

Are the Families in Your Community Under-Connected?

If you lead a school district or community organization and you're concerned about whether your students and families have adequate, consistent access to the internet and digital devices, this quick set of questions can identify which families require support, and what kinds of support they need most.

These questions were developed as part of nationally representative surveys we conducted with lower-income U.S. parents with school-aged children about technology use and learning experiences. Our report of survey findings from 2015 can be [downloaded here](#), and the 2021 report can be [downloaded here](#). These full set of survey questions from the 2021 survey [is available here](#).

This page is your guide to using these questions in your own community. The next page has been designed to be easily distributed to your community members.



How to Use These Questions

Questions 1 and 2 provide information on the kinds of access that families have to digital devices (Question 1) and the internet (Question 2) at home. These questions provide an immediate guide to which families require assistance with securing devices or a broadband internet connection.

Question 3 includes seven questions that will enable you to identify which families are *under-connected*, because their access is too inadequate or inconsistent to meet their needs. Because these questions ask about families' experiences over the past year, they will help you identify families who answered "yes" to Questions 1 and 2 today, but who have struggled in the past with being under-connected and may face challenges again in the future.

The under-connected questions in Question 3 can either be tallied as a score out of seven possible points (with higher scores indicating more struggles with being under-connected), or used to identify specific ways to support families who have struggled with their mobile devices, computers, and/or internet access in the past 12 months.

1. Please tell me whether your family has the following items at home:

	Yes	No	If Yes: How many of this device do you have in your household?
Laptop computer			
Desktop computer			
Smartphone			
Tablet device			

2. Please tell me whether you have the following kinds of internet at home:

	Yes	No
Broadband internet (e.g., cable, Fios, fiber optic)		
Dial-up via a home telephone line		
Data plan on a smartphone or tablet		
I have internet at home, but I'm not sure what I have		
I don't have any internet connection at home right now		

3. Many people have issues with technology sometimes. Please tell us whether you have encountered each of these issues in the past 12 months.

Do you have a smartphone or tablet at home?

If yes, please answer these questions about your experiences with these devices in the past 12 months.

	Yes	No
Too many people were sharing the smartphone or tablet so it was hard for everyone to get enough time on it		
You reached the limit on your data plan for a mobile device, and couldn't go online for a while		
Your cell phone service got cut off because it was hard to pay for		

Do you have a computer at home?

If yes, please answer these questions about your experiences with these devices in the past 12 months.

	Yes	No
Your computer ran too slowly or didn't work properly		
Too many people were sharing the computer so it was hard for everyone to get enough time on it		

Do you have internet at home?

If yes, please answer these questions about your experiences with these devices in the past 12 months.

	Yes	No
Your Internet service got cut off at home because it was hard to pay for		
Your Internet service was too slow		