



Bringing Our Kids Into Their Kindness Era

Building inclusive, intentionally kind digital communities — research-backed strategies for educators, designers, and school leaders.



[Kim Zajac](#)



[Andrew Marcinek](#)

2026 Jeffrey Powell Mobile Learning Conference

Day: Monday, June 8

Time: 2:00 - 2:50pm CDT / 3:00 - 3:50pm EDT

The Conversation Has Shifted

Across the country, educators are moving beyond "should we use tech?" to asking better questions.



1

Then

Binary: tech vs. no tech

2

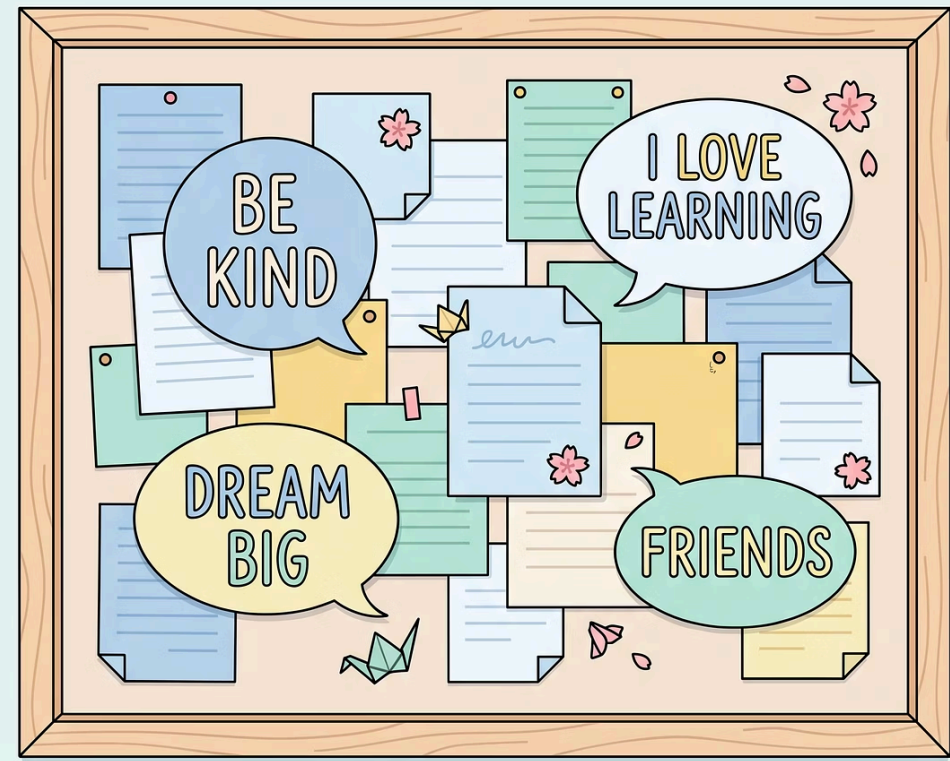
Now

How, when, and for whom?

3

Next

Wellbeing at the center



Where Is Your School in This Conversation?

With Administration

Are leaders actively shaping digital wellness policy?

With Students

Do students have voice in how tech is used?

With Families

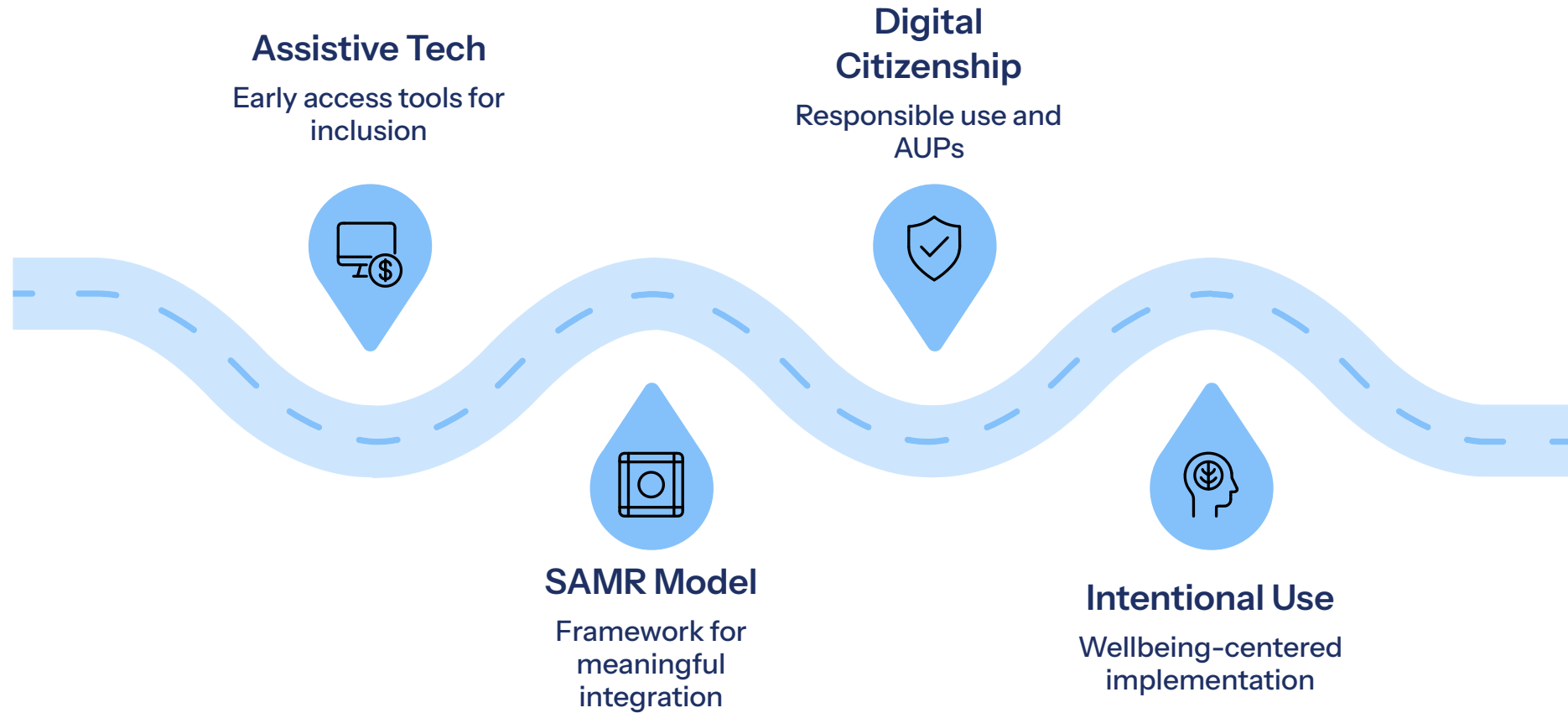
Are caregivers part of the digital wellness dialogue?



 Poll moment

15 YEARS OF PROGRESS

How We Got Here



Each era built new expectations — and new responsibilities — for educators navigating technology in learning spaces.



Tech as a Menu

Not a Mandate

The goal: **make technology available** — not required.

Every learner deserves choice.

Available

Tools are present and accessible for all

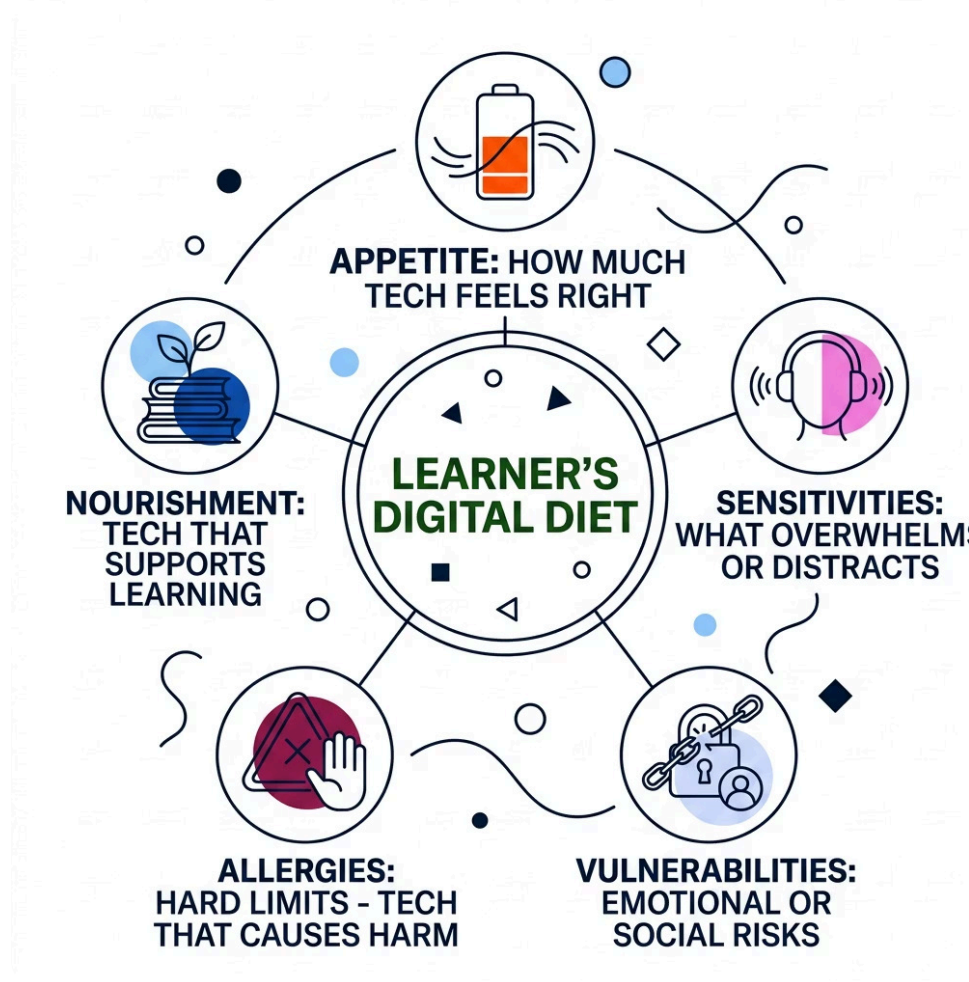
Optional

Learners choose tools that serve them

Intentional

Design decisions honor diverse needs

What's Your Digital Diet?



Just as we consider nutrition for physical health, learners deserve a **personalized digital diet** – one that nourishes without overwhelming.

- **Appetite** – how much screen time feels right?
- **Sensitivities** – what causes distraction or distress?
- **Vulnerabilities** – where are students at risk online?
- **Allergies** – what causes real harm and must be avoided?



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

When Tech Belongs in the Room

For many students, technology is not optional — it is **the access point**. Assistive tech paired with mindful digital practices creates conditions where every learner can thrive.

Digital Wellness Challenges in the Classroom



Screen Fatigue

Extended device use strains attention and increases cognitive load — especially for neurodiverse learners.



Communication Barriers

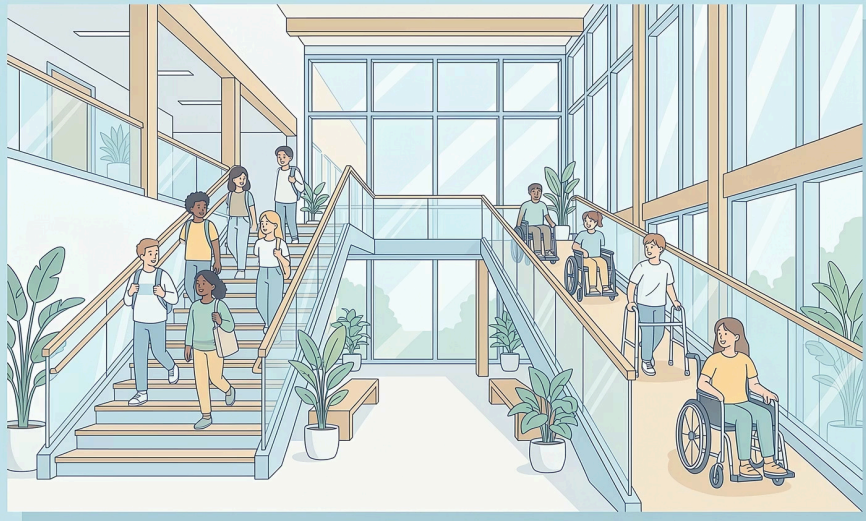
Online spaces can amplify miscommunication, exclusion, and social anxiety for vulnerable students.



Digital Overload

Too many platforms, alerts, and demands fragment focus and erode students' sense of wellbeing.

Belonging Is an Instructional Design Choice



How we design learning environments — digital and physical — either **signals belonging** or **signals exclusion**.

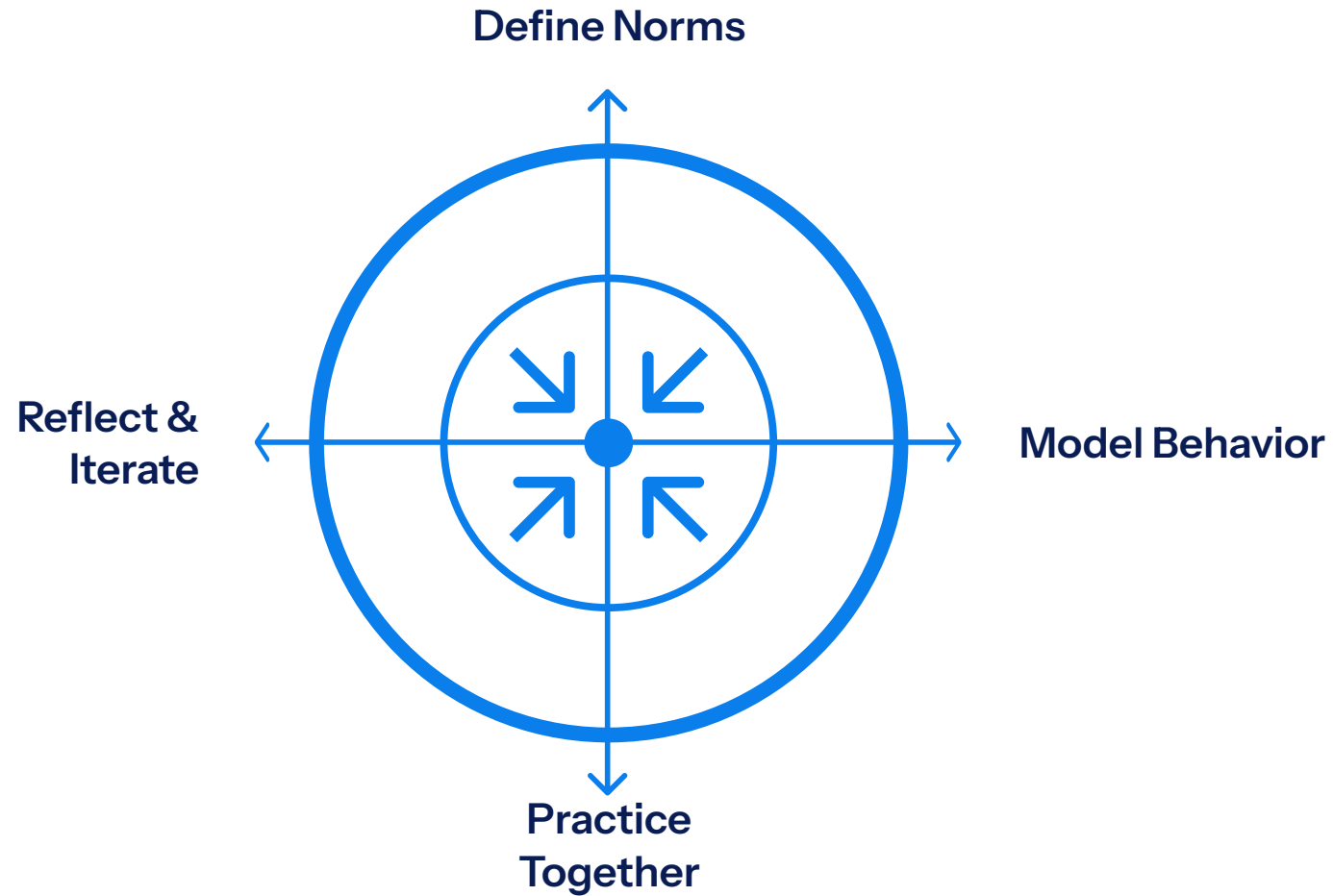
- Representation in content and tools
- Flexible participation pathways
- Choice in how students show up online
- Explicit norms for kind
- digital interaction

The Collective Impact of Digital Kindness

Small, intentional acts of digital kindness — across thousands of classrooms — reshape the culture of learning online.



Designing for Digital Citizenship



Citizenship is taught — not assumed. Build explicit, recurring structures so all learners develop the skills to engage with integrity online.

A Framework for Inclusive Tech Integration

1

Know Your Learners

Assess digital access, comfort, and individual needs before designing.

2

Build a Menu

Offer multiple tech pathways — students choose what serves them best.

3

Teach Digital Wellness

Embed screen breaks, reflection, and kindness norms into daily practice.

4

Iterate with Feedback

Regularly gather student and family input to refine your approach.

Strategies You Can Use Tomorrow

- **Set a Digital Diet Check-In**
Ask students: what tech energizes you? What drains you?
- **Co-Create a Kindness Agreement**
Build community norms for online communication together.
- **Integrate Analog Alternatives**
Give students a non-tech option for at least one task per day.



Learning & Growth

Empowering Every Stakeholder



Educators

Model digital wellness.
Design with intentionality
and compassion.



Students

Build agency. Recognize
their own needs and
advocate for them.



Families

Partners in digital diet —
aware, informed, and
supported.



Leaders

Set policy, allocate
resources, and champion
belonging-centered design.

Thriving Together in Digital Spaces

When we design learning environments with **intention, kindness, and inclusion** at the center — every learner can belong, grow, and thrive.

Start Small

One change, one classroom,
one conversation

Stay Curious

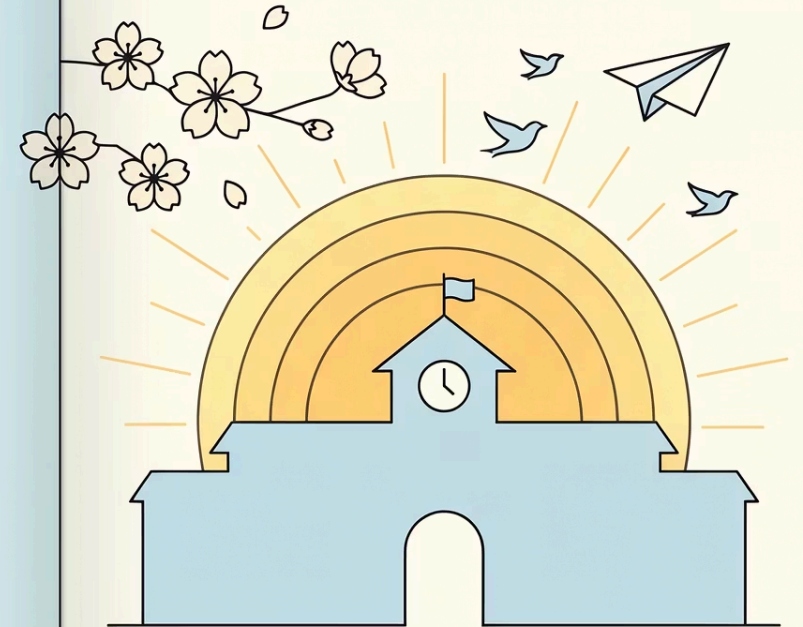
Ask learners what works —
then listen

Calibrate Often

Respond to feedback from
lived experience

Keep Going

Inclusive digital wellness is a
practice, not a destination



Resources for Digital Kindness & Wellness

Explore these valuable resources to deepen your understanding and enhance your practice of digital kindness and wellness.

Books & Publications

- [Teaching Digital Kindness: Helping Students Become More Aware and Accountable in Their Online Lives](#)
- [Think Forward Substack](#)

Organizations & Frameworks

- [CAST Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)
- [CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#)
- [ISTE Standards for Students, Educators, and Leaders](#)
- [Common Sense Education: Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\)](#)

Inclusive Tech & Accessibility

- [Google: Accessible Features & Tools](#)
- [Apple Accessibility](#)
- [Microsoft Accessibility](#)
- [Tech'ing it... One Step at a Time Substack](#)

