

# Empowering Children in the Online Era with Katie Schumacher

## Introduction and Guest Welcome

**Candace Dellacona:** Welcome to the sandwich generation survival guide. I am your host, Candace Dellacona, and I am pleased to announce Katie Schumacher, who is here from Don't Press Send, an organization she founded. Welcome, Katie.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Thank you for having me. I love the title.

**Candace Dellacona:** Oh, thank you.

**Candace Dellacona:** Well, as a fellow Sandwich Generation member, I'm glad you can appreciate it. We're so happy to have you here today to talk to us about responsible internet usage and what we can do to advocate for our children and teach them the way to go.

## The Birth of Don't Press Send

**Candace Dellacona:** So why don't you tell us a little bit about you, Katie, where you came from and how you came up with this amazing platform that has really taken the country by storm.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Thank you. I started the program just about 10 years ago now, and when I was going to my children's open school night when they were entering middle school this was 2014, and the principal was talking about all the problems that the phones were bringing into the school, from education to, emotional pain that it's causing the children, the exclusion, the leaving out, the sending pictures without clothing on, all of those things.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And I walked up to her after and I said, look, we're the first generation of parents doing this. We don't know what we're doing.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** At that time I had no social media. So I went home. I asked my niece to show me. At the time it was just Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And I'm like, Oh no, this is a recipe for disaster.

## Understanding the Impact of Technology on Children

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So I have a background in teaching in classrooms and to me, nothing matters more to me as a parent or a teacher is how kids are feeling about themselves.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** It directly impacts everything.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, that's a great point that it's not only about responsible usage, but we're really talking about the health, welfare and safety, the mental health of our kids.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah. And as we all know, when I started this and I started researching and learning more about what was going on and how it was affecting. And first, many parents were like, oh, this is no different than television. Our parents said that about television. I'm like, no, no, no, no, no, no. You don't even understand what's going on.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And that's where the no pun intended. And the disconnect was, that parents just thought times are changing and we have to go along with it. And we do. Technology, my message is never that technology is bad, it's not. But it is a resource.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And it is to be used as a resource and unfortunately we gave children, impulsive teens by nature, as they're developing, a device to be impulsive with, and we were shocked they were doing it wrong.

**Candace Dellacona:** So how do we, as parents and, I assume this is part of your campaign for Don't Press Send. How do we as parents, what are the first steps that we need to take to ensure that, look, our kids are going to use technology and social media. What are the tips that you give parents and how to do it healthily and responsibly?

## Teaching Empathy and Emotional Connection

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Well, two things I always say, when I speak to the children, the students, regardless of age, from now I'm at pre K all the way through college, and parents, I speak to parents, and I speak to administrators, and I speak to children, and I speak to teachers, what I say is, until laws and policies catch up, we must give our children guidelines and strategies.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And the first thing we must teach them is that the screen is an emotional disconnect. That screen is breaking down our emotional disconnect. Look, we grew up, people said unkind things to us. And we said some back.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** But we had a natural consequence because the hurt was right in front of you. If you said something unkind, you got a big fat knot in your stomach, and you had a natural consequence to your behavior.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And you learned to pivot and say, you know what, it doesn't feel good to hurt somebody because it doesn't. And even the ones online, when they accidentally or not purposefully put something online that hurts, humiliates, embarrasses someone. Children are hurt by that.

**Candace Dellacona:** Sure. And you said something interesting, though, that you have to understand that when there is a screen between two people that there's a disconnect and so that's one of the points that you're trying to drive home with the students and the parents and the teachers that even though you feel connected, there's actually the opposite effect happening.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And there's a high level, and I would say, and of course not across the board, that most people did not experience growing up, when we grew up. There is a high level of unkindness, fear, embarrassment, harassment, and it's just so public. So it becomes public humiliation.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And it is, if I could pinpoint one reason why this is, is because it's a lack of empathy and empathy must be taught.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** It is not an innate skill. I thought it was. And we had natural, experiences in our lives that taught us empathy.

**Candace Dellacona:** And so when you're talking to students or parents or teachers, you're driving the point home that having the screen between the two parties creates a disconnect. So people are bolder and they're not really thinking as much about the consequences to what they're saying, doing or posting because the person's not in front of them. Right?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yes. And they're not connecting to their gut. That's what empathy does.

**Candace Dellacona:** Got it.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And when we disconnect from that gut, we are less thoughtful with our words, with our actions. And we are sorry in the long run because there are ramifications for everything we choose and do in life.

### **Practical Tips for Parents and Children**

**Candace Dellacona:** So what's the tip that you give to the parents and the students and the teachers?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I teach children to, I actually give them an exercise. I tell them to close their eyes and put their hand on their stomach and I tell them to say, close your eyes and imagine a time in your life where you were super proud of yourself.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And it could be you picked up someone's book because it dropped. It could be you got the winning goal in a game. It could be someone complimented you. Something that made you feel really proud. And I have them, what does that feel like in your gut? That's pride, right? Now I say, now think of a time in your life where you regretted how you acted, what you said, what you did, something you posted.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** You regretted that. What does that feel like? That is what you have to get in touch with before you press that send button. You have to ask yourself, how would that make me feel if I received it? That's empathy.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Put a picture of someone else doing something that you were, would be embarrassed of. You have to get connected to that.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. That is a great exercise.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah. Yeah. It doesn't steer us wrong. We all did it. And then we're like, well, why did I do that? I knew it. I felt it in my gut and I ignored it.

**Candace Dellacona:** Sure.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** We don't want to teach our children to ignore that.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. That's a lesson that's universal, right? Where even just taking a breath and thinking about what you're saying or posting, as you say before you press send.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Or responding to anything. I always tell them, you get a text or a picture or a video or something, you don't have to respond at all.

**Candace Dellacona:** Great.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** This is not mandatory.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes. I mean, we could say that to adults too, Katie, right?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Everything that I say, believe me, what my favorite presentation is the parent presentation because they're modeling some really unhealthy behavior that, yeah, with children. We know we could say, don't smoke, but if we're smoking in front of them, guess what? We're telling them.

**Candace Dellacona:** It's okay.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** It's not good for you. It's not good for me.

## Digital Wellbeing and Cyber Civics

**Candace Dellacona:** I guess what you're talking about is what you're referring to as cyber civics, right?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Well, I actually changed it this year. I changed it to digital wellbeing.

**Candace Dellacona:** Digital wellbeing. Okay.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Digital wellness, digital well being is that this is affecting our health. So we need to make sure, yay, part of digital health is how to conduct yourself online, which is exactly what cyber civics is.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Being mindful, a mindful approach to social media, which was my first book, Don't Press Send, which is, okay, if we're going to be online, we have to be mindful. So that's one piece.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** The other piece is how to conduct yourself online, how to be respectful, how to take that pause, how to not respond, how to if you're scrolling and it's not making you feel good, well, how can we take that mindful minute and re engage and remember who are the people that should like the things we do?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And that's another exercise I give them, I tell them. Close your eyes right now, and something really great happened in your life and you want to tell somebody. Who are the people you want to tell? So they, in their own minds, they name their people. And then I say, now you need help. You need support.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** You need guidance. You need advice. Who are those five people? That's your support group. Not in the all, not everywhere. I, who is hundreds of thousands of friends and followers that you don't to follow you, those are the people that will sustain you through your life and give you support, love guidance, and really cheer you on.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Everybody can't cheer you on.

**Candace Dellacona:** So it's taking stock of who your people are and who's important to you.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And remember, we're adults.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So we understand this very clearly. We, but we've all got caught up in all of this. When you, if you've ever been on social media, you know, you've said to yourself, why didn't that person like this video? Why didn't that person this?

**Candace Dellacona:** Absolutely

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Right?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes. Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** We had the opportunity to build a self esteem.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** These kids are getting knocked down every step of the way.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** They're hearing the message, I'm not good enough.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And that is why I do what I do. We are all worthy, regardless of your GPA, the sports, the music, your clothes, whatever it is.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Whatever it is that is causing children pain when they're scrolling to hear the voice, I'm not good enough.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That concerns me.

### **The Pressure of Social Media and Parental Responsibility**

**Candace Dellacona:** Well, I took one of your courses, obviously, as a parent, a community member, and it was years ago, and I remember one of the things that you spoke about to the parents was consider what you are posting and is it boasting?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah.

**Candace Dellacona:** And I think of that all the time Katie and I think that a lot of our peers you know you and I are sort of in the same area of life.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Thank you. I'll take that.

**Candace Dellacona:** Sandwich generation members but you know really thinking about what we're posting as it relates to our own children and how that makes even our peers feel and how it makes our children feel to be quote unquote bragged about putting, I've seen people put their kids GPAs online.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Oh, so have I.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I've seen people put their children's, their, what do they call those?

**Candace Dellacona:** The transcripts.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Transcripts.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Two things, when I talk to children and we talk about pictures and videos and I said, how many people like when your parents put a picture up of you or write something? Very few hands go up.

**Candace Dellacona:** Wow.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** How many of you don't like it? Many hands go up.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So I tell them you have the right to have this discussion with your parents.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And say, it makes me uncomfortable when you put that up. And I asked them, what is it you don't like about it? It makes me nervous. It makes me nervous that someone's going to make fun of it.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** It makes me nervous that someone's going to laugh at it or repost it. It makes me nervous because I feel bad for the other people who didn't make the team.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes. Wow. There you go. There's your empathy too, Katie.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Right. Right.

**Candace Dellacona:** So we're talking about creating empathy for our kids, right?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Right.

**Candace Dellacona:** And we're saying, don't be a bystander and stand up for people and be kind. And yet our parents are bragging about our accomplishments, perhaps to the exclusion of our kids peers, and they're feeling empathy, and we're overruling it.



**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And more than that, it's putting so much pressure on your children. So they made the team this year, they might not next year. They got A's this year, they might be having a really hard time next year.

**Candace Dellacona:** Great point.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I remember when my children were applying to colleges and parents were posting the college visits. Oh, one of our top choices, Duke, or one of our top, like, hold your roll. That's a lot of pressure to put on somebody.

**Candace Dellacona:** It is. Especially looking at the way college admissions processes are going.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And by the way. Your child may say, Uncle, this is too much for me. I want to stay home for a year.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** But if you put that bar so high, they don't even think that's an option.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. Great point. Back to mental health.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Right.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And we have done, I will never forget, my daughter, when she was, I'm going to say fourth or fifth grade, she was talking to me, she's like, but when I go to college, whatever, and I, it was the first time I'm like, I was playing with Barbie dolls in fifth grade.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** College did not enter my mind in fifth grade.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** We are stealing their childhood. We are talking, and everything I discuss with you, I have partaken in.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I never want to seem like I'm saying, don't do this, don't do that. Cause as a parent, when I read a book about parenting and someone says, you don't know my children, you don't know me.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** How about you talk to me as a peer, how can we do this? Right?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Again, I am your peer. I am through this. I'm a little past people who are just starting. So there are many skills I would give them, but one of them is constantly talk to your children about how it is affecting how they feel about themselves.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right. Right. To your point too, Katie, and this isn't about judgment, right? We're all in this together. None of us really know what we're doing.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** It's hard.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, it is hard. So let's talk about so we know how to perhaps set the stage and make sure that our kids are acting civilly and mindfully.

### **Supporting Children Through Online Mistakes**

**Candace Dellacona:** But let's say our kids, I know my kids have and your kids have, they make a mistake, right? They post something, they say something online that they regret, or even worse, in many cases, they're the victim of that. How do you support your child, whether they are the person that's not mindfully posting, or the victim of someone who was posted about?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** When I speak to the students, and I always say, I don't want you to be on either side.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I don't want you to be the one hurting someone, and I don't want you to want being one hurt or humiliated. So, empowering yourself. First of all, know who your tribe is. Know who is your support team. Okay. When it happens, please speak to a trusted adult.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right. Step one.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** But the problem is, they think their peers can handle this. Let's just say middle school, for example, which are really talk about a sandwich that is a sandwich.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** The sandwich part.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That's the meat of development and they want to, and they build friendships, but their friendships are very different than ours.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I could call up a friend of mine right now from elementary school and it was like time never passed.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I built, I think, not just me, our generation built those friendships because we were on our streets, we were talking, we were engaging, we built those emotional connections.

**Candace Dellacona:** Sure. Face to face.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And they're deep. They're emotionally deep.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** This generation, because they are mostly communicating online, they still don't trust who their real friends are. And their real friends may make a mistake, so let's say something happens online and they tell their friend, their friend is going through their growing pains and may do something with that.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So that's, they have to go to a trusted adult first.

**Candace Dellacona:** Sure.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Trusted adult should and can, empower them to put that device away for the day, just the day, one day.

**Candace Dellacona:** Take a break.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Take a break and ask them how it feels. The schools that are doing this have reported such positive things. Their lunchrooms, people are laughing. When I go to schools and pass a lunchroom and it's quiet, I want to scream.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes, because they're all on their devices.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That is the only time in a classroom they have to pay attention and learn, right?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Guess what? They're still on their devices.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. So we know they're not going back, right? In terms of, the relationship building that we went through in our youth. I think in many ways that's gone. So we have to figure out ways for our kids to connect with the technology and the background in a more responsible way. So they are hurt. They tell a trusted adult, they take a break from the phone. What do you do as a parent? Do you call the other parent if there is a hurt between the two and it seems like it's not just a typical, disagreement among kids where it's over their head. What's the threshold Katie?

### **The Impact of Parental Involvement**

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Well, see, this is really the tricky part of our generation is that our parents didn't get involved and we gained very important skills.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** However, we also know that it wasn't a perfect world. So I never want to say that it's like, it wasn't perfect, right?

**Candace Dellacona:** No rose colored glasses.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** No.

### **Challenges Faced by Today's Children**

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** However, our children are missing skills in later life because of lack of exposure to many things. Feelings get hurt more. People are like, Oh, they're so soft. They're so soft. I'm like, it's because they didn't have life experience. We were on our street arguing the ball was fair from six years old.

**Candace Dellacona:** True. True.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So now they're playing what, let's say they're playing video games, whatever. The rules are there. There's nothing to dis. You either got the guy or you didn't, or you scored the goal or you didn't. There's no real, ramifications for that stuff.

### **Parental Intervention Strategies**

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So the problem lies is where do parents intervene?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes, that's the question.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** My personal opinion is, and I have gone to many schools and heard horror stories. Horror.

**Candace Dellacona:** I'll bet.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** From suicides to cutting to horrible, horrible things that are happening to students who are suffering because they didn't know where to go. And I have also heard parents who have done all the right steps. And it ended in tragedy.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** There is no right answer, one answer, but because of the delicate situation we are all in. I always err on, just step in, you never know again, how you parent is not how somebody else parents. Right. How they may get defensive, you may not, you, whatever it may be. If your child is in distress or having a trouble with another classmate, I call or email or say please know this is coming from a loving place, parent to parent. Start with that.

**Candace Dellacona:** Okay.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Arms down.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. No accusations.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** No accusations. My child's really struggling right now and I think it's best that your child deletes our number or contact from there so that we can move past this. If you want to discuss it further or try with your child, if you think we can mediate it, great. If not, let's just take a break from each other.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, that's great advice because there's no pointing fingers. It's no saying take a clean break. Cause let's be honest. Often our kids can say to us that they feel like they've been the victim of bullying or, an unkind word has been passed about them and they may have been a participant, right? And like they were, right?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And everybody sells it from their point of view, as you know, the attorney. Yeah. It's your point of view. Yeah. And the point is I don't want your kid to feel bad. I don't want, that's not true because that's another piece of it is our children are going to feel bad, but if your child is really feeling, you will know your child is down, they're withdrawn, the doors close, all of those things are things we need to pay attention to.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, that's the tricky thing too, Katie, is that, as parents, because they have their own devices, we are not privy to a lot of the communication, and so we're looking to their behavior for cues about what they're feeling as opposed to hearing the telephone call in the kitchen for watching, an argument out on the street.

### **School's Role in Addressing Online Issues**

**Candace Dellacona:** All of this is happening under the cover, and, I also think schools, too, are in this really difficult position, too, because these communications are happening on their devices, whether or not it's happening in school, and the schools are also trying to figure out a way to help the students and so how do you involve the school, Katie?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** This is, where I get worried because school is the place where all the kids are, right? So, where it can be addressed. Why I love going to schools, why I love speaking to teachers. Okay, this is how we can help them, right? However, because each state has different laws. And in our state, we have something called DASA.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Which means, if someone does something online, that is mean, hurtful, inappropriate, illegal, anything online and it is brought to the school's attention. By law, they must address it. Okay. So now Monday morning, a parent calls the school and says, look, what's being said about my child all over social media.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Now the principal will have to get the school social worker, the psychologist, the child, any other child that's been part of it and spend hours on who said what on Snapchat and Instagram. Your educational resources are being spent on this lots of time.

**Candace Dellacona:** Wow. That's so true. That, that's interesting. You have this school that has to involve itself by operation of law, which in many ways thank God, right? Because there are parents that don't necessarily know what's going on. The flip side of that is that they're usurping all of these resources.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That are needed.

**Candace Dellacona:** That are needed that could otherwise go to actually teaching our kids.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Right. And think about that. Think about being in a classroom and everybody in your school probably saw the post or the majority of them. Whatever it was. Now, Johnny goes down to the principal's office, everybody in that building is on high alert.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes. Absolutely.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** You think they're learning? They're worried, like, uh oh, it's on my phone, uh oh, there is, you cannot learn when you are in a high state of anxiety, or you can't learn properly.

**Candace Dellacona:** Absolutely true.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So that's the first thing that needs to happen.

### **The Ripple Effect of Tragedies**

**Candace Dellacona:** Such a ripple effect.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I'm writing another book right now, and I talk about the ripple effect of the many communities that I have gone to where a suicide has happened.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And the ripple effect on a community, and unfortunately, they do say that it's like a copycat. Every child goes through difficult times. Every child.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That's not an answer.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right. We can't prevent that.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah. We can't. Let children think that that's an answer.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That it gets better.

**Candace Dellacona:** Isn't that like the universal advice, right? That you just have to hang on.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Right.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. And get through it.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I'm telling you, when I hear and listen and just try to really imagine what it is like, let's just say seventh grade child. Imagine being a seventh grade child, which is when everything starts changing. Who am I? What do I want to be? Who are my friends? And all you are inundated with is I'm not good enough.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I don't fit in here. I don't, we didn't fit in everywhere. We didn't know.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right. We weren't exposed to

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That was a luxury.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That was a luxury for these kids. That's a luxury.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

## Guiding Children in the Digital Age

**Candace Dellacona:** Taking a step back and thinking about what your lessons are, when we are imparting this wisdom to our kids to be responsible members of cyber society taking a breath, taking a pause, thinking about how things make you feel, whether good or bad.

**Candace Dellacona:** And then if something does happen and you make a mistake, you have to go to an adult. That could be an adult in your household, it could be someone in your school, it could be a coach. Right? There is always a way to make it better and I just heard you through.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah, there's always support and guidance there. I'm gonna be starting this summer making educational videos that I'm trying to say, look, the reality is



this is not going anywhere. So we have, we have to find its place. We have to find its place.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And finally things are getting to DC and laws and policies will hopefully get in place. The reality is we have allowed children to be on apps that they are not ready for. We have allowed them to watch tiktoks, to watch videos that are scary. So you have no control, just so parents know what the whole TikTok thing is about. Yes, I understand. I am using all social media to show how social media can be used for good.

**Candace Dellacona:** That's ironic. Right?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That's right. Yeah. And I tell them, I use social media. I'm a grown up. Many companies use it for marketing and it's working. But they're grown ups.

**Candace Dellacona:** We have to figure out a way to impart the knowledge to our kids, and I think it sounds like a community.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Apps took at least high school.

**Candace Dellacona:** Okay. That's, so that's interesting.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So I think they should have to scan a license or a birth certificate or something in order to download it. Yes. Just like drinking. You think people don't steal other people's things and go buy them? Yes, but there are laws in place. Right now, it's a free for all. Children are killing themselves.

**Candace Dellacona:** The stakes are so high, Katie.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** 200 percent increase in suicide between 10 and 14 year olds.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Insane.

**Candace Dellacona:** It is insane. That is a scary statistic and it's certainly a cautionary tale for all our listeners.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** That means no social media till past that age.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. Yeah. That answers my question and when you say what's the appropriate age for a phone,

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** You could get a phone without access to it. We need, I know that the smartphones, but think about what you're giving your children access to. Two years ago, I was in third grade, and I was talking, that's where I started, third grade on.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I'm like, let's start from the beginning. Some of their older brothers and sisters are on it. Let's start just educating them from the start, right?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Before you click, pause before you post if it's not kind, it doesn't belong online. All of these little catchphrases help, right? So when I went two years ago, 80 percent of third graders already had their own device and are on social media. TikTok especially.

**Candace Dellacona:** Wow.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I'm saying, you've given them complete internet access.

**Candace Dellacona:** So that's eight or nine years old in third grade. And so that's, is that the sort of how why? I got to write each book. Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And that's, I said, if I could break it down, think about, I could go on and on, but I did a lot of research on early childhood. Children learn the most. Their brain grows and develops the most from zero to three. How they learn first is through their eyes. They are seeing a generation of people like this. That is so scary to me. When I was in graduate school and I studied early childhood, we talked about children in orphanages and how they were more violent because they did not have the emotional connection.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** There wasn't enough staff. There wasn't enough holding. There wasn't enough coddling. There wasn't enough eye to eye. All of those things. So now a baby is saying, oh, people are holding these devices. They're very important. They're more important than the people in my presence. That's a very dangerous thing.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Would you not do anything to go back to those baby years?

**Candace Dellacona:** I know I would. Certainly some days, I'll tell you, as a parent of three teenagers,

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I'm like, just let me hold a baby.

**Candace Dellacona:** So let me ask you, Bye Bye Wi Fi is geared towards what age?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I would say toddlers through second grade. And the whole premise of the book is, it's the day the Wi Fi went down, a storm knocks out the Wi Fi. And, the dad's working from home, so his computer gets shut down and they find all the fun things they can do when the wifi goes down. Painting, cooking a meal together playing tag, board games grandma and grandpa stops by and teaches them to tie dye. And it's a rhythmic story where it keeps going bye bye wifi, bye bye wifi. And at the end, the mom says, well, let's all remember, there are always things to do and try, even when we do have wifi.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** So finding the balance from the beginning.

### **The Importance of Attention and Presence**

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** When I speak to students I am going to video it next time. I ask them, how many of you have ever been in the presence of an adult, and they're on their device, and you want their attention, you need to ask them something, and they say, okay, I hear you, I hear you, go ahead, go ahead, I hear you, I'm just scrolling over this.

**Candace Dellacona:** I've done this.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah, we all have. I said, how does it make you feel? Now I'm talking elementary through high school. Unimportant. Invisible. They don't care.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Harsh, harsh words.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Okay. Now, I said, listen, there are sometimes parents have to answer a call, look up maybe they got their medical things that they're waiting for.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Maybe they have to answer an email. But what we have to do as adults is say, you are important, just give me a few seconds, and let me answer this important email. The email's not more important to you, but they're waiting for a response. Whatever it may be. But I also tell the children, you have every right to tell your parent or whomever, and say, I'll wait till you're done.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And if they continue and say, it's okay, I'm just looking, I'm just whatever, you could say, it's okay, I deserve your attention. Nicely and politely.

**Candace Dellacona:** That's great advice.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** The best thing you can give someone is their attention.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. Yeah. And it's hard to do that when you're constantly on your phone.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Dinging and dinging. And what kind of relationships can they have? What kind of marriages can they have? What kind of friendships can they have? When they are valuing their device over the people in their presence. Very lonely ones.

**Candace Dellacona:** Absolutely.

### **Resources and Final Thoughts**

**Candace Dellacona:** So Katie, where can people get in touch with you and are you still doing your roadshow and visiting with school districts?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I just went to the best conference with Hay House. I don't know if you know who Hay House publishers are. They're all the people I read, the Gabby Bernsteins, the Jamie Kern Limas. They're all positive people. What can we do to help the world wherever?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Learn. We all can take a part. And by the way, we're all responsible for this. And we need all hands on deck.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yes. Good point.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Yeah. You can find me at my website. It's [dontpresssend.Com](http://dontpresssend.com).

**Candace Dellacona:** Okay. We'll leave a link for our listeners.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** My children's book just came out right before the holidays, and that is [byebyeWifiBook.Com](http://byebyeWifiBook.Com).

**Candace Dellacona:** Terrific.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** My first book is Don't Press Send, A Mindful Approach to Social Media, Education and Cyber Civics, which is basically my presentation in book form.

**Candace Dellacona:** Okay.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** I just read it again, now I published that eight years, nine years ago. It's more relevant, and which was not my hope. My hope was not that it was going to be more relevant.

**Candace Dellacona:** That they'd be unemployed, that the problem would be dealt with. And what about, you've cited so many great studies where can we find those citations for our listeners?

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** One, I write for medium. com, so I do a lot of that. I pull them out and I make it more okay, this is how this is accessible.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** And A lot of them are also on my site, there's, blogs and all kinds of information on there. And I present all over to schools, which is my favorite thing to do. And you can book me on the website or also [katydps@gmail.com](mailto:katydps@gmail.com).

**Candace Dellacona:** Perfect, Katie, this has been really enlightening and if I'm honest, a little scary to think about.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** No, you can't be scared because that's what's making people step back.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, we have to be involved.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Our kids need us. And there's a line of kids, 10 years later, a line of kids waiting to ask me questions before they go back to class. How many people, they're like, okay, I'm out of here. This is boring.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. Not many assemblies.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** No. And it's not me. It's I'm validating their feelings. I'm so sorry. This is your reality.

**Candace Dellacona:** I think you've given us a lot to think about today and certainly the takeaways about taking a breath and pausing and thinking about how you feel and going to a trusted adult and reminding our kids to go to a trusted adult.

**Candace Dellacona:** So thank you so much for your time today, Katie.

**Katie Duffy Schumacher:** Thank you for having me.