

# Smart Phone Addiction and Young Children

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Technology has reached the peak of advancement in our world today. Technology, like a coin, has both its blessings and its disadvantages. Smartphones, in particular, have made our lives too easy that we have somehow become dependent upon them. Despite the advantages, various negative smartphone consequences affect physical and mental health, reduce social interaction, cognitive disorders, sedentary lifestyle, sleep quality, vision, obesity, nervous system problems, tumours because of cell phone radiation and psychological dependence which includes smartphone addiction in children.

Smartphone addiction, which can also be thought of as a fear of being without a connection to the internet has been related to many mental health concerns. The doctors say there are proven facts that smartphone addiction in children develops anxiety and low self-esteem, and also in some cases there are very young children develop communication problems.

Some recent research found that smartphone addiction has become extremely common among kids. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which due to virtual classes' parents should give smartphones to children and also in some schools assignment is being sent on whatsapp, so children became more dependent on their screens than ever before.

In today's digital world our children use phones limitlessly and they are gradually becoming addictive. This smartphone is affecting the growth



and development of children when they use it without limits. Hence, reducing smartphone addiction among children is extremely important.

## Signs and Symptoms of cell phone addiction in kids

Some possible warning signs of cell phone addiction in kids could include:

- Low appetite
- Sleep disturbances
- Fear of missing out
- Weak or unreal social life.
- Problems of the nervous system
- More and more time using a phone.
- Accidents or injury due to phone use.
- Changes in behavior (temper tantrums).
- Difficulty with emotional regulation
- Continuous worry about where the cell phone is
- Extreme reactions when separated from device
- Trouble in completing duties at work, school, or home.
- Aggression over wanting to use the phone constantly

- A need to use the phone even when watching television, eating, or doing any other activity

### Reasons why kids are addicted to smartphone

There are many reasons for cell phone addiction, some of them are as given below:

**Parents first introduce:** It has been a common situation that parents first introduce mobile phones to their children, so they do not irritate them when parents are otherwise engaged. Parents do so to distract them while they eat as well, to avoid any fussy behaviour. Hence, children become addicted to mobile phones.

**Parental ignorance:** Essentially, parents do not want to devote much time with their children, which results in addiction to mobile phones. Most parents do not worry at all to halt the growing habit of their children of using smartphones. In many cases, they are happy to see their children's different talents when using a smartphone. Most parents do not find anything wrong with this obsession with technology and social media and go on to ignore the dangerous effects of too much screen time on their kids.

**Cellular video games:** Users are compelled to use their phones more repeatedly as a result of the video games available on them. In today's market for cell phones and smartphones, gaming is noticed as an essential feature that has the ability to appeal users.

**Pleasure:** Smartphone addiction works similarly to game addiction. Every once in a while, the user gets some sort of a reward. Reward makes people feel happy and desire more. It also causes a rapid message check turn into endless Facebook feed scrolling.

**The need to produce and socialize:** It's a part of human nature to imitate, and make models in the process of personal progression. Mobile devices help

children with that. They take selfie, select the best picture and socialize.

### Adverse effects of Mobile Addiction in Kids

Smartphones can harm children if they are used and exposed continuously. Here's a list of side Effects of excessive use of smartphones in children:



**Problems with sleep** – this might it reveal itself as insomnia, worse sleep quality or taking a long time to fall asleep. This might be triggered by staying up late to play games and watch videos, waking up during the night to check notifications.

**Depression and anxiety** – Lack of social contact can result in mental health problems. Cell phone addiction affects relationships with friends and family in a bad way. There's also a tight association between mental health problems and an increase in modern media screen activities.

**Relationship problems** – Mobile phone engagement might reach such a degree that a child becomes unfocussed from being present in the real world. It unfavourably affects all spheres of their lives – school, family and other responsibilities. A child might detach from friends and family, spending time absorbed in the digital world.

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder** – Cell phone addicted children persistently feel the pressing need to use their mobile devices all the time. Turning the phone off can cause increased anxiety. The obsessive idea of staying connected round the clock is a real problem that might require professional care.

**Mental health:** kids who are active on social media are usually the targets of cyber bullies. The problem is that many of them don't disclose it until after they have already suffered mental damage. Depression and anxiety can also be prompted by social media.

**Disturbed Brain Activities:** Children are simply



affected by the waves from their mobiles because the waves penetrate their brains. When a child speaks for just two minutes on the phone, the electrical motion in his or her brain can be affected.

**Tumours:** According to the World Health Organization, mobile phone radiation has been shown to cause cancer. Children who tend to keep smartphone close to their ears for extended periods of time may be more prone to develop non-malignant tumours, especially in the brain and ear.

**Here are some creative ways for parents to break child's smartphone addiction:**

If you want to support your child to overcome digital addiction, here are some ideas:

1. **Break time:** Children have a lot of energy and it should be invested efficiently. Make sure your kids do something active frequently. Indulge them in mini stretching exercises every 30 mins. It's essential to break up screen time and move around.
2. **Set Priority for other things:** Ensure your child finishes homework, before they get on the mobile

device. This helps in setting the priorities straight right from an early age.

3. **Make a strict smartphone schedule:** Setting sufficient time allows parents to keep track and restrict the amount of time spending on gadgets and avoid excessive usage of the smartphone. By presenting a schedule, parents can improve the habit of routine which prevents the child from spending more time on screen.
4. **Bonding with child:** These days parents lead very busy lives and the time they get to spend with their children becomes inadequate. Therefore, it is vital to take the time out for bonding activities with children. Playing board games or engaging your child in household tasks like cleaning, cooking or gardening will keep her away from smartphones.
5. **Encourage play time:** Physical play fuels the brain. Activities that involve physical movements permit children to use their energy and give children the chance to develop gross and fine motor skills, learn new things and socialize. Indulge them in activity-based learning.
6. **Encourage face-to-face communication:** Studies showed that the two-way communication with children advances language development much more effectively than inactive listening or one-way interaction with a screen. Spend time together with your kids.
7. **Set passwords:** Set a password on your phone to avoid the usage of the phone by your child in your absence.
8. **Be a great role model:** Children learn more from your movements than your words. They are great observers, and they imitate the habits of parents. Be a good role model for your child by controlling your smartphone usage. Spend more



time with your children by interacting, hugging, playing with them.

9. **Say no to smartphone:** Media can be helpful in keeping kids calm, but it should not be the only way to calm them down. It is the responsibility of parents to help their child detect and handle strong emotions, come up with activities to manage boredom, open communication to solve the problem.
10. **Replace the phone with healthy options.** Involve your kid in active family time or fun activities. Teach them to enjoy the real world and to get along without a cell phone.
11. **Use kids mode:** Mobile phones have the option to set children mode or to set passwords for certain apps, permit these options when you give smartphones to your kids. It is not possible to monitor your children every time.
12. **Stop giving phones as a reward:** Sometimes parents promise their children that they get costly gadgets when they top in academics or win some competition. Offering these can distract them easily so you can try to gift them with some other thoughtful gifts.
13. **Strict Supervision:** It is essential to restrict mobile phones, having a one-to-one discussion with your child helps to avoid smartphones. Explain to them clearly why you should not use them often and talk to them about the drawbacks while using them beyond their boundary. Educate children on the side effects of too much screen time.
14. **Encourage physical activities:** Make sure your child is spending sufficient time away from

technology at home to play outside or do other physical activities. Outdoor games help brain



development in children, they increase attention and concentration. Leaving your kid to play outside helps to quit their smartphone addiction completely.

Researches showed that face-to-face time with family, children, and friends has a major influence on children's healthy development. Smartphone apps, social media and gaming are built around encouraging endless use. And child brains often aren't furnished to regulate their own use in a healthy way without parental boundaries. So, it's vital for caregivers to step in to help them learn this important skill. As adults do not let your child get lost in a stream of technology and media. According to a World Health Organization recommendation, a digital mobile phone or laptop should never be within the reach of a kid younger than one-year-old. Children between ages two and five could use their phones for one hour every day. So, before claiming that the condition is out of control and that children are bound to be addicted to mobile devices, parents must consider what effective interventions they are taking to end this addictio

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