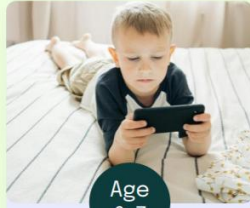




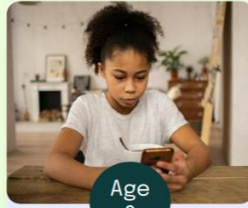
Smartphones have become 'normal' for kids



Age
6-7

1 in 3

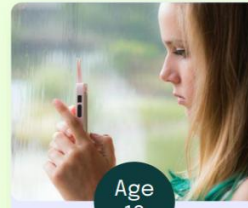
children have a
smartphone



Age
9

Average age

a child gets a
smartphone in the
UK



Age
12

90%

of children have
a smartphone

OFCOM 2025



We all want the same for our children



**Happy
today**

*Enjoy a happy,
healthy childhood*



**Thriving
tomorrow**

*Grow into confident,
capable adults*



**Safe
always**

*Stay safe as they
explore the world*



Smartphones make all these things harder



Drives the teen mental health
crisis

Steals time through addictive
algorithms

Replaces real-world socialising
with screen time



Disrupts focus, sleep, and
concentration

Exposes children to violence,
porn, and extreme viewpoints

Undermines
academic outcomes



Makes online bullying constant
and inescapable

Enables sharing of nudes with
peers and strangers

Creates widespread risks of
grooming and child sextortion

PAPAYA – Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adults



Hi, I'm Dr. Susie Davies. I'm a GP and the mum of three teenagers.

Seven years ago, while working as a university GP, I began noticing that more and more of my students were struggling with their mental health—especially anxiety, low mood, self-harm, and low self-esteem. I observed that the students with the poorest mental health often had an unhealthy relationship with their devices. Constant notifications, social media pressure, and endless scrolling were leaving them overwhelmed and disconnected.

At the same time, at home, my 10-year-old daughter was asking for her first smartphone. I felt completely torn. I didn't want her to feel left out, but I also couldn't ignore what I was seeing in my clinic every day. When I spoke to other parents, I realised I wasn't alone. We were all wrestling with the same questions—and we needed support. That's why, in 2018, I founded **PAPAYA (Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adults)**.

Papaya Talks is a space for families to feel empowered (not judged) when it comes to screen time and smartphones. We want to help spark vital conversations that support families in navigating the digital age with more confidence and less conflict.

Today, this topic is finally getting the prominence it deserves—thanks in part to the brilliant **Smartphone Free Childhood** campaign, which we're now proud to be working with as their official talks provider.

Parents everywhere are waking up—not only to the risks of smartphones and social media, but to the fact that we really can change things if we work together.

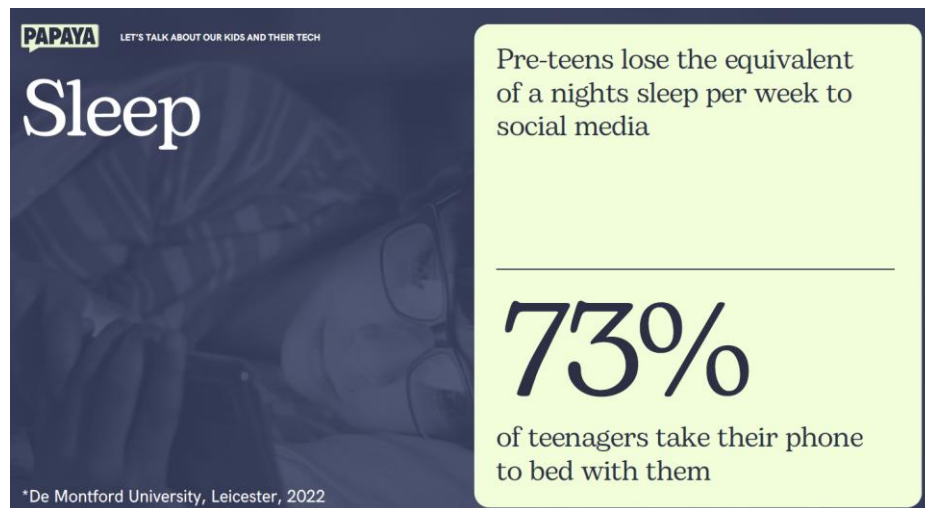
<https://www.papayataalks.com/about>

Join Smartphone Free Childhood

Many parents are choosing to delay giving their child their first smartphone until at least age 14, recognising that early exposure can impact mental health, sleep, attention, and social skills. Waiting allows children to develop stronger face-to-face communication, healthier habits, and a deeper sense of digital responsibility. You don't have to do it alone - join the growing community of parents at **Smartphone Free Childhood** by joining your local WhatsApp group and signing the **Smartphone-Free Childhood Pact** [here](#).



Parents are conscious about children's safety but by carrying a smartphone around with them (a computer in their pocket) they are exposed to so many dangers that are often out of a parent's control.



Children with Problematic Smartphone Usage (PSU) are twice as likely to experience anxiety and three times as likely to experience depression compared to children without PSU.

Tik Tok Experiment

01.

Dummy accounts set up for 13-year-old girls

02.

Content about suicide shown within 3 minutes

03.

Content about eating disorder content shown within 8 minutes

04.

TikTok's algorithm delivered content promoting self-harm and eating disorders every 39 seconds to vulnerable users

What are they seeing?

The average first exposure to porn is 12 whilst doing their homework

Rothman, E. F. (2021). Pornography and public health. Oxford University Press

94% of children are exposed to porn by 14

Middlesex University report for NSPCC and the children's Commissioner

This appears as children are innocently doing their homework

PAPAYA

LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS AND THEIR TECH

1 in 5 children are bullied online

*Online bullying in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk), 2023.

*Ditch the label, The Wireless report , 2017

Of those bullied:

75%

were adversely affected

24%

Self harm as a result

Gaming

83%

of 12-15 years olds
game online

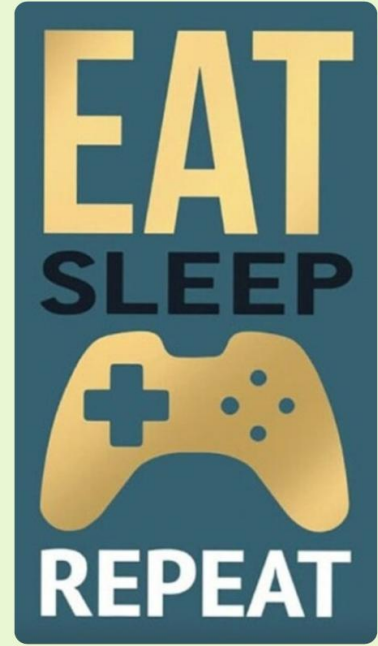
Uswitch 2024

3-4%

of gamers develop gaming
disorder. 327,600-436,800
UK children.

Online Nation 2021 report (ofcom.org.uk)

Some heavy gamers can develop gaming disorder. This is when a gamer can't stop despite trying, has lost interest in other hobbies, and experiences negative impacts on their life due to gaming.



Why?



Social isolation and loneliness



Cyberbullying, grooming,
inappropriate content



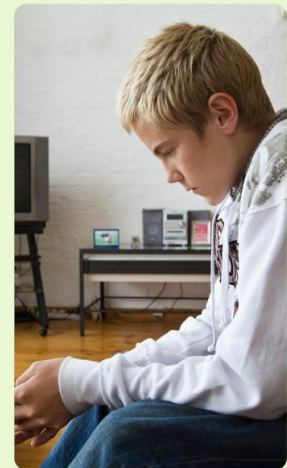
Opportunity costs, loss of
other interests and sleep



Pornography



Gaming



Self-esteem



Comparison

Young adolescents

“

Everyone
else in my
class has
a phone...

Delay the smartphone

Or consider a smartphone without the internet or a basic phone.

Talk to other parents

This is your superpower! Just because your child says everyone else has x doesn't mean they do.

Talk to your child

It's not "never"; it's just "not yet."
Validate feelings.

Step wise progression



01. Delay the first phone.
Consider a basic phone first.
02. 14+ Consider a smartphone
phone with strict controls.
03. 16+ A cautious trial of selected
social media with private
settings and time limits.
04. Greater responsibility
and freedom online.

Want to do more?

PAPAYA

×

**SMARTPHONE
FREE CHILDHOOD**

01. Talk to your child
and other parents.

02. Join your local Smartphone Free
Childhood WhatsApp group.

smartphonefreechildhood.org/find-your-community

03. Sign the Parent Pact



Scan to sign

PAPAYA

LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS AND THEIR TECH

If your child has a phone

01. Talk to your child and other parents
02. Keep devices out of bedrooms at night
03. Use filters and parental control apps
04. Encourage more things that help your child/teen forget about their phone
05. Consider changing your mind....



My child already has a phone – what can I do?

<https://www.papayatalks.com/resources#problem>

1. **Talk to your child and other parents.**

Open communication with your child about their phone use is essential for their safety and

wellbeing. By talking openly, you help them understand the benefits and risks of technology, build trust, and encourage responsible habits. Make sure to reassure them that you won't tell them off if they share something with you, so they feel safe coming to you with concerns. These conversations empower children to make safer choices online and give them the confidence to seek help when needed.

2. **Keep devices out of bedrooms at night.**

Our number one tip is to keep all internet-connected devices out of your child's bedroom at night. This will not only greatly benefit their sleep but also protect them from the darker side of the internet - including pornography, cyberbullying, and grooming.

3. **Set up screen time limits and use parental control apps.**

It is very important to set up your child's smartphone safely so they cannot download apps without your consent - this will also prevent them from downloading a VPN. A VPN, or Virtual Private Network, allows users to bypass most parental controls. With free VPN apps, children can access almost anything online, including content you may not want them to see. You can watch some helpful guides [here](#).

4. **Use Parental Controls**

No parental control system is perfect; children can often find ways to bypass them. However, if your child has an **internet-connected device**, we **recommend using parental controls** as an added layer of protection.

Important:

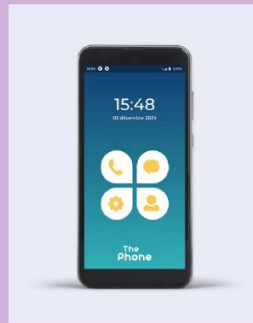
Parental controls **should not be relied on as the sole method** for keeping your child safe online.

Use them alongside **open communication, supervision, and education** about safe and responsible device use.

By combining technology with guidance and discussion, you can create a safer digital environment without giving a false sense of security.

Basic phones allow children to connect with others via text and calls

New models coming soon



Alternatives

Under 14's

The Phone

Nokia 215

Xplora XG03

Karri Messenger

Over 14's

Balance Phone

Pinwheel Phone

HMD Fusion X1

www.papayaparents/resources

You can't go back and change the
beginning, but you can start where
you are and change the ending.

C.S. LEWIS

As a school we are working with other schools (including high schools) on this campaign for children to have a smartphone free childhood, and it is very likely that soon, schools will only be permitting the brick style phones to be brought in. We wanted you to be aware of this in advance in case you are considering getting your child a smartphone for when they move to high school.