Digital Safety Tips from Teens

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Overview

This section will be focused on social media as a whole along with smartphones. We will be presenting information regarding the appropriate age children should be using social media/smartphones, tips about what social media is like, the pros and cons of social media/smartphones, and social media and smartphones from the perspective of school administrators.

Opinions from school administrators

What was the most concerning thing that you have heard from a student involving a smart device?

When this question was asked to the staff that deals with children and social media/smartphones, we were given a couple different answers. More than half of the answers we got back were stating that they are not comfortable answering this question because of confidentiality. However, the answers we did receive were in regards to mental health, depression, sexting, and anxiety.

What age would you recommend a child to get a smart device and why?

The common answer we got for this question was the age of 13. Even at the age of 13, it is highly recommended for the child's smartphone to be heavily monitored with restrictions and rules.

What age would you recommend a child be allowed to use social media and why?

We were given different answers to this question from the age of 13 to the age of 18. Some believe that children should be allowed to use social media at the age of 13 but only with monitoring and restrictions. Others believe that the age 16 is an appropriate age for social media because that is when children start to understand what social media is and the risks and consequences of it. There are also those who believe children should not be on social media at all. They say that social media is a distraction and a danger to children of all ages.

Pros and Cons

Pros and risks of your young child having a smart device	
Pros	Risks
The child feeling like they are fitting in	Negative brain development
The child's entertainment	Overexposure to mature content
Convenience	A child coming into contact with a predator
Coordinating schedules	Cyber-Bullying
Times of crisis	Could affect physical well-being, posture-related disorders
Location tracking	Could foster dependence to phones
Independence	Shorter attention span
Education apps	Phone addiction
	Increased risk of identity theft
	Lack in social development

Teens Conclusion

After doing the research, we have formed a new perspective on how each age group should be managed when it comes to technology. With kids on the younger side (such as kids 11 and under) we would suggest that parents heavily monitor what the kids are doing on their devices. One way of doing that would be downloading an app called "Screen Time", which lets you see what your child is doing on their phone or smart device. We would recommend that if a parent is on the fence about their child between the age of 8-11 getting internet access, that it would probably be better to stay on the safe side and hold off until when they are around 12 or 13 when kids really start to mentally mature. Another option would be a trial run with internet access with heavy amounts of parental controls to see how the child handles it. With kids 12/13 and up, we would recommend starting out with something like the Screen Time app or any type of semi-strict parental controls and ease off as the child shows more maturity and better ability to handle the responsibilities of a smart device.

Helpful Resources

https://www.npr.org/2019/10/31/774838891/its-a-smartphone-life-more-than-half-of-u-s-children-now-have-one

https://rachfeed.com/8-risks-of-excessive-smartphone-use/

https://smartsocial.com/social-media-statistics/

https://www.netfamilynews.org/

https://www.waituntil8th.org/why-wait

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/groundbreaking-study-examines-effects-of-screen-time-on-kids-60-minutes/

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Anne. "Tech Intelligence for Parents." NetFamilyNews.org, www.netfamilynews.org/.

"Why Wait?" Wait Until 8th, www.waituntil8th.org/why-wait.

"Groundbreaking Study Examines Effects of Screen Time on Kids." CBS News, CBS Interactive, www.cbsnews.com/news/groundbreaking-study-examines-effects-of-screen-time-on-kids-60-minutes/.