

Communications Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Expert to Present Free Community Event on Raising Kids in the Digital Age

Harford County Public Schools, Harford County Government, the Harford County Health Department, and the Office on Mental Health are partnering together to bring a free educational event to help Harford County parents and guardians work through the challenges of raising children in the digital age. The event, *"Raising Healthy Kids in the Digital Age"* is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Bel Air High School auditorium.

Harford County parents and guardians are encouraged to attend this free event without their children. Pre-registration is requested but not required. The program is not recommended for children.

Featured speaker Dr. Shreya Hessler, Psy.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist, anxiety specialist, college professor, and TEDx speaker with more than two decades of experience working with children, teens, and families. She is the owner and director of The MINDset Center in Bel Air and is known for translating psychological research into practical, compassionate guidance for families navigating real-world challenges.

The evening will offer realistic, research-based strategies for managing screen time at home without constant conflict. Topics will include how screens affect developing brains, promoting healthier digital habits without power struggles, and reconnecting kids with the world beyond their devices.

The event comes at a time when parents and guardians across the country are experiencing an increase in the struggle to manage technology use at home. Concerns over the effects of excessive screen time on children's mental health, sleep, and social development, continue for parents and guardians who feel underprepared to address those challenges in practical, everyday ways.

“Most parents were not born into a world where everyone had a cellphone and screens were everywhere, but that is the world in which children are being raised today,” County Executive Bob Cassilly said. “We are proud to co-sponsor this event to help parents make good decisions for their families.”

"For many parents, finding the balance between healthy technology use and overuse is a real and daily challenge. It is easy for children to become overly reliant on screens in today's world, and we are seeing the impacts on behavior, socialization, and learning in our classrooms," said Dr. Dyann Mack, Interim Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools. "Helping parents and guardians understand how to navigate technology at home is critical, and this event will give them practical tools to do just that."

"We're raising kids in a world that's moving faster than their brains are ready for, and parents are feeling the pressure of that every day," added Dr. Shreya Hessler. "This talk is about giving families practical, real-life ways to create healthier boundaries with technology—so connection, sleep, and mental health don't get lost along the way."

The event is presented as part of the Harford County Public Schools Parent Academy, an ongoing initiative to provide families with resources that support student success and family well-being.

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