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CHARACTER IS COMMON SENSE

A REPORT ON AN INITIATIVE LINKING MEDIA, KIDS, AND CHARACTER STRENGTHS

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CHARACTER IS COMMON SENSE

A Report on an Initiative Linking Media, Kids, and Character Strengths

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"All television is educational television. The question is: what is it teaching?"

— Nicholas Johnson
Federal Communications Commission commissioner (1966-1973)

A long history of research documenting the significance of character strengths and social and emotional skills underscores their importance to academic and life success. Just as educators and families have turned to media as resources for imparting literacy skills and historical knowledge, so too can they draw upon media's potential to support the positive development of nonacademic skills. Accordingly, with generous support from our funders, Common Sense developed an initiative to help parents, kids, and educators discover, select, and learn from content that models character strengths and life skills[1].

We began this initiative with a determination of which skills and virtues matter the most for positive youth development. In keeping with Common Sense's research-based tradition, we reviewed multiple academic fields, including moral character virtues, social and emotional learning (SEL), and positive psychology; we also interviewed experts who have dedicated their lives to identifying the key qualities that unlock the potential of positive character development. Our approach was multimethod and included creating an interdisciplinary advisory council, conducting a literature review, administering an online survey to our parent users, and directing focus group studies.

As we sought to understand how we could maximize our contribution to the field, we focused on our core competencies: children and media. One perhaps unique feature of our work is that we included the perspective of content creators so that we could understand how they see their role in developing stories for children. Then, to ensure that our language was accessible and reflected what mattered most to parents, we consulted with the Common Sense editorial team. Finally, we included attributes that are salient in today's media landscape and best serve real people's lived experiences (e.g., in the 21st century, "communication" is a core life skill due to the plethora of ways we can share information using digital media and technology). For more details on how we narrowed down to the final 11 (see sidebar for complete list), please look to the methodology section.

Our final list of character strengths was used to create the first-of-its-kind tagging system that identifies movies and TV programs that promote core character

COMMON SENSE CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Communication
Compassion
Courage
Curiosity
Empathy
Gratitude
Humility
Integrity
Perseverance
Self-control
Teamwork

[1] Character strengths are referred to as morally desirable traits and are aligned with values; these qualities are needed for developing ethical behavior. Life skills encompass cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills; these qualities are needed for thriving within social institutions (e.g., family, school, workplace).

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strengths and life skills. To help our users best take advantage of this new feature on our reviews, we developed a resource section on our website that presents guidance about how to leverage media to teach character strengths. In addition, within our reviews for movies and television shows, character-based discussion questions were created to guide families on how to foster rich conversations around the content. These features have been available on the Common Sense website since March 2016, and we continue to iterate them with support from our academic advisory council and our funders.

After we launched, we tested the resource with parents and educators in focus groups and in a small intervention study, conducted in three different cities and in English and Spanish. Our results, reported in more detail in the key insights, were promising. We found that while initially most parents tend to think of their role as gatekeepers, as we exposed them to this work, they felt more empowered to be proactive in helping their children learn from high-quality content.

We also report that, as we continue building upon these resources for parents, we have seen encouraging results from several surveys indicating that the connection of media to developing character strengths is a topic parents care about. For example, in a July 2017 survey of 3,377 parents on the Common Sense website, users reported that "learning about media that supports character development" was one of the key drivers for their coming to our site. In addition, in a survey with Latino families, character education was rated as the second most important topic for parents, with one in three parents citing it as an area very important to them.

Common Sense is at the nexus of culture/media, education, and kids, thanks to our mainstream credibility, our research focus, and our extensive network of parents and teachers. The Character Is Common Sense initiative uses all these levers to guide kids, parents, and educators to find great content. By developing research-based media evaluation guidelines, we have been able to "bake" character awareness into our media and education materials and provide parents across the philosophical spectrum with the resources they are looking for without judgement or expectation.

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KEY INSIGHTS: BEFORE AND AFTER LAUNCH

Our key insights are broken up into two parts. The first section, before launch, describes insights gleaned from early focus groups and the literature review. Our second section, after launch, describes the focus groups and intervention study. Through this research and feedback, we learned that media can act as a positive role model for today's kids. We also know that parents, caregivers, and educators are eager to learn more about the importance of building strong character in their kids and the ways to use visual media (TV and movies), as well as apps, games, and websites to cultivate, nurture, and inspire these strengths in their children.

Before Launch: The Need

1. Parents tend to be more reactive than proactive when it comes to children's media choices. In general, we found that most parents saw their role primarily as media gatekeepers, acting to either approve or veto what their children select.

> *"I don't select. I just approve."*
>
> — Mother of two boys (age 5 and 11), Los Angeles

2. Media can teach "the good stuff." A growing body of research highlights the pro-social value of storytelling. For example, research found that exposure to pro-social modeling on television affects young viewers' behavior in situations similar to those modeled in the original programs. Interestingly enough, school-age children learn from pro-social entertainment programs even more than from traditional educational shows (Calvert, Stong, Jacobs, & Conger, 2007; Jordan, 2004; John, 1999; Mares & Acosta, 2010).

3. Age and stage influence what children will take away from the content. Research found that a developmental trajectory exists as to when, how, and what children will learn from media content. As children's attentional and cognitive resources develop, so does the extent to which they comprehend stories (John, 1999; Mares & Acosta, 2010). Both the context in which children engage with media and their developmental stage profoundly affect their capacity to process media messages. However, developmental capacities emerge in children in different ways and are experience-dependent. In other words, individual differences exist; each child is unique.

4. Tweens and teens also learn positive lessons from media and need guidance from adults. For example, in one study, researchers found that values of stimulation, self-direction, and universalism became more important and values of conformity and security became less important to a group of female adolescents after watching the 2007 film *Into the Wild* (Döring & Hillbrink, 2015). This pro-social learning for girls (age 13 to 18) persisted even one week later.

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5. Though they may not initially articulate it, parents do in fact use media to teach their kids. Parents told us about media that had a particularly positive impact on their own character and how they shared these titles with their children in order to impart character lessons. In one group, when asked the question, "How many of you bond with your children over media content?" every single parent raised their hand. And when prompted, "Remember the first movie, TV show, or book that inspired you, that you shared with your family," each member was eager to share their favorite story.

> *"For me, one of the biggest things we share is the Olympics: perseverance. That they don't quit, that it's hard — it's not an easy road."*
>
> — Mother of two boys and one girl (age 8, 11, and 14)
> Harlem, New York

After Launch: The Value

1. Our content, combined with family conversations, can support using high-quality movies for character development. After exposure to Common Sense Media's character content via a self-guided tutorial (which included watching a film), participants rated media as 10 percent more influential in teaching character strengths than they had before the tutorial.

> *"I learned I should be choosing quality media focusing on character-building ideas and talking about the message. I can't just restrict my kids' media use."*
>
> — Mother of three (age 13, 15, and 18)
> Harlem, New York

> *"It's very important to watch the movie together with them, not just leave them watching it while you are doing something else. I like to be with them so that they can understand everything that happens in the movie. Very often children are failing in certain aspects, and many times you have examples in the movies, and we talk about that with our kids."*
>
> — Mother of two sons (age 7 and 8)
> Spanish-language focus group, Berkeley, California

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2. When parents help their children understand the value of the content, children learn to choose the good stuff. Parents who participated in our intervention reported that after they had used our materials to have character-focused conversations, their children selected media that were tagged with character strengths 11 percent more than before they were exposed to our materials.

> *"I learned that after a movie I should talk to my kids about it; give them positive examples and emphasize events that I want them to learn."*
>
> — Mother of two (age 7 and 8)
> Los Angeles, California

3. Parents want resources to help them proactively use media to support character development. Parents expressed a desire to use media to teach character lessons when faced with troubling situations where their child demonstrated a lapse of character in real life. They also reported that media could be leveraged effectively to spark discussions about difficult and complex topics. Participants reported that our discussion questions were useful and a helpful jumping-off point for further discussions about character and other important issues such as racism, sexism, and bullying.

> *"Those can help them better. They may not understand color or race, but when you understand, oh, the poor bunny and the poor fox, and when they get it — she understood that much better than me explaining race."*
>
> — Mother of 10-year-old girl
> Harlem, New York (discussing *Zootopia*)

4. Of Common Sense's list of 11 character strengths and life skills, parents in our focus groups reported that the following strengths and life skills were the most important for them to teach their children:

1. Integrity
2. Communication
3. Gratitude

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CHARACTER LEARNING FROM MEDIA: AGES AND STAGES

Age 2-5

- When it comes to learning from media, parents (and other adult caregivers) can help children actively engage with the storytelling and support the learning. Adult co-viewing and mediation can substantially affect the ways in which children attend to media and make meaning (Sang, Schmitz, & Tasche, 1993; Uhls & Robb, 2017).
- When a narrative has several storylines, young children tend to forget the main character's central goal. Focusing on one main narrative, which is supported by the action, will be most effective for preschoolers (Mares & Acosta, 2008). Discerning the moral lesson from stories is even more difficult for children if the stories are folk tales or fables rather than realistic stories (Larsen, Lee, & Ganea, 2017; Richert, Shawber, Hoffman & Taylor, 2009).
- Preschoolers have a tendency to let physical characteristics dominate — if someone "looks" nice, they must be nice (Fisch, McCann Brown & Cohen, 2001).
- In order for kindergartners (age 5 to 6) to comprehend moral lessons from television, it is inadvisable to "muddy the message" by combining pro-social and antisocial models — simplicity is essential (Mares & Acosta, 2008).
- Lived experience plays a role, and audience demographics are important to consider. For example, in order for children to reproduce a protagonist's pro-social behaviors, children must "see themselves" in that protagonist (Calvert et al., 2007).

Age 6-10

- This age group will still have difficulty when too much secondary content (i.e., content that is not connected to the main storyline) is introduced between central elements of a plot. The character's motives should be temporally connected (in sequence) with actions and consequences in order for children to be able to make the links (Jordan, 2008).
- Children are typically unable to extract moral lessons from fables until they are 9 years old; younger children tend to retell specific parts of the story instead of deriving a more general principle (Goldman & Varnhagen, 1986; Lynch et al., 2008).

Age 11 and above

- At this stage, major changes occur in children's socio-cognitive and information-processing capabilities. More specifically, their improved ability to take others' perspectives and to reason on an abstract level improves. Accordingly, subplots and content that has nuance can be introduced (Singer & Singer, 2012).
- The ability to fully summarize the gist or main theme of a story develops late — often not until age 14. The intended moral takeaway may not be absorbed by the younger adolescent viewer (van den Broek, Lynch, Naslund, Ievers-Landis & Verduin, 2003).
- Tween and teen viewers often reject moralistic messages in order to protect their sense of freedom and/or reassert their independence.
- For this age group, the most effective educational media should come in narrative rather than didactic formats. When older youth interpret texts as "agenda-less," absorbing, and relevant, they are most likely to internalize the moral lessons they model (Moyer-Gusé 2008).

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METHODOLOGY

Common Sense is committed to providing unbiased resources for parents and educators based on research that surveys the field. In order to comprehensively choose our final taxonomy of core character strengths, we mined expertise from a variety of sources, including academics, educators, and content experts, as well as our users and our internal team of editors and education specialists. We used a variety of methods, including creating an interdisciplinary advisory council, conducting a literature review, administering an online survey, and directing focus group studies.

Our framework was based on our core competencies: children and media. The character strengths, life skills, and socio-emotional learning fields are filled with experts who have dedicated their lives to identifying key qualities for youth to develop. In order to maximize our contribution, we sought (1) to understand which character strengths media content can best teach, and (2) to use a developmental lens, with a focus on children age 2 to 17.

Linda Burch initiated the idea for this program. The project was directed and designed by Yalda T. Uhls, Ph.D., with input from her collaborators and advisory council. The literature review was conducted by Laurel Felt, Ph.D., and the focus group and survey research and intervention were conducted by Katherine Wong, Ph.D., with support from Aneesa Walden, Mia Klett, and Maria Alvarez. This report was written by Yalda T. Uhls and leans heavily on the work of both Dr. Felt and Dr. Wong.

Below is an overview of the methodology. For more specifics about participants, please see Appendix D.

Development of Our Taxonomy

Advisory council. Before beginning a review of the literature, we formed an advisory council of experts from across several fields. Not only were we interested in what academics and practitioners had to say, but we also felt it was important to include the people who create the content, as their understanding of storytelling provides an invaluable point of view. As such, our council consisted of academics from several areas of expertise (e.g., moral character virtues and life skills), as well as media scholars and content specialists in the film and television business.

Expert interviews. In addition, we conducted a variety of expert interviews. Fifteen academic scholars in the fields of moral development, positive psychology, SEL, media effects, and communication were consulted.

Literature review. Our literature review consisted of a review of multiple academic fields and included a consideration of 133 papers, reports, and books. The largest body of work consisted of

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papers on character development. As we reviewed the corpus on moral character virtues, positive psychology, and SEL, we asked the following key questions:

- How do strengths/virtues differ from talents/abilities/skills?
- Within each corpus, which qualities are most important?
- Which labels are most apt?

Our focus is on how media can influence character development. As such, we also reviewed the media effects literature. While the field of connecting media to character development is still emerging, we reviewed several key questions.

- How have audiovisual and interactive media impacted children's development of character and/or skills?
- Which strengths were more likely to be influenced by media content?

Finally, we looked at developmental milestones in order to understand when children were developmentally able for pro-social media to impact their attitudes and behaviors.

This review of the literature, along with our expert interviews, uncovered a long list of qualities that researchers identify as related to positive character development. In addition, we found that many research teams in the field use distinct (often synonymous) terms to refer to these qualities. Accordingly, grouping and labeling was challenging. With the support of our advisory council, we were able to identify 23 strengths as most consistently appearing across the academic literature. Our next step was to narrow down the list.

Focus groups. To further refine our language, we met with groups of parents and educators to get their insight into what they cared about, as well as the words they used to describe the 23 qualities we identified. This language was then used to help us develop definitions for our online survey.

Online survey of users. Common Sense's online audience is primarily composed of parents and educators, and thus we wanted to make sure that the terminology we settled on was something they could easily understand. We next conducted an online survey of our parent and grandparent users to determine which of the 23 character strengths were important to them and to identify user-friendly language. For example, parents and educators might understand or label the quality of "working hard and for long periods of time despite obstacles" as *grit*, *perseverance*, *persistence*, *diligence*, and/or *resilience*; our survey helped us determine which term resonated the most.

The survey was composed of a pop-up box on our movie review pages during July 2015 that linked to a survey platform. Parents and grandparents of kids age 18 and younger were asked to rank the importance of the character strengths and to tell us which name best described a definition of the quality.

Finally, we shared the results of this survey with our advisers and the Common Sense editorial team to get their input. This resulted in a list of 11 character strengths and life skills, collectively termed "qualities."

The final 11 were chosen to best represent:

1. Qualities that could be learned through consumption of media content.
2. Character strengths that could more easily be taught to children under the age of 18.
3. Qualities that our users and editors determined were important in language that resonated for them.

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Evaluation and Impact Research

To pressure-test the taxonomy and evaluate how it worked for families, we conducted several focus groups, in English and Spanish and in three cities: Los Angeles, New York City, and Berkeley, California. These groups served the following purposes: (1) to gather feedback on what parts of Common Sense Media's character tools did and did not work, and (2) to measure whether exposure to our initiative could increase knowledge about the role of media in promoting positive character development.

Procedure. Upon acceptance as a participant, parents were asked to take an at-home online survey administered through SurveyMonkey (this served as the pretest) gauging their attitudes toward media's role in character education. Participants were then instructed to complete a brief self-directed tutorial introducing them to Common Sense Media's character content (e.g., select media for their child, read an article, watch a video, etc.). As part of this tutorial, parents were instructed to watch a movie that was tagged for character strengths with their children and to conduct a discussion (guided by Common Sense Media's "Families Can Talk About ..." questions) about the character lessons embedded in the film.

Finally, participants were convened for in-person focus groups moderated by a Common Sense representative (Yalda T. Uhls, Ph.D. for English language and Maria Alvarez for Spanish language) to discuss their views on media's role in character education, share their methods for media selection, and provide feedback on Common Sense Media's character content. At the end of the focus groups, the post-test survey was administered. (This was 24 days after their pretest survey administration for LA participants, and 31 days after the pretest for New York participants.) The Berkeley focus group, which was Spanish language, did not include the intervention, as our character materials were not available in Spanish at the time.

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APPENDIX A: COMMON SENSE'S FINAL LIST OF 11 CHARACTER

Quality (rank in Common Sense user survey)	School(s) of thought (naming)	Definition (see note)	Additional input on why we chose this quality
Integrity (1)	▪ John Templeton (Honesty) ▪ Seligman (Honesty) ▪ John Templeton (Reliability) ▪ Josephson Institute of Ethics (Trustworthiness) ▪ Josephson Institute of Ethics (Fairness) ▪ Seligman (Fairness) ▪ Making Caring Common	Speaking the truth, acting in a sincere way, and taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions	Appears across a great deal of academic literature Social role models in media can display integrity and delve into the "why and how"
Compassion (2)	▪ Josephson Institute of Ethics (Caring) ▪ Seligman (Kindness) ▪ Making Caring Common (Caring, Altruism)	Caring about others and behaving generously and with concern = behavioral	Narrative storytelling and even interactive can illustrate this quality in multiple ways Important in a world where cyberbullying and shaming online are so easy
Gratitude (3)	▪ John Templeton (Gratitude) ▪ Character Lab (Gratitude) ▪ Seligman (Gratitude)	Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen	Across much literature and most predictive of well-being Can be modeled in audiovisual and practiced in interactive
Self-control (4)	▪ Character Lab (Self-Control) ▪ CASEL, Galinsky (Focus and Self-Control)	Being able to manage one's thoughts, feelings, and impulses	Excellent predictor for many academic outcomes (and other life outcomes) Can be practiced and emphasized in interactive gaming
Empathy (5)	▪ Damon (Empathy) ▪ CASEL (Social Awareness) ▪ Seligman (Social Intelligence) ▪ Seligman (Perspective Taking) ▪ Galinsky (Perspective Taking)	Understanding and sharing the feelings of another = cognitive, affective	Critical for social intelligence and success Media (books, movies, games) are some of the best ways to teach this skill — perspective taking

Note: Definitions were developed to try to encompass some of the most important ideas from each grouping of terms.

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STRENGTHS AND LIFE SKILLS

Quality (rank in Common Sense user survey)	School(s) of thought (naming)	Definition (see note)	Additional input on why we chose this quality
Humility (7)	• Seligman (Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence) • Arthur (Humility) • Josephson Institute of Ethics (Respect) John Templeton (Humility)	Not regarding oneself as more special or better than others	Key moral virtue
Teamwork (15)	• Seligman (Teamwork)	Working respectfully and effectively with a group	Important in many early-learning media content
Courage (21)	• Making Caring Common	Taking on challenges even if there is a risk of physical harm and/or harm to reputation	Featured in storytelling — lends itself to narratives
Curiosity (11)	• John Templeton (Curiosity) • John Templeton (Intellectual Humility) • Character Lab (Curiosity, Growth Mindset) • CASEL (Self-Awareness) • Seligman, Seligman (Love of Learning, Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence) • Galinsky (Self-Directed, Engaged Learning)	Having a strong desire to learn or know something — a search for information for its own sake	Common Sense editors suggest that a great deal of high-quality storytelling is about curiosity
Communication (6)	• CASEL (Relationship Skills) • Galinsky (Communicating)	Listening attentively and appreciatively, expressing oneself clearly and sensitively, and honoring differences	Exemplifies digital citizenship
Perseverance (8)	• Character Lab (Grit) • Making Caring Common (Achievement) • Galinsky (Taking on Challenges)	Working hard, despite obstacles, in pursuit of a long-term goal	In nearly every piece of narrative storytelling (arguing for and against it)

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APPENDIX B: FURTHER RESOURCES

Below are further resources that Common Sense Media editors recommend for parents and educators interested in learning more about character strengths and life skills.

Common Sense Media: Best Movies and TV for Character Development

www.commonsensemedia.org/best-for-character-development-lists

Common Sense Education: Digital Citizenship and Social and Emotional Guide

https://d1e2bohyu2u2w9.cloudfront.net/education/sites/default/files/cse_digitalcitizenship_sel.pdf

Making Caring Common: Harvard Graduate School of Education project to develop caring, ethical kids

http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/parenting-resources-raising-caring-ethical-children

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: Support for educators teaching character

http://www.casel.org/

Character Lab: Tools and positive posters for teachers

https://characterlab.org/

Let It Ripple: Movies, discussion guides, and events to promote character

http://www.letitripple.org/character-day/

Greater Good Science Center: Tools for mindful living

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/

Mind in the Making: Bezos Family Foundation program to support life skills

http://www.mindinthemaking.org/7-essential-skills/

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

http://ei.yale.edu/

Common Sense Education: Inspiring SEL classroom activities

https://www.commonsense.org/education/blog/we-all-teach-sel-inspiring-activities-for-every-classroom

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APPENDIX C: ADVISORY COUNCIL

Darla Anderson	Producer, Pixar
Edmond Bowers, Ph.D.	Associate Professor, Youth Development Leadership, Clemson University
Ellen Galinsky, M.A.	President and Co-Founder of Families and Work Institute
Carrie James, Ph.D.	Research Associate and Lecturer, Harvard School of Education
Jeff Kleeman	President, A Very Good Production
Hannah Minghella	President, Tri-Star
Richard Weissbourd, Ph.D.	President, Making Caring Common and senior lecturer, Harvard School of Education

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APPENDIX D:
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR EACH SAMPLE

Initial online survey of users:

418 respondents.

Evenly spread across United States.

Majority: American, parents, 30-49 years old, white, college-educated, with children enrolled in public school.

Focus Groups and Survey Intervention Sample Demographics:

The following demographic data were collected via a preliminary eligibility survey and were not linked to individual survey data. The following demographic data describe the 24 participants who completed the survey pretest and post-test, completed the self-guided tutorial, and attended a focus group.

Total Number of Participants:	24	
Geography:	Los Angeles: 9 (38 %)	Harlem: 15 (62 %)

Age of Participants' Children:

25 % of parents had children between ages 4-6
33 % of parents had children between ages 7-9
38 % of parents had children between ages 10-12
29 % of parents had children between ages 13-16

Gender of Participants' Children:

60 % of participants' children were female
40 % of participants' children were male

Gender of Parents:

86 % of participants were mothers
14 % of participants were fathers

Race/Ethnicity of Parents:

47 % of participants identified as Latino
33 % of participants identified as black/African-American
10 % of participants identified as white
10 % of participants identified as other or biracial

Language:

91 % of participants spoke primarily English at home

Household Income:

59 % of participants had an annual household income of $25,000-$50,000
41 % of participants had an annual household income of less than $25,000

Participants' Highest Level of Education

5 %, some high school
18 %, high school diploma
5 %, technical/vocational training
40 %, some college
27 %, college degree
5 %, postgraduate degree

Political Leaning:

5 % of participants were moderately conservative
27 % of participants were politically neutral
36 % of participants were moderately liberal
32 % of participants were very liberal

Religiosity:

9 % of participants were not religious
73 % of participants were moderately religious
18 % of participants were very religious

Familiarity with Common Sense:

85 % of participants had never heard of Common Sense Media
5 % of participants had heard of Common Sense Media, but had never used the website or app
5 % of participants had used Common Sense Media on occasion (less than once per month)
5 % of participants use Common Sense Media a couple of times per month

Spanish-Language Focus Group:

Total Number of Participants:	14
Location of Focus Group:	Berkeley, California

Age of Participants' Children:

29 % of participants' children were between ages 4-6
29 % of participants' children were between ages 7-9
23 % of participants' children were between ages 10-12
19 % of participants' children were between ages 13-16

Gender of Participants' Children:

63 % of participants' children were female

37 % of participants' children were male

Gender of Parents:

86 % of participants were mothers

14 % of participants were fathers

Race/Ethnicity of Parents:

93 % of participants identified as Latino

7 % of participants identified as white

Language:

86 % of participants spoke primarily Spanish at home

Household Income:

50 % of participants had an annual household income of less than $25,000
22 % of participants had an annual household income of $25,000-$50,000
7 % of participants had an annual household income of $50,000-$75,000
7 % of participants had an annual household income of $75,000-$100,000
14 % of participants had an annual household income of more than $100,000

Participants' Highest Level of Education

14 %, completed primary school
7 %, some high school
21 %, high school diploma
36 %, some college
21 %, postgraduate degree

Political Leaning:

7 % of participants were moderately conservative
14 % of participants were politically neutral
43 % of participants were moderately liberal
36 % of participants were very liberal

Religiosity:

14 % of participants were not religious
64 % of participants were moderately religious
22 % of participants were very religious

Familiarity with Common Sense:

86 % of participants had never heard of Common Sense Media
7 % of participants had used Common Sense Media on occasion (less than once per month)
7 % of participants use Common Sense Media a couple of times per month

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