

Should Children Under the Age of Ten Own Cell Phones?

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With the advent of technology, digital devices have become increasingly rampant in our society. On a recent visit to my Uncle's place, I observed how my three young cousins, all below ten, were consumed on their cell phones or tablets. As I saw the three adolescents engage in video games and YouTube shows, I reminisced about my childhood days when we used to go out on sunny days to ride bikes or spend afternoons in the playground. I felt as though the digitalization of the world had deprived the new generation of real childhood memories. This brings me to the main argument I will put forward in my essay: children under the age of ten should not own cell phones. To support this argument, I will describe how increasing the use of cell phones at an early age can hamper a child's ability to develop social interaction skills, lead to behavioral problems, and affect sleeping patterns that hinder the child's development.

Most children today are engrossed with their cell phones or tablets and lose out on the opportunity to interact with their family and friends. Social engagement with peers in adolescence, predominantly in-person interactions, is a crucial factor influencing infants' social skills (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). The relationships a child develops with his family and friends at home or school allow them to learn through communication and their connections. These experiences help young children develop skills such as thinking critically or becoming more knowledgeable by being exposed to different opinions and experiences. However, being always engaged with their cell phones, the kids are isolated and are deprived of these experiences. Frequent use of mobile phones, especially at a young age, increases social isolation (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). Hence, due to the multitude of benefits of the numerous interactions an adolescent experiences, children should not own cell phones at a young age.

When most children use cell phones, they invest their time and energy into a wide range of activities, mostly playing games and watching videos. A study conducted on cell phones and the associated behavioral problems in young children concluded that mobile phones among children were associated with behavioral issues at age seven (Kheifets, 2010). Another study on child adjustment revealed that of the popular video games, more than half of the lot featured violence or hostility (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). These studies concluded that frequent exposure to violence increases a child's anger and resentment. Young children need to engage themselves in activities that reinforce positive behavior. Hence, since cell phone usage diminishes constructive development, it is not appropriate for young children to own them.

Lastly, many adolescents disturb their sleep patterns through excessive cell phone usage. Due to the addictive nature of digital devices, one can easily use these devices at different times of the day due to ease of access. If children below ten own cell phones, they are very likely to be using them for entertainment purposes during the night, which would affect their sleeping patterns. A journal linking mobile usage to physical health in young children concluded that excessive screen time affects sleep duration, sleep quality, and the time it takes to fall asleep (Domoff, 2019). For adolescents, proper rest and sleep are crucial for development. Since cell phones prohibit children from achieving their desired sleeping patterns, it is not beneficial for young children to own them.

In conclusion, increased use of mobile phones at an early age inhibits a child's ability to develop abilities for social contact, leads to behavioral issues, and affects sleeping habits that hinder the child's growth. Due to the negative impacts cell phones have on adolescents, they should not be allowed to own cell phones below ten.

References

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