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My name is Jamie Andrew, and I am a parent of a three-year-old girl and an eight-year-old boy. We live in Scarborough, Maine.

Everywhere I look, people are distracted by devices. Waiting in line at the grocery store, pushing their kids on swings at the playground, sitting on their couches at night. Everyone is scrolling, gazing at, thumbing their phones.

The average American adult spends 5 hours and 16 minutes per day on their phone. That's over five hours that we could be talking, reading, hiking, playing, drawing, cooking – anything. Our kids look to us, they want phones too. They want to be like us.

The average American teen spends 8 hours and 39 minutes per day on screens. This includes phones, tablets, gaming, TVs, and computers. This is more than half of their waking life spent mentally elsewhere. They are missing the value of being bored, of paying attention, of finding things to do with friends, of figuring things out by simply trying and failing.

Our kids are growing up in a world with devices that devour their attention. The least we can do is provide them with six hours a day, at school, where their attention is truly their own, where they can be fully present with their school communities.

We need to trust our schools and their incredible teachers and staff to keep our kids safe, to trust our kids' ability to make decisions during the school day, to let them live in the world as independent people. Kids are no safer, in fact, they are less so, with devices in school settings. Devices distract, they sound alerts, they create chaos when responsible adults are doing everything in their power to keep our children safe in dangerous situations.

The biggest gift we can give our kids is to be present, of not having their attention tethered to a device. A device that pulls them out of the hilarious joke their friend is telling, of how the sun feels outside on a spring day, of the heated discussion at the lunch table. Devices that have already devoured the attention of so many adults and teens, day after day.

Let's teach our kids how to take their attention back.