. "It's amazing to see how students' imaginations work and how that is translated to film," says Kay Hill, executive VP of programming and one of the festival co-founders. Awards will be presented for Best Narrative, Documentary, and Animation across four age groups from elementary school through college. The festival takes place in downtown St. Augustine at Corazon Cinema and Cafe beginning at 12:30 PM, and tickets cost \$5. ★

— DEANNA PISACRETA



Parents Who Post

The transition from sharing to "over-sharenting" is a slippery slope.

BY LAURA HAMPTON

TO A GENERATION THAT GREW UP WITH A SMARTPHONE IN ONE HAND AND A MOUSE IN THE OTHER, sharing photos, videos and even their inner-most thoughts on social media is second nature. As these "early adopters" of social media—generally Millennials and Gen Zers—have grown up and started families, social networking sites have replaced family photo albums, Christmas newsletters and old-fashioned play dates as the preferred way to share photos, stories and parenting tips.

Melissa Fay, a 31-year-old mother of three, posts on Facebook or Instagram about three times a week. She generally only posts photos or updates regarding daily activities, but Fay says she has also used social media to solve minor parenting dilemmas. "If I have a question—like my baby has a rash, I will ask 'What should we do?'"

Certainly, Fay is not alone. Through a National Poll

on Children's Health in 2014, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital found that 84 percent of mothers and 70 percent of fathers use social media, online forums or blogs. In the poll, over half of mothers (56 percent) said they discuss child health and parenting topics on these sites. The most common discussions include getting kids to sleep, nutrition/eating tips, discipline, daycare/preschool and behavior problems.

Susan Perez, associate professor of psychology at the University of North Florida, says using social media to stay connected can be beneficial to a parent's wellbeing and can increase one's confidence in his or her own ability to be a good parent.

"That can be a good thing in terms of the indirect effect it has on a child," Perez says. "If you feel better as a parent, and you have access to information, you might be engaging in better parenting."



STRANGER DANGER

Self-defense techniques aren't only for adults. In fact, child defense training can be beneficial not only to teach children how to handle physical attacks, but also to learn the values of hard work and perseverance. Locally, the Women's Defense Company's **Kidz Tough** classes teach children the benefit of communication and open a dialogue about safety in dangerous situations. "Children often haven't experienced violence in their young lives and therefore have no idea how to deal with it should it find them," says instructor Chris Oklevitch. The 60-minute self-defense classes (\$45) are geared toward children ages 5-10, and lessons go well beyond the physical. "They learn to verbalize, learn the importance of communicating with a parent—and they learn to fight back, if needed." Parents are required to attend, too. ★ — DEANNA PISACRETA

Though most parents exercise caution when posting information about their children online, some parents go overboard, a behavior that's been coined "oversharenting."

Because the generation impacted by the increased use of social media is still young, developmental psychologists have a wait-and-see attitude about how the practice will affect the child as he or she grows up.

What parents choose to post when the child is young may not be a big deal, Perez says, but as children approach adolescence, those posts may have a negative impact. In the adolescent phase of development, children are still trying to develop their own identity. Through the use of social media, however, parents are essentially forming the child's identity through what they're presenting on social media forums. And parents are putting plenty out there.

A 2016 study by Nominet, the official registry of domain names in the United Kingdom, found that parents are posting an average of 300 photos of their children online each year, which means most children have 1,500 photos on the internet before their fifth birthday.

Creating a permanent record is not the only risk parents take when they post, however. Cyber security expert Dom Sanfilippo, owner of CMIT Solutions, says many times photos of children end up on unscrupulous websites. But parents also should be mindful of giving away identifying information about their children when they post a photo.

"Parents think it's relatively benign; they're just posting a picture of their kid at school or at home or in the neighborhood, but there are landmarks, dates, times and metadata in that picture," he adds.

In recent years, data brokers have begun mining social media sites for information, which is then used to build profiles of consumers and sold to advertisers, spammers, malware distributors, employment agencies and college admission offices.

"Data recently surpassed oil as the No. 1 asset in the world," Sanfilippo says. "We all think of ourselves as customers of Google or Facebook, but no. *You're* the commodity."

By all indications, parents using social media to provide updates on their family will continue. And for the most part, experts agree it's a good way for people to stay connected. By taking some precautions, however, parents can help ensure their kids stay safe.

"You should be thinking about how the child would feel about what's being put out there several years down the road," says Perez. "Is having a picture out there of them in the bath going to be embarrassing for him or her? Of course, a three-year-old probably doesn't care, but will it make a difference later?" ★



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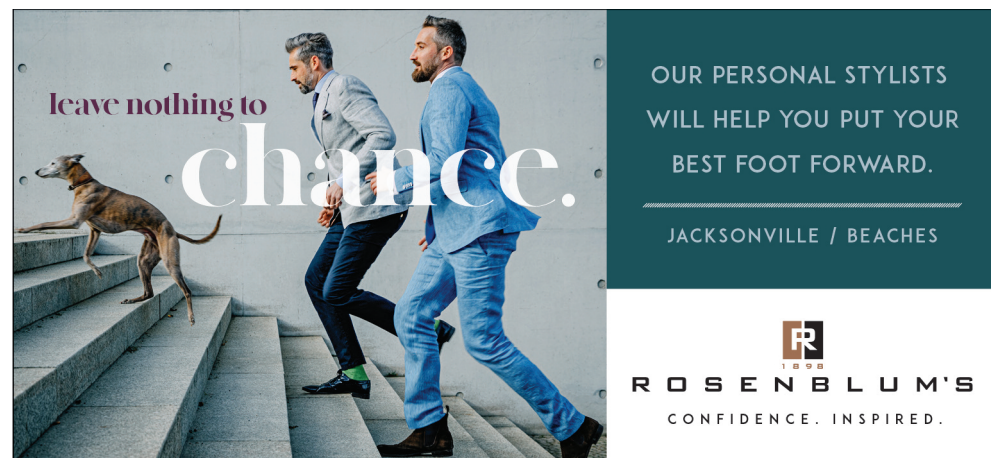
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