

Majority of Parents Worried About Children's Screen Time Before Bed, Survey Finds

Submitted by: Tiger Mobiles

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- Research reveals over 90% of parents are concerned about youngsters' screen time before bed.[2]
- Parents cite health, academic performance or exposure to inappropriate content as their main fears
- Blue light from screens is associated with sleep deprivation which can lead to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and depression

The majority of parents are concerned about their children using mobile devices, tablets, laptops, games consoles and ebooks near bedtime according to a new survey. With respondents suggesting they feared late night usage would negatively affect their child's health, attention span or expose them to inappropriate content.

More than 1,600 parents of UK children aged between 6 and 14 years old were surveyed by the mobile phone comparison site TigerMobiles.com (<https://www.tigermobiles.com/>). Asking parents about their children's use of digital devices, the researchers found that 89% of children had at least one device where they sleep and is used near bedtime. [1]

Key findings showed:

92% of parents surveyed had concerns about usage of a gadget near bed time with only 8% having no concerns. [2]

Concerns include that use of electronic devices near bed time will [3]:

- Increase children's overall screen time (72%)
- Expose them to inappropriate content (85%) or too much advertising (62%)
- Affect a child's attention span and performance at school (84%)
- Lead to sleep deprivation and potential health complication (74%)
- Reduce parent's ability to monitor what children look at (64%) or result in children purchasing add-ons without parent's knowledge (36%)
- Miss out on other important experiences (32%)
- Harm a child's brain (13%)

84% of parents believe there are educational benefits to having access to devices but despite the benefits: [4]

39% of parents think their children are addicted to screens whilst 59% per cent believe their children spend too much time in front of them [4]

89% of parents think they would benefit from advice on how they can better manage screen time [5] and 68% would like advice on how they can harness devices to support their child's learning. [6]

Brandon Ackroyd, head of customer insight at TigerMobiles.com, who commissioned the survey said:

"Our research reveals that the vast majority of parents are worried about their children using devices just before bed. Because children have easy access to tablets and smartphones it's far harder to police their use. Several scientific studies show that blue light emitted from the devices can cause sleep deprivation. We're seeing more and more schools use tablets as a replacement for textbooks too so the problem of poor sleep amongst children is likely to get worse. Our findings indicate that parents do want help and an integrated approach involving parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals is necessary to reduce access to these devices and encourage good sleeping habits near bedtime."

The survey comes after a team from King's College London and Cardiff University reviewed available evidence on connections between child sleep patterns and device use. The academics looked at 20 studies involving more than 125,000 children who had an average age of 14. The researchers found that children and teenagers who use mobile phones and tablets at bedtime are more than twice as likely to be getting too little sleep as those who don't. [7]

Electronic devices are thought to adversely impact sleep through a variety of ways including displacing, delaying or interrupting sleep time - psychologically stimulating the brain and affecting circadian timing, sleep physiology and alertness.

Sleep disturbance in childhood is known to lead to adverse physical and mental health consequences. Short and long-term detrimental health outcomes include poor diet, sedative behaviour, obesity, reduced immunity, stunted growth and mental health issues.

Dr Ben Carter, from Cardiff University's School of Medicine, said:

Our study is the first to consolidate results across existing research and provides further proof of the detrimental effect of media devices. Sleep is an often undervalued but important part of children's development, with a regular lack of sleep causing a variety of health problems.

For further information on the dangers of blue light at night you download this infographic: The Dangers of Blue Light at Night (<https://www.tigermobiles.com/faq/the-dangers-of-blue-light-at-night/>)

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Notes To Editors:

This survey was commissioned by Tiger Mobiles and conducted by polling agency Carter Digby within the United Kingdom between October 18th and October 31st, 2016 among 1635 adults whom have children aged between 5-14 years old. The survey utilised Carter Digby's proprietary omnibus platform. Respondents for the survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Carter Digby Interactive surveys.

1. When asked 'does/do your child(ren) have access to a tablet, smartphone, laptop, games console or e-reader where they sleep and is in use before bed time?' 52% answered 'yes, multiple devices' and 37% answered 'yes, one device'. $52\%+37\% = 89\%$.

2. When asked 'Do you have any concerns about your child(ren) using electronic devices near bed time?'
92% said 'Yes'

3. Parents who answered yes to having concerns were asked 'How worried are you about the following?'

How worried are you about the following?

- Very concerned
- Quite Concerned
- Not Concerned

Using gadgets before bed will increase my child(ren)'s overall screentime.

- 54%
- 18%
- 28%

Using gadgets before bed will expose my child(ren) to inappropriate content

- 69%
- 16%
- 15%

Using gadgets before bed will expose my child(ren) to too much advertising

- 34%
- 28%
- 38%

Using gadgets before bed will negatively affect my child (ren)'s attention span and performance at school

- 64%
- 20%
- 16%

Using gadgets before bed will deprive my child(ren) of sleep and could lead to health complications

- 49%
- 26%
- 25%

Using gadgets before bed will reduce my ability to monitor what my child(ren) is/are looking at

37%

27%

36%

Using gadgets before bed will result in my child(ren) purchasing add-ons without my knowledge

15%

21%

64%

Using gadgets before bed will cause my child(ren) to miss out on other important experiences

17%

15%

68%

Using gadgets before bed will harm my child(ren)'s brain

6%

7%

88%

4. Respondents were asked 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements?'

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Agree

Disagree

Don't Know

I think my child(ren) is/are addicted to their screen

39%

29%

32%

There are educational benefits to having access to a tablet / smartphone / laptop / e-reader

89%

3%

8%

I think my child(ren) spend too much time on looking at a screen

59%

31%

10%

5. Respondents were asked 'Do you think you would benefit from help & advice on how to manage your child(ren)'s screentime?' 89% answered 'Yes'

6. Respondents were asked 'Do you think you would benefit from help & advice on how to use gadgets to support your child(ren)'s learning?' 68% answered 'Yes'.

7. <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2571467>

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