



The impact of online activity on children's emotional well-being

Social media and internet use have become widespread. The average screen time of children aged 6-14 was around 3 hours per day.⁵ Use this guide to explore how online activity can affect your child.

Pros and Cons of online activity



Adolescents use the internet to maintain existing friendships, leading to increased contact with close friends, which has been linked with overall well-being.¹

Social media has given children and adolescents a place to show their creative side and interact with others with similar interests!

A study finds that among 6 to 17 year olds, **daily screen time of 4 hours or more** was associated with **higher risks of anxiety, depression, behaviour or conduct problems, and ADHD.**²

Heavy use of social media can have detrimental effects on children aged 9-12, as it links to depression, anxiety,^{1, 4} loneliness, and low self-esteem.



Online feedback

Teenagers spend a lot of their time on social media sharing photos, stories, and videos as a way to affirm their thoughts, perspectives, and physical appearance. **Research finds that adolescents' self-esteem is impacted by the kind of feedback they receive on their social profiles.**³

Seeking validation on social media can **have benefits**: It can provide opportunities for self-expression, increased self-esteem, and foster a sense of connection and support within the online community.



However, these positive effects are accompanied by **potential downsides**, including social isolation. It's important to recognize that the emotional impact of online validation can be short-lived, and reliance on external approval may make adolescents more vulnerable to negative feedback.³

Overall, **social media use comes with both benefits and drawbacks**. It's important for parents to guide their children to use it in positive ways such as **staying connected with friends, making new ones, and having fun**, while also encouraging **meaningful real-life interactions** and helping them develop **self-confidence beyond online validation**.