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American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Survey Information About Potential Harm To Communication Health Prompts Interest In Safer Usage

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

A new survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research on behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association shows modern technology usurping the role of personal, face to face communication in teenagers' and parents' daily lives, but also a willingness among both groups to curb their technology use when informed of the risks to communication health. Education results in strong interest in adopting healthier behaviors and stronger parameters on technology use within households, plus greater concern by both teens and parents.

This survey, conducted in recognition of Better Hearing and Speech month this May, encourages a larger conversation around the risks of overusing technology and the solutions we can embrace in improving hearing health and communication development for the next generation.

- **Teens depend on technology to communicate.** Teens average nearly 6 hours a day on a personal technology device, often using these devices to communicate with their friends instead of talking with them, checking their phone while spending time with their family or even when directly communicating with their parents.
- **Headphone and earbud use common among teens.** Teens frequently use devices with accompanying earbuds or headphones, logging 3 hours a day on average. This raises concerns about their hearing health, as noise-induced hearing loss may result from listening to devices for too long and at too loud volumes.
- **Parents depend on technology too.** Teens appear to be following their parents lead. Parents report using their devices as much as their children. This includes majorities that often use these devices at the dinner table, during family leisure time and while speaking with their children.

Technology also has a major role in how parents manage their time and daily responsibilities. Majorities use personal technology devices to keep their children from being bored, find time to get chores or work done, and find time for themselves.

- **Technology use interferes with communication.** Many parents see technology undermining basic communication skills and abilities in their children: majorities say personal

technology devices are making it harder to pay attention when someone is talking, engage in meaningful conversations and focus on their schoolwork.

Many parents show interest in decreasing technology use in their households. Nearly half say they use their own devices too much, and nearly as many say their children use their devices too much.

- **Rules work, but only if parents set them.** Only 2 in 5 teens say there are rules in their household governing technology use, and even minorities of those with rules report having limitations during key opportunities for conversation like dinnertime or family leisure time. This represents a missed opportunity: 93 percent of teens that have rules say they are fair.

There is also a disconnect between parents and teens in whether there are any rules in the household. Over two thirds of parents report implementing some guidelines on their children's use of technology. Again, however, the rules are working: over 90 percent that do set rules say the effort is successful.

- **Information results in healthy behavior.** After reading short descriptions about the potential harm to hearing and communication development that technology overuse can result in, both parents and teens indicated a strong willingness to change how they use their personal technology devices. Almost all parents embrace implementing new rules in their home, and in recognition of their own overuse, leading by example with more responsible use. Teens express concerns about their own health, and majorities say they are likely to turn the volume down, start communicating with their friends more in person and use their devices less.
- **Millennial parents using technology more, but more willing to implement healthy rules.** On average, parents under the age of 40 use some sort of personal technology device over 6 hours a day outside of work – an hour and a half longer than parents over 40. This overuse extends to family time, with millennial parents more likely to acknowledge they use these devices at least “sometimes” when spending time with their children, speaking with their children and at the dinner table.

While more likely to spend more time on their devices, younger parents are also more self-conscious of their behavior, including the two thirds that recognize they use their devices too much. After hearing more information about threats to hearing health, 46 percent of millennial parents say they are much more likely to implement stronger guidelines around technology use in their household – only 22 percent of older parents say the same. Similarly, 54 percent of younger parents to 30 percent of older parents say they are very likely to set stronger guidelines after hearing more about potential risks to communication development.

The above findings are based on online national surveys among 500 parents of children under the age of 20 and 500 teens between the ages of 13 and 19. The national survey of parents was conducted March 17-21, 2016. The national survey of teens was conducted March 21-24, 2016. Each carries an overall margin of error of +/- 4.4 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval, with the margin being higher among subgroups. Results are weighted to reflect national census data.

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