

Supporting your child in rediscovering their creativity

Tackling device addiction and digital distractions with
MIOT's Department of Mental Well-Being's personalised approaches.



Do You Find Yourself Increasingly Concerned About Your Child's Screen Time?

It may be a sign that your child is dealing with device addiction. Smartphones and other devices like TVs, tablets, video games etc. have become integral to modern life, yet their extensive presence also makes them highly addictive. Device addiction happens when a child spends so much time on their device that it starts to affect their life and health. Device addiction can be just as damaging as any other addiction, because of its ability to distort one's perception of reality.

Psychological triggers like separation anxiety and the desire for social connectivity keep us and our children constantly engaged and reliant on these devices. The more children become addicted to devices, the less they participate in social engagement.

The trend often begins when parents hand any device like smartphones, TVs, tablets, video games etc. to children as an easy way to keep them calm or entertained. This approach can be problematic, as early exposure to screens may encourage addictive behaviours. Children might grow reliant on instant gratification from their devices, which makes offline activities that require patience and effort less appealing. This reliance on devices for entertainment can also prevent the development of crucial social skills, as children may miss out on valuable interactions with peers and family, potentially impacting their ability to form relationships in the future.



Device Addiction in Children - An Overview

Compulsive overuse of devices releases dopamine in the brain, creating feelings of pleasure and reward. There is a well-established link between device addiction and depression, anxiety, and loneliness. If your children prefer device interactions over real-world connections, there may be an underlying reliance on digital stimulation for emotional fulfillment.

Distinguishing between typical device use and a developing psychological dependency can be challenging. However, several subtle signs may suggest your child's device habits are shifting toward a more concerning pattern.

- Difficulty focusing on responsibilities.
- Increased social withdrawal.
- A persistent grip on their phone.
- Disrupted sleep patterns.
- Neglecting everyday activities.
- Frequent checking of devices like smartphones, TVs, tablets, video games etc.
- Anger outbursts and temper tantrums when asked to hand back the device (mild distress is normal).



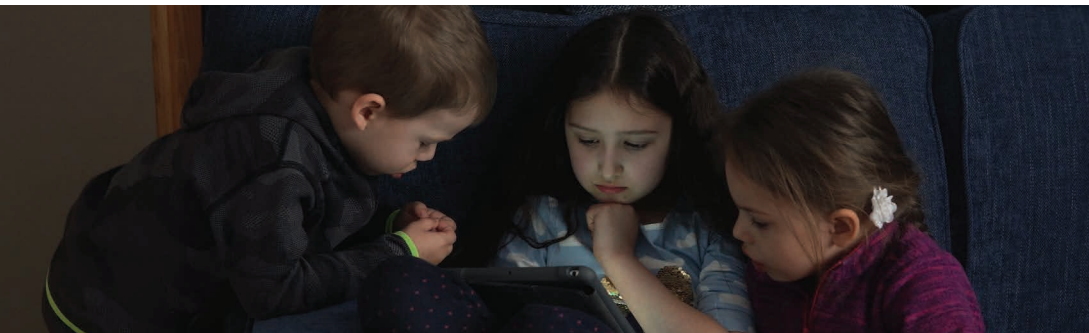
The Importance of Early Intervention

Many studies have shown that routine and frequent usage of smartphones, TVs, tablets, video games etc. can correlate with behavioural problems in children. Early intervention can help prevent the development of behavioural issues associated with excessive device use, such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation. By addressing this issue early, parents can instil healthy digital habits that promote self-regulation and responsible usage. This foundation can help children navigate technology positively as they grow older.

Early intervention can minimise issues that are increasingly prevalent among children who engage in prolonged device use, such as obesity, sleep disturbances, and eye strain. Reducing your children's screen time can lead to better concentration and performance in school. Children who are less distracted by devices like smartphones, TVs, tablets, video games etc. tend to perform better academically and engage more meaningfully in classroom activities. By guiding children on responsible device use, parents can help them develop critical digital literacy skills for navigating online environments safely and effectively.

What Happens if Your Child's Device Addiction Remains Unaddressed?

If your child's device addiction is not addressed, it can have serious consequences for their physical, mental, and social development. They may become more irritable or prone to emotional outbursts when they can't access their phones, showing signs of dependency that harm their emotional well-being. Additionally, constant notifications and digital distractions can lead to attention deficits, making it difficult for them to concentrate on tasks or engage in meaningful learning experiences. Given the many potential consequences of unaddressed device addiction in children, it's crucial to tackle the issue as early as possible.





MIOT International's Role In Tackling Your Child's Device Addiction

Our Department of Mental Well-Being equips your child with practical coping strategies while guiding you and their teachers on effective ways to manage device addiction. The process begins with extensive observations of each child over a significant period. By taking a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach, we address both device addiction and related mental well-being challenges. Collaborative care is emphasised, involving parents, educators, and healthcare providers to create tailored intervention strategies. Our multidisciplinary team includes:

- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Developmental Paediatricians
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Nursing and support staff



The integration of various fields of expertise is to gain a comprehensive understanding of each child. Our dedicated team of professionals offers personalised solutions tailored to the unique needs of each child dealing with device addiction. By utilising evidence-based approaches from around the globe and ensuring cultural appropriateness, we help children develop the coping skills and strategies necessary to manage their technology use effectively.

Guidelines for Healthy Device Use in Children:

- No digital devices like smartphones, TVs, tablets, video games etc. until age 2.
- Limit screen time to 1-2 hours per day.
- Adult monitoring and supervision are crucial to prevent exploitation by individuals posing as children online.
- Regularly engage children in sports, art, music, and other social activities to help them discover alternative enjoyable activities.

