

Social Networking: Recommended Educational Resources

Youth & Digital Technology: Growing Up Online Toolkit

This document provides a collection of resources, including websites, courses, videos, brochures, and academic articles that practitioners may find helpful while supporting children, youth, and families facing challenges around the problematic use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs).

This curated list provides a variety of academic, practical, and policy-oriented resources to help professionals better understand and support children, youth, and families in navigating social networking challenges.

Reports & Guidelines

Social Media and Children's Mental Health. A Review of the Evidence (Emily Frith, June 2017)

This report from the Education Policy Institute in the United Kingdom explores the relationship between the internet, social networking, and young people's mental health.

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/social-media-childrens-mental-health-review-evidence/>

Young Canadians in a Wired World: Trends and Recommendations (MediaSmarts, 2015)

This report from MediaSmarts contains useful information related to networked technologies. It provides a guideline and appropriate policy responses for young people who are experiencing problematic use of SNSs, such as online privacy and publicity issues, harassment, offensive content, and safety.

https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/publication-report/full/ycwwiii_trends_recommendations_fullreport.pdf

WHO Guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep for Children under 5 Years of Age (World Health Organization, 2019)

These guidelines highlight the recommended screen time limits for young children. The recommendations support the development of national plans to increase physical activity, reduce sedentary time and improve sleep in young children.

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311664/9789241550536-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

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American Psychological Association (APA) – Digital Media Use Guidelines

Research-based recommendations on screen time and mental health.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet>

Children and Adolescents and Digital Media [Technical Report] (Reid, Radesky, Christakis, Moreno, Cross, and Council on Communications and Media, November 2016, in Pediatrics)

This report from the American Academy of Pediatrics aims to identify reactions related to digital media and its impact on youth, by exploring the use of media, trends, benefits, risks, and type of use. It includes recommendations for educators and caregivers.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162593>

Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents [Policy Statement] (Council on Communications and Media, 2016, in American Academy of Pediatrics)

This publication focuses on the effects of social media use on children and adolescents 5 through 18 years of age. Researchers found multiple factors impact children's functioning as a result of social media use. The impact depends on the type of media, the type of use, the amount and extent of use, and the features of the child.

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162592>

Social Media and Youth Mental Health (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2025)

This report highlights that children and adolescents who spend more than three hours daily on social media face double the risk of mental health problems, including symptoms of depression and anxiety.

<https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/youth-mental-health/social-media/index.html>

More reports are available on MediaSmarts' website:

<https://mediasmarts.ca/research-and-evaluation/young-canadians-wireless-world>

Articles

Social media: What Parents Should Know (Caring for Kids, February 2018)

This article contains useful information that can be used by health professionals to share with children, youth and their families.

https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/social_media

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Should I Play or Should I Go? (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health [CAMH], no date)

This article offers healthier alternatives for using technology in outdoor settings. This can have a positive effect on mood as it encourages individuals to pay attention to their surroundings while interacting with other people.

<https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/should-i-play-or-should-i-go>

Youth, Family and Interactive Technology (CAMH, 2016)

This material allows parents, caregivers, and service providers to increase awareness and understanding about the problematic use of technology.

<https://camh.ca/-/media/files/youthfamilyinteractive-onlinebrochure-pdf.pdf>

Online Social Networking and Addiction-A Review of the Psychological Literature (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011 in International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health)

This literature review provides an understanding about the emerging phenomenon of addiction to online social networking sites (SNSs) by examining patterns of use, motivations to use, personalities of users, negative consequences to use, exploring potential SNS addiction, and exploring SNS addiction specificity and comorbidity.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3194102/>

Relationship between High School Students' Facebook Addiction and Loneliness Status (Karakose, Yirci, Uygun, & Ozdemir, 2016 in Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science & Technology Education)

This study analyzes the relationship between high school students' Facebook addiction and loneliness levels in a sample of 712 randomly selected students, using two scales called the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) and the Loneliness Scale (UCLA). Results suggest that the Facebook addiction levels of the high school students in the sample were rather low.

<https://www.ejmste.com/article/relationship-between-high-school-students-facebook-addiction-and-loneliness-status-4609>

Are Adolescents Engaged in the Problematic Use of Social Networking Sites More Involved in Peer Aggression and Victimization? (Martínez-Ferrer, Moreno, & Musitu, 2018 in Frontiers in Psychology)

This article analyzes the relationship between problematic use of social networking sites with forms of peer aggression and victimization.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00801/full>

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Teens and Technology (Ottawa Police Service, no date)

This article highlights two of parents' most common concerns, sexting and cyberbullying.
<https://www.parentinginottawa.ca/en/youth/Youth-and-Technology.aspx>

Research trends in social media addiction and problematic social media use: A bibliometric analysis (Pellegrino, Stasi, & Bhatiasavi in Frontiers in Psychology, 2022)

This article examines how habitual social media use may lead to addiction, negatively affecting adolescents' school performance, social behavior, and interpersonal relationships.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36458122/>

Understanding Social Media Addiction: A Deep Dive (Amirthalingam & Khera, 2024 in Cureus)

This study characterizes social media addiction by excessive and compulsive usage that affects daily functioning and overall well-being.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39600781/>

The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Adults: A Systematic Review (Khalaf, Alubied, Khalaf & Rifaey 2023 in Cureus)

This research indicates that smartphone and social media use among teenagers is linked to increased mental distress, self-harming behaviors, and suicidality.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37671234/>

Books

Internet and Social Media Addiction (A.C. Nakaya, Reference Point Press, Incorporated®, 2015)

This book provides information to professionals who want to learn more about internet and social media addiction. The author examines some of the issues parents and teachers face. It also includes a discussion around whether internet and social media use is a real problem, what causes addiction, and treatments to overcome the issue.

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Internet Addiction: A Handbook and Guide to Evaluation and Treatment (Young, K. & Nabuco de Abreu C, 2010)

This book discusses several topics related to internet addiction. The information provided about the treatment of internet addiction may be useful for professionals working with children or students.

<https://www.maryaiken.com/the-cyber-effect>

Digital Madness: How Social Media Is Driving Our Mental Health Crisis—and How to Restore Our Sanity (Dr. Nicholas Kardaras, 2022)

This book explores the link between tech overuse and rising anxiety, depression, and loneliness especially in youth. It blends clinical insights with practical strategies for parents and professionals.

Your Brain on Social Media: A Teen's Guide to Controlling the Scroll (Latasha Holden, 2023)

Targeted toward teens, this book empowers youth with tools to self-regulate and understand the impact of algorithms, FOMO, and digital stress. Great for psychoeducation sessions.

The Social Media Age: Rethinking Digital Technologies in Mental Health (Zoë Boden-Stuart, Steffen Moritz, and Tania Lecomte, 2023)

An academic, clinician-focused book that explores mental health implications, evidence-based interventions, and cultural aspects of social media use.

Screenwise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in Their Digital World (Devorah Heitner . Updated Edition 2023)

Offers a strengths-based, non-punitive approach for educators and parents. Helps adults mentor instead of monitor kids' tech use.

Videos-Documentaries

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) offers a series of videos related to the use of social media, including life stories of people that have been impacted by the problematic use of digital technology.

<http://www.bbc.com/future/columns/likeminded>

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The Center for Internet and Technology Addiction offers videos featuring Dr. David Greenfield, who has been interviewed by different TV networks, sharing important information about digital technology.

<https://virtual-addiction.com/videos-featuring-dr-david-greenfield/>

The Social Dilemma (Documentary, 2020) – Examines the dangers of social media on mental health.

<https://thesocialdilemma.com/>

Courses

The Impact of Social Media on Children and Adolescents – MORE

This four-part course provides an overview of the effects of social media, discussing both risks and benefits, and offers strategies to assist students. This resource offers valuable information for practitioners supporting children, youth, and families in navigating the challenges associated with social networking.

<https://ahsmore.mhcollab.ca/courses/the-impact-of-social-media-on-children-and-adolescents/>

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