In today’s digital and globalized world, the usage of smartphones is increasing rapidly, and one cannot imagine their day-to-day life without them. Not only adults but smartphones are affecting kids as well. And if you are the parent of young children living in this generation, it is hard to keep them away from smartphones. The children of this generation are hooked on the smartphone for a long time at an early age.

According to recent studies, almost 53 percent of kids in the US have smartphones by age 11. And also, some kids get their smartphones by the age of 8. With the increasing technology, their smartphone usage is also rising, which has increased concern for many parents. With the advancement of technologies, smartphones are not only used for making phone calls but also for surfing the internet. They are not less than mini-computers. Smartphones can also perform other functions like clicking photos, playing games that substitute devices like cameras, music players, etc. Many parents give their children smartphones to learn new things, connect with their friends, and share their ideas. Though smartphone usage has a lot of benefits, the risk that comes along cannot be neglected. Most parents have said that their kids use smartphones all day to play games, watch YouTube videos and use social media. Increasing mobile phone usage can have a lot of negative impacts on children’s development, health, and studies. If your child uses a smartphone with your proper guidance, then it can benefit them.

**Positive Effects of Smartphones on Child Development**

**Digital literacy**

Digital literacy means understanding and knowing how to use technology. Children spend most of their time using smartphones; they become more tech-savvy and know how to use technology better than parents. Digital literacy does not only mean knowing how to use social media like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and more. It means the ability to find a new information and use it beneficially. Being digitally literate also helps kids know about the risks and limitations of technology and take the precautions required.

In today’s digital world, children can take a lot of advantages of being digitally literate. They can learn new skills from an early age by researching things that they are most interested in.

Most of the schools provide digital skills as part of their study. And they require their students to submit [projects and assignments online](https://shiftedmag.com/top-e-learning-tools-for-organisations/). It will help children learn basic skills such as typing documents, researching a particular topic using search engines, sending emails, and learning to use the internet safely. I have mentioned some important skills that being digitally literate can help kids:

1. **Effective research:** If kids research a particular topic for their school report by themselves, they will learn the importance of quality data, trustworthiness, and source validity. And your kids will know how to properly acknowledge the source.
2. **Protect their privacy:**Your kids will learn basic internet safety like keeping their profile private, setting strong passwords, and respecting other’s privacy as well. Also, make sure that they do not share their personal information online.
3. **Include source and give proper credit:** In this digital world, everything can be copied, pasted, and one can claim it as their creation. So kids need to learn to cite sources and give credit to owners.
4. **Understand social media: Your** kids should know that whenever they create a profile on social media, everything they post, share, and comment on can be easily seen by others. So they must know what they are sharing and commenting on.

**Promotes creativity**

Improving a child’s creativity is essential for their development since it helps develop other important skills associated with their intellectual, social interactions, and emotional well-being. Rather than watching endless [YouTube videos](https://shiftedmag.com/how-any-youtube-channel-can-use-story-feature-to-maximize-the-video-reach/) and [playing games](https://shiftedmag.com/f95zone/), you can engage them in other activities like photography, creative writing, and reading a new book.

Smartphones can also be used as a great medium to teach good things to your kids. You can help them promote creativity through the following ways:

1. **Educational, artistic apps**

You can install several educational apps on your kid’s phones to enhance their creativity. Some of the artistic apps are storytelling, music, drawing, and painting. These apps allow children to present their artwork while creating it on virtual paper and share them online. Kids can create their own stories by placing characters and using animations. Musical apps allow kids to learn musical notes and compose songs as well.

1. **Go out and take photos and videos.**

If your kids love photography, smartphones can be the best option to enhance their skills. You can assist your kid while taking pictures and videos. You should allow them to explore nature and develop their photography skills. Connecting with the natural environment also enhances emotional and social well-being. These days smartphones have powerful lenses and support various editing apps; as a result, they can also learn editing skills.

1. **Encourage to read and write.**

With the help of smartphones, your kids can easily write down their ideas and experiences in an online journal. It will help them to keep their tasks organized and develop their skills. If your kid has a writing hobby, they can enhance their writing skills by finding references online. Your kids can share their blogs, photography, and videos with their friends. They can also improve their reading habit by getting “learn to read” apps.

**Stay connected**

Nowadays, people have many ways to connect with friends and family, but the most effective and inexpensive way is to use smartphones. With the help of smartphones, your kids can easily communicate with their friends and extended family living in different parts of the world. Your kids will be able to message as well as [call and video chat](https://shiftedmag.com/popular-live-video-call-apis-sdks/) with their dear ones.

With advancements in technology, various applications like Viber, Whatsapp, and Skype are available to help users interact with their friends and share files and photos. Your kids can easily share their notes, homework, project files through these apps. If your children have smartphones, they may join social media forums and online groups with similar interests, share their interests and creativity, and learn new things.

**Safety and security**

One of the best things about giving your kids a smartphone is that they can easily contact you in an emergency. Its ability to contact during emergencies can provide a sense of security to both children and parents.

For instance, if your child is stuck in traffic or late for their extra classes, you can quickly call or text them to know their whereabouts.

You can also use GPS tracking apps or software to monitor the movement of your kids. According to [Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/) studies, 33 percent of parents use location tracking software to track their children’s location. Even your kid can use these apps to trace their way back home if they are lost.

**Enhance learning**

There are several applications that support kids to grow their knowledge and creativity. You can install helpful educational-related applications on their phones to reduce [online gaming](https://shiftedmag.com/introduction-to-online-gaming/), watching Youtube videos, and social media usage. Research has shown that more than 3300 apps are designed to help kids make learning easier and more accessible. Here I have mentioned some of the ways that smartphones can help your kid support their learning are:

1. **Access educational apps:**If your child ever comes to you for help with their maths solution or difficult assignments and even you have a hard time solving it, having a smartphone helps your kids get in touch with homework help very quickly. They can easily access free online forums, courses, infographics, and tutorial websites with a few clicks. Learning through smartphones encourages communication and collaboration with them, which helps kids to overcome geographical and economic barriers.
2. **Track their homework and tasks:** As kids carry their phones wherever they go, it is quick and easy to record and check in on daily deadlines and pending due dates.
3. **Setting reminders:** Setting reminders on smartphones is a great way to maintain an ongoing task list. For example, kids can remind themselves to submit a project before a deadline or attend parent-teacher meetings.
4. **Note-taking:**Kids are considerably faster at adding new information to their mobile phones. Evernote and other apps allow youngsters to record thoughts, videos, site URLs, photographs, and other media in their notes.

**Learning responsibility**

Many parents think that giving a smartphone to their kids at an early age is not a good idea, but giving them such a valuable item may increase their ability to be responsible. Giving your kid smartphones can teach your kid a sense of responsibility. You can use smartphones as a tool to teach them about money, overspending, and budgeting.

For example: After you buy a phone for your kid, you can include them on a mobile plan and inform them of the amount of data they can use each month. If they go above that limit, you can set restrictions such as not being allowed to use a phone for certain days or give them additional duties to compensate for the excess cost.

**Negative effects of smartphones on child development**

**Damaged eyesight**

Young kids increasingly playing games and watching YouTube videos for hours can severely affect their eyes. Some kids hold their phones too close to their eyes. Staring at mobile phones continuously for a long time in a day can cause eye damage. Though it is currently not proven to cause permanent eye damage, it can cause discomforts like headaches, dry eyes, blurred vision, and pain.

Not only do children, even adults, experience dry eyes and blurred vision, but children are more susceptible to developing these symptoms depending on how much they use their phones. According to [Chonnam National University research](https://www.researchgate.net/institution/Chonnam_National_University), most children aged 7 to 16 spend a significant amount of time on their smartphones and become cross-eyed. Spending four to eight hours each day on a smartphone device was most likely to become cross-eyed.

Though these eye problems are temporary, doctors suggest that smartphone usage should be limited or take 30 min intervals as a break for the eyes. Furthermore, kids should be taught to hold their phones further away from their faces and adjust their devices’ brightness.

**Disturbed sleep pattern**

Most kids use their mobile phones before going to bed. You might not have any idea, but your kid can play games or watch youtube videos during the night. And using any electronic device at night can lead to reduced sleeping time. Any digital device we use emits blue light harmful to our eyes and tricks our brain into thinking it is daytime.

A recent study shows that lack of quality sleep in kids can affect their physical development, productivity, lack of energy, decreased attention, and obesity. So, make sure that your kid is getting enough sleep. If they have a habit of using their phone late at night, enforce strict rules about using their phone at the mentioned time or 2 to 3 hours before bedtime, or you can also give them books to read.

**Depression and anxiety**

With the increasing use of smartphones, [kids are addicted to social media](https://shiftedmag.com/minimize-screen-addiction-in-kids/) these days. Most of them use social media to connect with friends and learn new things. If your kid uses social media, it is common to compare themselves to their friends or even post something to gain more likes and comments. And your kid may encounter and see a variety of improper behavior that might have a negative effect on their mental health.

According to the British Psychological Society, kids and teens who use social media tend to have low self-esteem, poor sleep quality, anxiety, and depression. Many children have experienced harassment and bullying on social media. Kids who suffer from bullies and harassment are likely to get depression and anxiety later in life.

If your kid receives unwanted and threatening messages from unknown people, you can block unwanted communication through their privacy settings. So it is your responsibility to watch and keep track of their activities. Have a clear conversation about any forms of harassment and cyberbullying that can happen on social media so that kids can understand and prevent themselves from being bullied.

**Health problems**

The overuse of mobile phones not only affects kids’ mental health but also increases the risk of other health problems. Continuous use of smartphones can result in excessive strain on their neck and shoulder. It can cause headaches, neck pain, shoulder strain and affect their posture. As there is no physical movement while using mobile phones, your kids have a high chance of becoming obese and increase the risk of other illnesses like hypertension and diabetes.

Also, many studies suggest that electromagnetic radiation produced by mobile devices is harmful to human brains. According to the recent study of the [International Agency for Research on Cancer](https://www.iarc.who.int/), the excessive use of mobile phones and wireless devices may lead to brain tumors. Children who are more dependent on smartphones tend to have lower IQ, improper mental growth, and other psychiatric diseases. The magnetic produced by mobile phones can impair children’s learning capacity and other behavioral issues.

**Poor academic performance**

Kids are addicted to smartphones, and they carry them everywhere they go. Most kids carry phones along with them, even in school. Playing games, taking selfies, and chatting with friends during breaks or even in an ongoing class is increasing day by day. These activities can result in decreased attention, low grades, poor academic performance, and missing important lessons.

As smartphones are capable of storing all the educational information, some kids may also use them to cheat during examinations. Many kids have been found cheating with the help of notes, photographs, and other reference sites during examinations. These kinds of activities not only lower their grades but also decrease their brain learning capacity.

**Inhibit social development skills**

As kids become more addicted to smartphones, they will be less curious about what is happening around them. Even in public places, kids are using mobile phones. For example, if you go to restaurants or malls, you will see kids are so focused on their phones they do not notice anything happening around them.

Continuous use of smartphones can increase children’s social isolation and encourage them to spend time alone, leading to depression and loneliness. They will also lack social skills, become more aggressive, and easily irritable.

Some experts said that the overuse of smartphones could have a negative impact on children’s emotional and social development. Most kids use their phones and social media to avoid face-to-face interactions with their parents. Many studies suggest that reduced parent-child verbal interactions are associated with negative children’s social development, including language development, self-regulation, and later academic achievement.

**Access inappropriate content**

As the usage of smartphones is increasing among children, there is a lot of chance they might surf the internet. Your kids can come across inappropriate messages, adult and explicit content, and abusive language.

Spending too much time online can make kids surf the dark side of the web called the “Deep Web,” where all kinds of illegal activities occur. Also, kids can easily find their way to pornography at an early age. Being exposed to such material at a young age can change their thought processes, increase curiosity, and be addicted to them.

**How can you limit your kid’s smartphone usage?**

Sometimes it might not be easy to monitor what children are doing on their phones. So, you must monitor their activities and take the necessary precautions to ensure that mobile phones will not affect your children’s development.

**Use Parental Control apps.**

You can always set parental control applications like [MobileSpy](https://mobilespy.io/" \t "_blank), Qustodio, mSpy, on their phones if you are concerned that they may use mobile phones against your rules and restrictions. With the Parental Control apps, you can limit their screen time, block inappropriate websites, and monitor their online activities.

**Set clear rules**

Before giving smartphones to your kids, make clear rules about using smartphones only at the mentioned times. And also, avoid giving phones to your children that are under the age of 12. Increased phone usage reduces parent-child interaction, so make sure you and your kids don’t use mobile phones during mealtime.

**Engage them in outdoor and household activities**

We all know that physical activities are the most important factor in a child’s development process. Encourage your kids to do activities that include physical movement like going for a walk and playing outdoor games. Playing outdoor games is an important factor that supports a child’s development. You can also encourage them to do household work so that they gain some sense of responsibility.

**Make them aware of the risks of using smartphones.**

If you are worried about smartphones’ radiation, talk to them or limit their phone usage. You can always communicate with them about technology and its risk as an ongoing conversation. Also, tell them how excessive screen time can increase the risk of eye problems and other health issues.

**Conclusion**

Smartphones have become both a benefit and a burden for today’s youngsters. Smartphones may provide tools that allow children of all ages to study in a fun and engaging way, express their creativity, and stay connected with friends and family. With the help of smartphones, you can contact your child to know their whereabouts. They will be able to learn new things and will learn to use technology in a responsible way.

On the other hand, overuse of mobile phones might have a negative impact on children’s development process. Smartphones emit blue light and radiation that are harmful to our eyes and brain. Excessive use of mobile phones can damage their eyes and alter their thought process.

At the same time, parents are also concerned about their children seeing improper content online and might be involved in other inappropriate activities. Being exposed to explicit content at a young age can change their attitude and behaviors.

Many parents have said that their children are more dependent on smartphones, and too much screen time makes them socially inactive. If your kid is too dependent on smartphones, they can reduce their learning ability and creativity. It also affects their physical development. As we all know, playing outdoor games and indulging in recreational activities is an essential component of a child’s growth. But they spend all their time using smartphones, which reduces children’s physical activity. So, make sure you engage them in outdoor games.