

why wait?



There is a reason why top Silicon Valley executives are saying no to the smartphone until at least 14 for their children. In fact, there is a long list of reasons and parents need to know them.

1

SMARTPHONES ARE CHANGING CHILDHOOD

Childhood is changing for children. Playing outdoors, spending time with friends, reading books and hanging out with family is happening a lot less to make room for hours of snap chatting, instagramming, and catching up on YouTube. With children spending anywhere between 3 to 9 hours daily in front of a screen, many childhood essentials are pushed aside for online amusement.

2

SMARTPHONES ARE ADDICTIVE

New research shows dependence on your smartphone may produce some of the same addictive brain responses similar to alcohol, drug and gambling addictions. **Smartphones are like slot machines** in your children's pocket constantly persuading them to crave more. The tech industry intentionally designs smartphone apps and social media for people to use for long periods of time because this is how they make their money.

3

EXCESSIVE SMARTPHONE USE IS ALTERING CHILDREN'S BRAINS

Initial results from a **groundbreaking study by the National Institute of Health** reveal that MRI's found significant differences in the brains of children who use smartphones, tablets, and video games more than seven hours a day. Children who spent an excessive amount of time on screens were found to have a premature thinning of the cortex. That's the outermost layer of the brain that processes information from the five senses.

4

SMARTPHONES ARE AN ACADEMIC DISTRACTION

Elementary and middle school years establish the foundation for your child's academic success. Children learn how to productively manage time, projects and homework. Introducing a constant distraction with a smartphone is paving a path for academic mediocrity. The early results of a **landmark study on brain development** by the National Institute of Health show children who spent more than two hours a day looking at a screen got lower scores on thinking and language tests. **Research from the University of Texas** suggests the mere presence of your smartphone reduces cognitive capacity and test-taking brainpower. **One study** demonstrated that using smartphones in classrooms can even lower a student's grade. **Another study** found that children who attend schools with smartphone bans did better on tests.

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SMARTPHONES IMPAIR SLEEP

Studies show that the use of smartphones and other portable devices with screens affects the quantity and quality of sleep in children and teens. **One study** demonstrated excessive smartphone use was related to shorter total sleep time in children.

Use of a smartphone was also associated with significant reductions in the quality of sleep in younger children.

Adolescents are likely restless because they anticipate receiving texts and social media messages from friends, which affects their nighttime routine. Some children even wake up in the middle of the night to check texts or social media. Sleep disturbance in childhood is known to have adverse effects on health, including poor diet, obesity, weakened immune system, stunted growth, and mental health issues.

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SCREEN TIME IMPACTS BEHAVIOR

Tweens who spend more time on screens have a higher likelihood of developing disruptive behavior disorders, with social media having an especially strong influence, a new UC San Francisco-led study published in the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* found. Social media use was most likely to be linked to conduct disorder, while other forms of screen use—such as watching videos and television, playing video games, and texting—were more likely to be associated with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD).

Conduct disorder is characterized by violating others' basic rights or societal rules with actions such as bullying, vandalism and stealing, while ODD is marked by a pattern of angry or irritable mood, argumentative or defiant behavior, and vindictiveness.

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SMARTPHONES INTERFERE WITH RELATIONSHIPS

Many parents regret allowing their child to have a smartphone because they have experienced the way the smartphone is destructive to relationships. The parent child relationship suffers. Children are often inattentive with the constant distraction the phone brings. Face to face relationships dwindle as children shift their time and energy to investing in their online "friendships."

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SMARTPHONES INCREASE THE RISK FOR ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Children are not emotionally equipped to navigate tricky social media waters at such an early age. Viewing someone else's highlight reel on social media often leads youth to think they are missing out or are not enough compared with their peers. **Research** shows that the more time someone uses social media the more likely they are to be depressed. A **Harvard Business Review** showed the more you use Facebook the worse you feel. **Another report** demonstrated that adolescents' psycho-

logical well-being decreased the more hours a week they spent on screens.

In addition, when children overuse technology, the constant stimulation of the brain causes the hormone cortisol to rise. Too much cortisol can inhibit a child from feeling calm. The loss of tranquility can lead to serious anxiety disorders.

Suicide rates are on the rise especially for girls between the ages of 10 and 14 years old. For this age group, suicide rates have tripled over the past 15 years.

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SMARTPHONES PUT YOUR CHILD AT RISK FOR CYBER BULLYING

Bullying is no longer limited to the playground or locker room. Bullies seek to harm children through social media and texts often making retreat for the victim impossible. The most common medium used for cyber bullying is the phone.

About one out of every four children has experienced cyber bullying, and about **one out of every six children** has done it to others. **Nearly half of U.S. teens** have been bullied or harassed online. **Only one in 10 victims** will inform a parent or trusted adult of their abuse.

Recent research indicates that children who receive smartphones in elementary school versus later in childhood are more likely to be involved in cyber bullying. According to the researchers, the increased risk of cyber bullying related to phone ownership could be tied to increased opportunity and vulnerability.

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SMARTPHONES EXPOSE CHILDREN TO SEXUAL CONTENT

Smartphones have enabled children to view pornography anywhere. Pornography marketers intentionally target youth online to lure them to dangerous images and videos. **One study** showed that 42% of online youth users have been exposed to online pornography. Of those, 66% reported unwanted exposure to pornography often through online ads.

Not only are children viewing sexual content with their phones but they are creating it as well. More and more children are "sexting" (sending sexual text messages and or explicit images). Also, various apps open the doors to sexual predators seeking to track, groom and harm our children.

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INCREASED SOCIAL MEDIA USE IS LINKED TO DEVELOPMENT OF EATING DISORDERS

New research shows that increased time spent on social media is a risk factor for eating disorders. **Increased use of social media** also has contributed, in part, to the shifting demographics of those affected by eating disorders. There has been an increase in younger individuals, including tweens as young as 9 and 10 years old, suffering from eating disorders. In addition to showing overedited, filtered photos, social media sites also offer users ways to find content like weight loss challenges, videos of purging techniques and unhealthy diets.

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TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVES BAN SMARTPHONES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

According to a *New York Times* piece, many technology executives wait until their child is 14 before they allow them to have a phone. While these teenagers can make calls and text, they are not given a data plan until 16.

If leaders of digital giants like Google, eBay, Apple and Yahoo are delaying the smartphone then should this not give us pause? Executives that flourish on the success of technology are protecting their children from the smartphone. Should we not do the same?

Take the pledge today.

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