As We Lose Our Children to Technology, This is the One Game That Builds Family Bonding and Educates

BY SHEA CURRY / FEATURED

Most parents are relatively familiar with Pokemon Go, an augmented reality (AR) mobile game that uses GPS to locate, capture, battle, and train virtual creatures which appear as if they...
are in the player's real-world location. While the game touts itself on promoting physical activity, it has also contributed to accidents and even death leading to concerns over security issues and costing parks and other public facilities to spend millions of extra dollars on resources to curb accidents and vandalism. As parents, it’s hard to escape that technology is a part of our children’s day-to-day world. And while many parents feel they've lost their children to this augmented world, one new gaming platform called Agents of Discovery has found a way to provide a positive alternative to Pokemon Go with an educational element that engages both children and adults and builds family bonding.

Agents of Discovery is an educational mobile gaming platform that, like Pokemon Go, uses augmented reality to get youth active. They employ educators like schools, parks, museums, etc., to create fun and engaging learning environments. Each Mission is free and easy to follow. All that is required is downloading the FREE app.

As a mom, I am continually looking to find new ways to explore and educate my 4½-year-old twin girls. It’s not always easy. Even at their young age, I already feel like I’ve lost them to their iPads and favorite movies. Don’t get me wrong; limited iPad use can be beneficial as there are many educational apps and even many movies have great moral themes. However, there are mornings my girls wake up, and the first thing they ask is to watch a video. When I say no, it often ends with toddler tantrums on the floor. These are mornings I wonder what kind of monsters we’re creating with all this visual stimulation. But when I learned about Agents of Discovery, it made me realize the positive benefits technology can have of stimulating a child’s mind and body.

With Agents of Discovery, I’m able to get them motivated to get dressed and out the door to explore local parks to learn about wildlife, nature, and landmarks. We’ve been fortunate to do a lot of that lately around Los Angeles.

Our first adventure with Agents of Discovery took us to Griffith Park. We began our experience as a whole family by downloading the Mission. My husband read our first task, and we were off! The girls were so excited to discover new things and to answer the challenges that are also a part of each Mission. I will admit, that even my husband and I learned things we didn’t know as we answered some questions incorrectly. You’re never too old to learn, and I think that’s what makes this an equally fun game for adults as well. Not only were the girls excited to learn new things, but we were too.
We ended our day by also exploring another Mission at Echo Park. And can you believe that in the 20 years I've lived in Los Angeles, that I had never been there? Wow, what a cool new park I discovered from exploring the Mission list in the Agents of Discovery app. What we loved the most about the Mission at Echo Park was learning about birds and ducks. We were told to look for Mallard Ducks, and sure enough, we saw quite a few. The girls got so excited about seeing an image on the app and then being able to scan the park to locate one. The girls also got tested on their knowledge of the colors of a Mallard Duck. It took a couple of tries to get it right, but they figured it out.

The mobile game also provides extra incentives to explore Southern California by allowing kids to earn digital rewards and real-world embroidered badges when they complete Missions. My girls want to complete all the Missions so they can show the badges to their friends.
Simply put, this type of family exploration and bonding is such a rarity in this day and age. We all had so much fun that even my husband wants to go on more Missions! If we’re going to lose our children to technology, we might as well join them on a gaming platform like **Agents of Discovery** that encourages the whole family to get outside and learn more about nature and our cities’ landmarks. So make sure to visit all the SoCal Explorer Campaigns. It’s a win-win for everyone!

**Shea Curry**

I’m a writer, actress, reality contestant, and producer. But more importantly, I’m a mom of twins girls that keep me smiling and exhausted.

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