

# CAFS in the News

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SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2014  
THE SUN-HERALD

NEWS

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## Keeping watch: parents turn to GPS technology

» COSIMA MARRINER

**A**nxious parents are using technology to monitor every move their children make, to give them a semblance of independence while not compromising their safety.

The latest gadget to cater to parents' desire for vigilance is the TicToeTrack, a watch designed for children which is fitted with a GPS tracking device. It will be launched at the CeBIT technology conference at Olympic Park on Monday.

The watch is an alternative to GPS-enabled pager-type devices that can be clipped to a child's backpack or kept in their pocket.

There are also mobile phone apps, which allow parents to track family members' location via their phone and see movements from previous days; and security apps such as FBI Child ID, created by the FBI, which allows parents to store a photo of their child and identifying details for access if the child goes missing.



Independence: Luke and April Palmerlee with their children Henry, 12, Portia, 9, Scarlett, 7, and Daphne, 3, at their Randwick home; (left) the TicToeTrack watch. Photo: James Brickwood

TicToeTrack watch developer Karen Cantwell, from Brisbane, said the watch was not intended to replace parental supervision. "It's not a panacea for child safety, but it gives parents that peace of mind," she said.

Parents receive an update on their child's location every five minutes via their phone or web browser. They can also set "safe areas", and receive SMS alerts when their child enters or strays from these boundaries. The watch comes with an SOS

button, which a child can press if they get into trouble. Parents are immediately alerted to the SOS call, and can track their child through updates every 10 seconds. The \$150 watch is intended for primary school children who are not

old enough for mobile phone. However, Lisa Wood, from the University of Western Australia's school of population health, said tracking devices could inadvertently undermine the sense of independence parents try to give their children by letting them travel alone.

"It's really important kids feel trusted and feel their parents have confidence in them from an early age," said Associate Professor Wood, who has researched parental fears about child safety.

She said parents should help children develop the skills to deal with unexpected situations, and encourage them to practice safe behaviours such as sticking to safe routes, and travelling with siblings or friends.

Professor Wood acknowledged developing a child's independence was tricky. "It's hard for parents to let go," she said. "Deep down, they want to give their kids freedom and independence but they worry about other people judging them on that."

Randwick mother of four April Palmerlee said her older children enjoyed greater freedom than many of their peers. Henry, 12, and nine-year-old Portia are dropped off at swimming training at 5am and must then make their own way to school.

"With four kids, it's impossible to get everybody where they need to be all the time," she said. "[Parents today] are on top of their kids all the time, so they don't develop a sense of independence the way we did."

But children have their own mobile phones, but Ms Palmerlee said it was rare for them to answer calls. "It's more for them being able to contact me," she said.

# Mums hire coaches to keep careers on track



Teacher Amy Payten and son James with two of her year 12 students, Olivia Whiting and Kirsten Hargreaves. Photo: Louise Kennerley

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**A**my Payten didn't want to give up teaching when she had a baby, but she didn't want to go back to work full-time either. However, she wasn't sure if part-time work was available at her school, Barker College.

"Because I was a full-time permanent teacher, I needed to be able to go in and have the confidence to negotiate a part-time workload," the drama teacher said. "I wanted to be a good role model as a working mum for the students, both the boys and girls, and show how important it is."

So after James was born in March, Ms Payten hired a professional maternity coach to help her convince her boss part-time could work for the school, the students and

her. They focused on Ms Payten's achievements and abilities, and staged a mock meeting so she could practise arguing her case.

Ms Payten will be working three days a week when school resumes in the new year. "Coaching proved to me that I can be a working mum and it will work. I love my job, I love my baby and I can do both."

Women like Ms Payten are increasingly hiring maternity coaches to help them navigate the transition out of, and back into, the workforce when they have a baby. It can cost up to \$2500 for coaching that runs from when a woman tells her work she is pregnant until she returns from parental leave.

"Maternity coaching offers a confidential, independent third party

who really listens to what's going on," said Parents@Work coach Jen North, who researched maternity coaching for her master's degree. "It gives women the time to step back and think about what they want and develop an action plan to get there."

Women often turn to maternity coaches when they encounter bias in the workplace after announcing their pregnancy. They may be left out of meetings and planning, have their responsibilities taken away, or be demoted.

"For many pregnant women it's the first time they've experienced any form of discrimination and they didn't see it coming," said Ms Payten's coach, Grace Papers' founder Prue Gilbert.

Many women also suffer a loss of

confidence about their professional abilities and achievements, and their value to the organisation once they are pregnant. Maternity coaches help rebuild that confidence and empower women to negotiate a successful return to work, which may involve more flexibility or a new role.

"Once they look at everything they've actually been doing, they can step up and have that conversation with their manager," Ms Gilbert said. "They are informed of their rights and responsibilities, they're confident at calling out inappropriate behaviours and they are empowered to take charge of their career."

Ms Gilbert said every woman she had coached in the past 12 months had received a promotion either just

before their maternity leave, during it, or when they returned to work.

Maternity coaching can also help organisations retain employees.

"The reality is 33 per cent of women aren't returning to work after giving birth," Milana Maternity Coaching founder Sona Thacore said. She coaches both employees and their line managers. "Companies were losing lots of intellect and lots of experience, which was leading to them losing clients and money."

Operations manager Roman Mirkus hired Ms Thacore to help his company retain staff members who took leave to have children.

"To us it was important to get those people back and for them to be comfortable when they came back," he said.

SMH 29/11/15

# Individuals and Work

## *individual strategies for managing multiple roles*

- Negotiating and sharing roles
- Managing resources
- Accessing support
- Utilizing workplace structures

- Devise strategies that individuals can utilise to effectively manage multiple role expectations caused by changing circumstances

a) Describe the 'coaching' strategy that parents have utilised to manage multiple role expectations

b) Explain how the strategy contributes to the wellbeing of the individual

c) Analyse how 'coaching' can empower women/men and enable them to positively contribute to changing work patterns in society

# Parenting and Caring

## *the roles of parents and carers*

- satisfying the specific needs of the dependant
- building a positive relationship with the dependant
- promoting the wellbeing of the dependant

- outline the roles of parents and carers and evaluate the significance of each role in various parenting and caring situations

a) Describe the purpose and features of the TicTocTrack watch

b) Explain how the technology contributes to the roles of parents/carers

c) Assess community attitudes to GPS technology and wellbeing

d) Critically analyse the impact of GPS technology upon the responsibilities of parents/ carers

## *influences on parents and carers*

- social
  - community attitudes
  - media stereotypes

- describe how social influences affect the roles of parents and carers
- explore one example of how a parent or carer may challenge social influences and assess the impact this can have on their wellbeing

*rights and responsibilities  
in parenting and caring*

- responsibilities of parents and carers
  - duty of care
  - setting limits
  - discipline

- discuss how the responsibilities of parents and carers contribute to building a positive relationship with the dependant



# Social Impact of Technology

*technologies and the family*

- information and communication technology

- explore how household technology contributes to the wellbeing of individuals within families
- critically analyse the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships within families

a) Describe the purpose and features of the TicTocTrack watch

b) Explain how the technology (ICT) contributes to the wellbeing of individuals within families

c) Assess community attitudes to GPS technology and wellbeing

d) Critically analyse the impact of GPS technology on interpersonal relationships within families