

Is Your Child Showing WARNING Signs?

Technology may be a problem for your child. Look for signs of;

- addiction,
- bullying,
- causing anxiety,
- mistakes that have led to contact with disturbing images, ideas or people



You know your child better than anyone. Here are some indicators to be aware of.

These indicators may or may not be linked to technology but **should never be discounted.**

- Increased aggression, particularly straight after using technology
- Frustration, particularly about not being able to use technology
- Preoccupied thoughts of the game they've just played and when they can get on the game again (they talk about the game when not on it)
- Lying about how long they play games
- Avoiding others or isolating themselves in order to use technology
- Tries to conceal what they are doing
 - Passwords they don't share
 - Locked doors
 - Sneaks technology after lights out/technology off times
- Fear to use technology
- Becomes more withdrawn
- Does not want to speak about technology
- Unusual website history
 - Suspect site visits or search words (yes, you can and should check their browsing history regularly)
 - Blank history if they have worked out how to erase the history
- Talks about new online 'friends'

- Uses language that is unusual for their age (swearing, sexual, negative)
- Asks questions about things or topics that seem unusual/unexpected
- Nightmares
- Change in behaviour or demeanour
- Unusual fatigue (may be a sign they are sneaking play time at night)
- Headaches (from poor posture on technology)
- Regularly misses meals to stay on technology

Notice any of these?

Observe your child, and look for opportunities to talk to your child about your observations and suspicions. Do it gently, and look for patterns or changes in behaviour.

Go back to the 'Communication Starters' factsheet in this course. Play detective. Keep it safe and supportive. Your role is to identify the cause of the problem and help your child address it. You need to be their safe place to fall, not their inquisitor or punisher.

Early stages of addiction require swift action.

- Reinforce the rules and boundaries.
- Remove access for some time and find happy diversions.

You are responsible for the solution. The misuse of technology can result in significant damage to your child, potentially setting her/him up for a lifetime of addictive behaviours.

Technology is not a comfortable babysitter. It can swiftly become a lifelong master and steal your child's childhood and future.

