



Workshop: Kids, Screens and Social Media

Introductions

Ella and Laura



What will we think about together today?

How might children start coming into contact with screens?

What are the possible impacts of screen use?

What does it look like if things get worse?

Advice and Guidance

What could a life with screens look like? What do you want for your children? (and how much can you control)

**Are there any questions that you have,
or anything that you would like to be
covered today?**



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Computers (work) cinema screens phones smart boards (school) smart watch

Bus stop doctor's surgery sign in machines billboards

Coming into contact with screens



Early Childhood and Screens



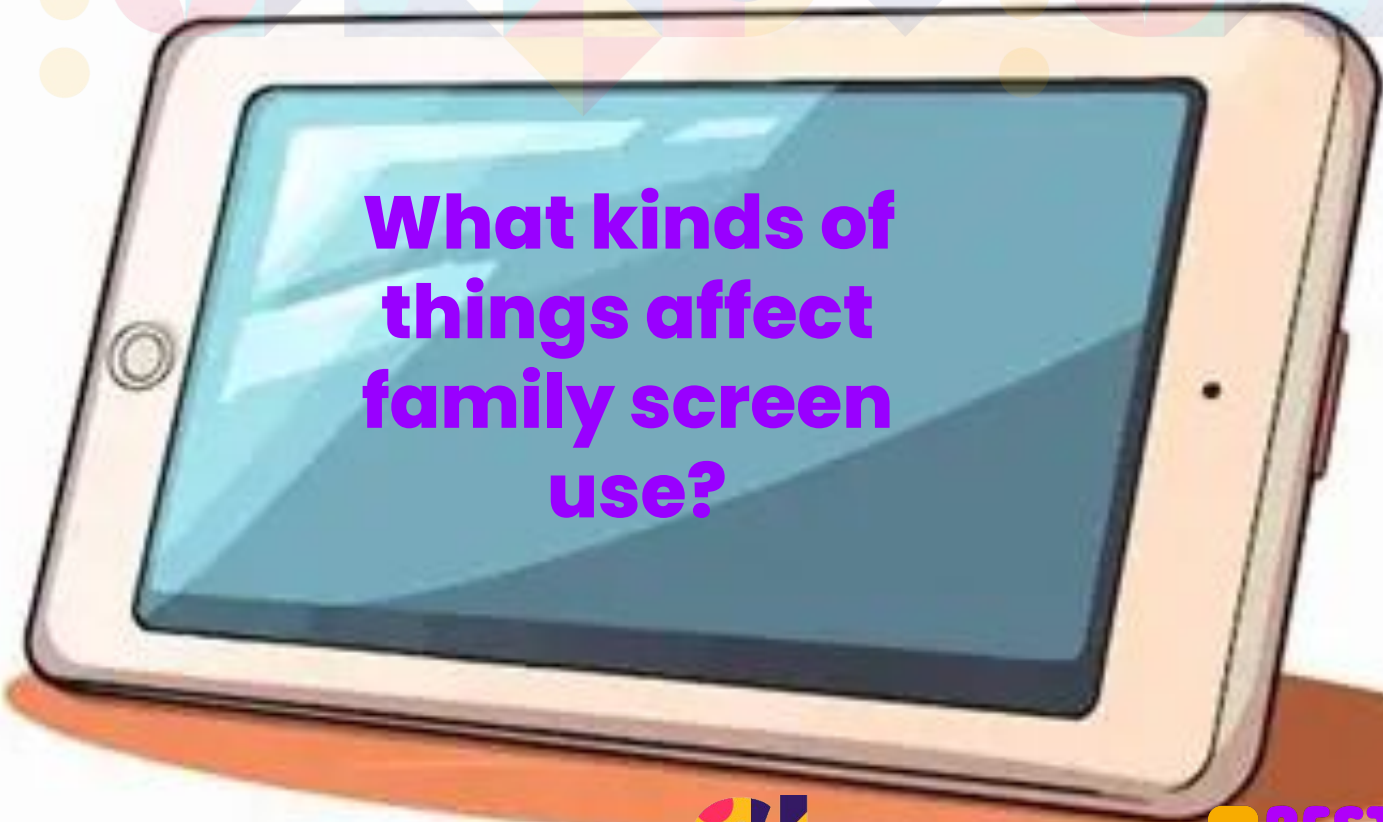
A study of young children between 0-8 and their use of digital technology was carried out with 234 families in 21 European countries (S Chaudron, GR DI, M Gemo, 2018)

Children have limited awareness of online risks, even if they can repeat what their parents say about the risks

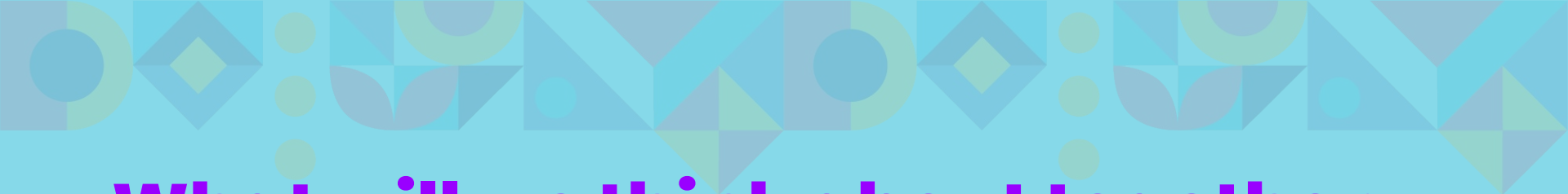
Children's (0-8y) screen use is influenced first by the behaviour of the adults in their home, and later by how their nurseries and schools use screens.

Parents and carers have very different approaches to screens with their children - no one knows how to do it! Most parents are eager for more guidance.





**What kinds of
things affect
family screen
use?**



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Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Child Development: An Updated Review and Strategies for Management

11

6

Sudheer Kumar Muppalla  • Sravya Vuppalapati • Apeksha Reddy Pulliahgaru • Himabindu Sreenivasulu

Research on children and screen use



House of Commons
Education Committee

Screen time: impacts on education and wellbeing

Fourth Report of Session 2023–24

Young children and screen-based media: The impact on cognitive and socioemotional development and the importance of parental mediation



Edyta Swider-Cios^a, Anouk Vermeij^{a,b}, Margriet M. Sitskoorn^{a,*}

Unpacking the relationship between screen use and educational outcomes in childhood: A systematic literature review

Daniel Caballero-Julia^a, Judith Martín-Lucas^{b,*}, Luis E. Andrade-Silva^c



The foundation has published a review of current evidence of families experiences of screen time and impacts on children during their first two years.

How do screens affect our...brains?

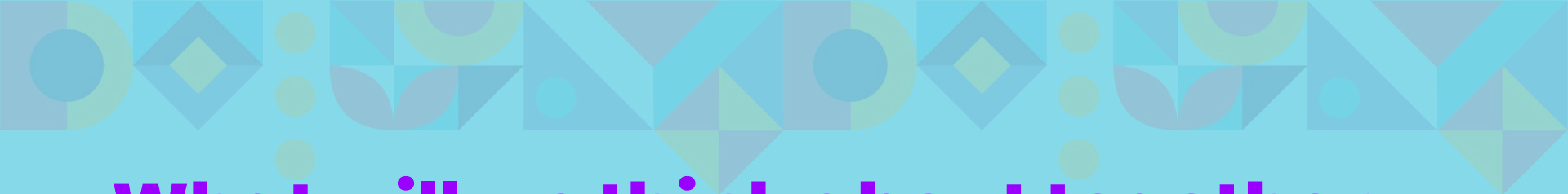
- Some types of screen time can be overstimulating to young children's brains (as well as adults!)
- Using screen time to calm down can potentially affect how children's mood regulation skills develop.
- There are also ongoing studies looking at whether screen time might impact the development of attention, concentration and self-regulation skills.

...bodies?

- Sometimes increased screen use can mean less playing with friends and playing outside.
- Screen time during meals can sometimes get in the way of healthy eating habits.
- Sleep has been shown to be negatively affected by screen time (reduced and delayed sleep)
- There is some evidence that increased screen time might impact how infants eyes are developing.

...Social lives?

- Sometimes we think about “opportunity cost” (that screens might sometimes be preventing kids from having other learning experiences, e.g. with each other.
- More screen time and less time playing and talking to people might impact the development of language, motor skills, and social skills.
- Screens being used as comfort might replace other forms of care and soothing, like words and physical comfort from parents. This can impact emotional development.



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Not all screen time is equal....



Screen Time Meltdowns!!!

Advice from Dr Martha Derios Collado, (author of The Smartphone Solution). Taken from an article by Genevieve Roberts in the iPaper, 18/06/2026.

- The type of content might impact how wired children get.
- Co-viewing with parents can help with meltdowns (but this is not possible for parents all the time).
- She advises not totally removing screen time, but having a predictable schedule of screen time.
- "It's not helpful to use screen time as a bribe or withdraw it as a punishment.
- She says she noticed that if she gives her daughter a screen right after school, before she's had a chance to move around, it more likely to lead to a meltdown.
- Help them with the transition from screens back to the real world, e.g. bringing them a snack
- "Give them an ending – and the parent needs to make it end: don't expect children to switch off the screen – it's up to us to make the boundary stick."

Phones and social media in schools

How are screens being used in schools?

What restrictions have schools put on use of screens, phones and social media?



Screen Time/Social Media Quiz

1. When was the internet made available to the public in the UK?
2. When was facebook invented?
3. When did the first iPhone launched?
4. What was the average age that children started regularly engaging with screens in 1970, and what is the average age now?
5. When did the UK government first introduce guidance on parenting and screen time/social media use?
6. What is WHO guidance and government guidance on screen time for children?

Advice and considerations for making screens less risky for under 2s, from the 1001 critical days foundation:

- Screen time increases with age
- Screen time Increases at home
- Screen time can increase at weekends
- Family/caregiver screen time dictates baby screen time
- Devices in bedrooms increase screen time
- Touch screen devices can negatively impact social interaction and negatively impact sleep more
- Screens used for education and learning may be considered beneficial, but also present risks
- Screens used as pacifiers or to distract/occupy the baby affects mood and emotional regulation
- Babies left unsupervised with screens leads to problematic use
- Screentime with meals impacts health outcomes

Young children and screen-based media: The impact on cognitive and socioemotional development and the importance of parental mediation

Edyta Swider-Cios^a, Anouk Vermeij^{a,b}, Margriet M. Sitskoorn^{a,*}

Screen-based media use by young children – recommendations

Parents:

- No screen time for children younger than 2 years, with an exception of video chatting
- Minimize screen time for children 2–5 (max 1 h), providing alternative activities
- Avoid exposing children to background screens, e.g., by turning TV off if no one is watching or when child is present in the room
- Engage in co-viewing and mediating strategies, by e.g., creating rules on screen-time and which content is allowed to be viewed, explaining what is happening on the screen, asking questions about viewed content
- Select interactive media content and use media together with your child
- Avoid fast-paced programs and apps with highly distracting content, select programs that are not interrupted with commercials
- Screen media should not be used as means to calm children, with an exception of special times, e.g., during medical procedures or flights
- Use of screen-devices should be avoided by all family members during meal and playtimes, right before nap/bedtime, and during family gatherings
- Discuss any concerns regarding child screen-media use with healthcare providers
- Create a personalized media plan using a Family Media Plan platform developed by AAP with the help of a healthcare provider if necessary



**As adults, we have also had
to work out how screens and
social media fit into our
lives.**

How do we feel about them?

What are families and communities experiencing across the world?

Highest screen time

South Africa: 9h 24m/day

Brazil: 9h 13m/day

Philippines: 8h 52m/day

Thailand: 8h 44m/day



Average global daily screen time

(Be Candid Research, 2026):

6h 58m

96 average phone pick-ups per day

2,617 smartphone touches per day

Teens (13–18): 8h 39m/day

Tweens (8–12): 5h 33m/day

Under 2s: 49 min/day

Gen Z: 9h/day

(WifiTalents 2026 report)

80% of the World's Population Will Use Social Media by 2028

Estimated number of social media users worldwide and global penetration rate

■ Users worldwide (in billions) — Penetration rate (in percent)



Lowest screen time

Japan: 4h 25m/day

Denmark: 5h 07m/day

Germany: 5h 12m/day

The impact of government policies on families and communities across the world

Australia:

Under 16s are not allowed to have a social media account (WhatsApp, Roblox, Discord and YouTube Kids are excluded). Tech companies need to enforce this or face fines.

France:

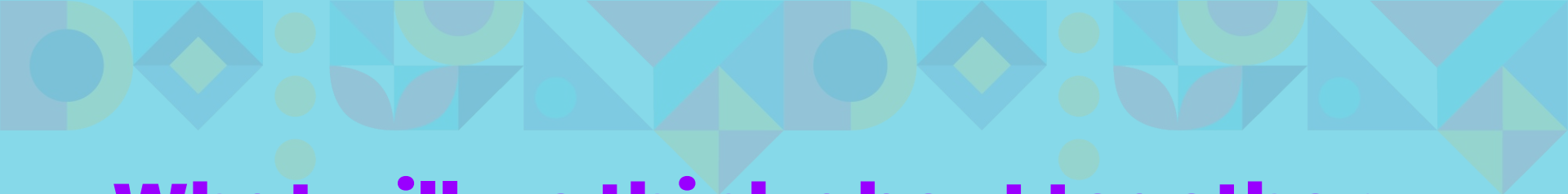
Legislation is in progress to ban under 15s from social media platforms without parental consent.

Brazil:

Under 16s can't use social networks without parental consent.

China:

"Minor Mode" cuts off access for under 18s between 10pm – 6am, also imposes daily limits.



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What could a life with screens look like, what do you want for your children (and how much can you control)?

When things get worse

The common risks associated with screen and social media use are:

Addiction, Exploitation, Bullying, Self-Harming behaviours, Radicalisation, Isolation, Harm to others

What does it look like if things get worse?

What might you notice?

- Difficulty managing time (e.g. staying up very late on social media)
- Sleep changes
- Eating changes
- Mood changes, seeming distressed or withdrawn
- Social withdrawal
- Changes to engagement in school and other interest areas.
- **What to look out for:**
- Sudden focus on weigh, calories, diet, appearance etc
- Always wanting to go on a screen and struggling if the answer is no
- Big emotional reaction when the screen time ends
- Use of online language e.g. do this IRL
- Change in how they speak about a topic e.g. girls, government conspiracies

Dove Social Media and Body Image Campaigns



Mental Health Impact on Teenagers

American Journal of Law & Medicine (2023), 49: 2-3, 135–172
doi:10.1017/amj.2023.25



ARTICLE

ALGORITHMS, ADDICTION, AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: An Interdisciplinary Study to Inform State-level Policy Action to Protect Youth from the Dangers of Social Media

Nancy Costello¹, Rebecca Sutton¹, Madeline Jones¹, Mackenzie Almassi², Oluwadunni Ojumu³, Meg Salvia⁴, Monique Santoso⁵, Jill R. Kavanaugh⁶

‘The Corpse Bride Diet’: How TikTok Inundates Teens With Eating-Disorder Videos

The app’s algorithm can send users down rabbit holes of narrow interest, resulting in potentially dangerous content such as emaciated images, purging techniques, hazardous diets and body shaming

By [Tawnell D. Hobbs](#), [Rob Barry](#) and [Yoree Koh](#)

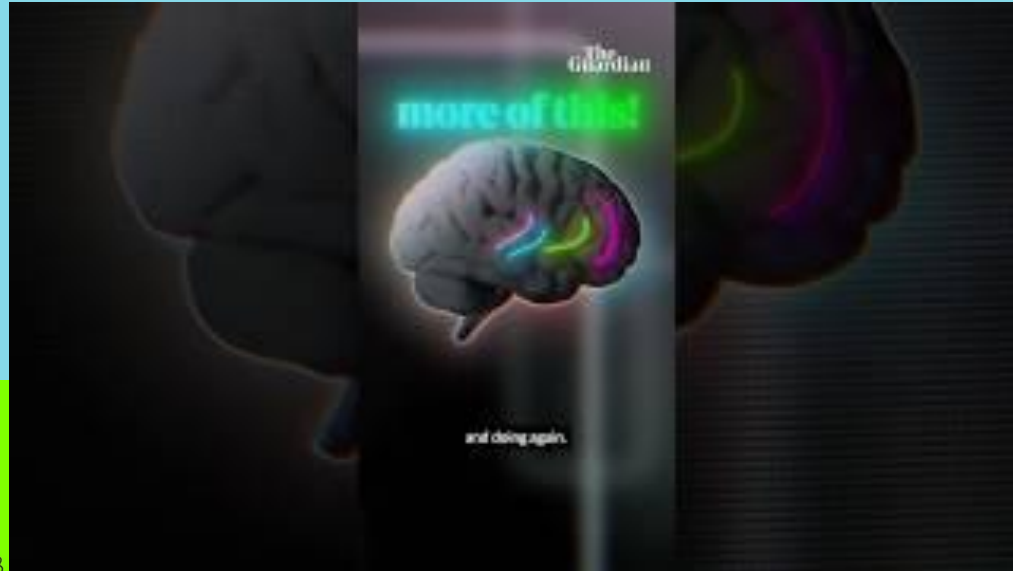
Dec. 17, 2021 10:45 am ET

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The Impact of Social Media on Youth Mental Health: Challenges and Opportunities

[Jacqueline Nesi](#)

What do we mean by social media addiction?



How rotten is your brain?

Find out how bad your mental mush is



Take the quiz ➡

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/ng-interactive/2026/apr/03/how-rotten-is-your-brain-quiz?CMP=share_btn_url

Social Media Addiction: Challenges and Family Solutions

Comparing Popular Social Media Platforms and Their Addiction Risks

Platform	User Base (Millions)	Key Addictive Features	Mental Health Risks	Parental Controls Available
Instagram	1200+	Image sharing, Stories, Notifications, Algorithmic feed	Body image issues, Anxiety, FOMO	Yes
TikTok	1000+	Short video infinite scroll, Personalized content	Attention deficits, Sleep disruption, Anxiety	Yes
Facebook	2800+	Newsfeed, Groups, Notifications	Social comparison, Depression, Loneliness	Yes
Snapchat	500+	Disappearing messages, Snap streaks, Filters	Peer pressure, Anxiety, Privacy concerns	Limited
Twitter / X	450+	Real-time updates, Likes, Shares, News	Polarization stress, Anxiety	Limited

Pro Tip: Customizing parental control settings per platform is essential. Each app offers different tools; awareness empowers families to act effectively.

Advice

- Don't blame ourselves. We know that there are many things that social media and tech companies do to make their products addictive. Effectively you and your children are up against a supercomputer, we can't defeat it alone!
- Similarly to big tobacco (before regulation), social media companies deliberately try to get young users, so that they will then have customers for life.
- Sometimes when our teenagers are so smart and capable in some areas (e.g. arguing) it can be hard to realise that with an addictive experience like social media, they may not have the capacity to reason or control behaviour.
- So as adults we need to support their growing brains, by taking control when they can't.

Advice

YOUNGMINDS

5 Tips for healthier smartphone usage from Dr Chatterjee x Smartphone Free Childhood:

1. Set up Parental controls (for time limits and to block inappropriate content)
2. No phones at mealtimes
3. No phones an hour before bed (as they can disrupt sleep)
4. Create tech-free zones (e.g. no phones in the bedroom)
5. Take a break: regular times in the week where there are no phones.

How to talk to your child about social media:

- Help them to think critically (needs to be clearer)
- Validate their feelings
- Help them to spot signs of distress.
- Support them to stay safe and in control.
- Don't panic when things go wrong.
- Celebrate the positives.

- Thinking critically: what would you want your teenager to know, or to consider, to help them understand more about social media companies?
- Your teenager comes to you feeling upset because they feel like they are missing out on stuff that's happening because they have to be off social media by a certain time. How might you respond?
- Your teenager has experienced someone speaking to them inappropriately on SnapChat or Instagram, how might you support them with the situation?

Resources for support



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Social Media and
Youth Mental Health

[5 Cs of Media Use](#) [Keep Me Updated](#) [Contact Us](#)

General Social Media Use:

- **Set boundaries:** Schedule specific times for social media and scroll with intention.
- **Turn off notifications and set up focus modes:** Reduce distractions and endless scrolling.
- **Choose no-go zones:** Avoid using social media in classrooms, cars, or certain rooms.
- **Be honest about your age!** Platforms enable access to riskier content based on users age.

Navigating Social Media: A Teen Wellness Toolkit

[Home](#) / [Patient Care](#) / [Media and Children](#) / [Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#) / Navigating Social Media: A Teen Wellness Toolkit

TikTok

- **Engage with what you like:** Watch and interact with videos you enjoy to train your feed.
- **Skip content:** Long-press a video and select “Not Interested” to see less like it.
- **Block or mute accounts:** Stop content from people you don’t want to see.
- **Use Restricted Mode:** Limit potentially inappropriate videos.
- **Refresh your feed:** Reset your For You Page to start fresh and see content you actually want.

Snapchat

- **Report inappropriate snaps:** Press and hold a snap to report it.
- **Adjust privacy:** Control who can see your story, contact you, or find you.
- **Friend control:** Only add people you know and manage visibility of your posts.
- **Be selective with location sharing:** Only share your location with people you know and trust or keep it off.



Thinking about Body Image

Social media

Filters &
'The Selfie Talk'



The Confidence Kit

Building body confidence in you
and the young people
in your life

Chorus
Children & parents together

**BEST
START
IN LIFE**





How should I talk to my child about smartphones? Tips for parents at every stage

RESOURCES ▾

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

GET INVOLVED

Smartphone Free Childhood is a movement of families standing together to delay smartphones and social media – turning isolation into collective strength.

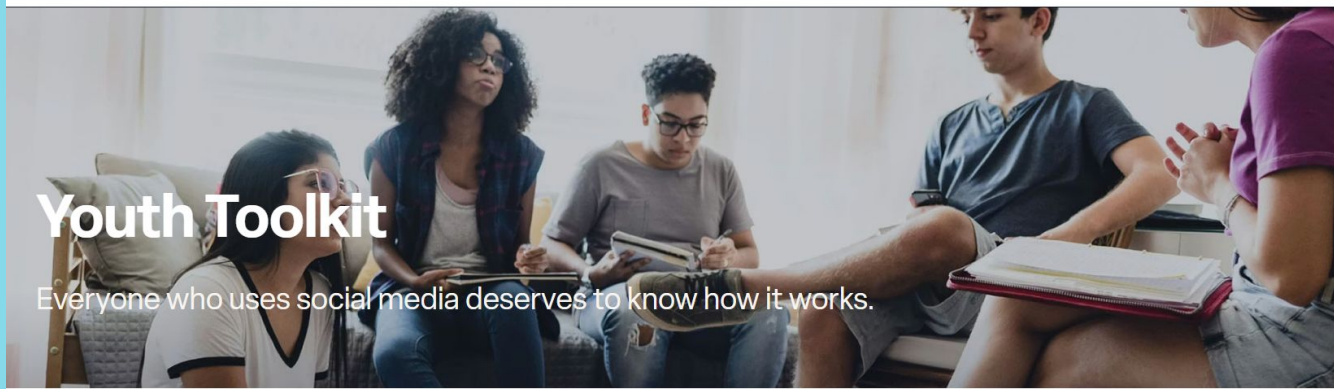
Together we're giving children back what truly matters: time to play, space to grow, freedom to be.

Because childhood should be shaped by families and communities, not algorithms.

[Center for Humane Technology]

Youth Toolkit

Everyone who uses social media deserves to know how it works.



What support can you access for your teenager?

Mental Health Support:

- It's useful to explore what support your child's school may offer (e.g. they may have counseling support available)
- You can speak to your GP about making a referral to Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). They might think about different options including medication and talking therapies.

What does the City of London offer?

- Early Help, Children's Services, City Chorus

Useful Charities:

- The Mix, Mind, YoungMinds, NSPCC, The Children's Society

Current and Developing Psychological Interventions for Social Media Addiction in Teenagers

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (usually focused on anxiety and depression that is occurring alongside addiction)
- Structured behavioral modification programs for gaming disorders eg., PROTECT and PIPATIC.
- Peer-support and group based interventions
- Mindfulness-based interventions (developing metacognitive awareness, and ways of responding to stress)
- Creative interventions: e.g. music therapy, drama and art therapies.
- Family-based interventions (thinking about family communication styles, relationships, patterns)
- School-based interventions (e.g. using peer influence within schools)
- Community and liberation psychology approaches: how can teenagers have their voices heard, can we support them to advocate for changes at a wider community and societal level?

(Canoğulları, 2026) Wang et al., (2024)



**What could my family life
with screens and social
media look like?**

**What do I hope for my
children?**

Further Resources

- <https://saferinternet.org.uk/> Gives guidance on internet related safety-related topics (e.g. cyberbullying, reporting online abuse) advice for professionals and others in supporting children to stay safe online.
- [Help your child stay safe online - Kids Online Safety](#) Gov-UK website aimed at parents giving advice on supporting children online.
- [Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#) again, online safety guidance aimed at parents, includes a page giving guidance for parents who are worried about their children being engaged in 'compulsive device use'.
- [Digital Addictions: A Family Guide to Prevention, Signs, and Treatment - Children and Screens](#)
- [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) aimed at promoting a campaign and supporting parents to try and not give their children smartphones, includes resources for parents, information pages about potential impact of smartphones for children. Includes videos – possibly include one in Workshop (although has a clear agenda of trying to persuade parents against smartphone use)
- [Digital technologies in young people's lives: Access and time use - Nuffield Foundation.](#) Includes statistics compiled from Ofcom etc about Children and YPs screen usage.

Books

'The Smartphone Solution When and how to give your child a phone' by clinical psychologist Dr Martha Deiros Collado

The Amazing Generation: Your Guide to Fun and Freedom in a Screen-Filled World, by Anne Price and Jonathan Haidt

