SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING
Working together to keep our young people safe
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A Child's First Phone

According to Ofcom, about a quarter of 5-7 year olds own a smartphone, while by age 11, 91% of children have one. If you're considering getting your child a phone or passing down an old device, here are four crucial questions to think about:

- **Is your child mature and responsible enough?**
  - Evaluate if your child can adhere to screen time guidelines and use the phone appropriately. Have they shown responsibility in other areas like taking care of their belongings?
  - Make sure your child understands the potential risks of smartphone use, such as exposure to inappropriate content and cyberbullying.
- **What are your child's communication needs?**
  - Think about whether your child truly needs a smartphone. If they're occasionally away from you and involved in activities where they need to stay in touch, a smartphone might be helpful, but not always necessary.
  - If it's for educational purposes, consider whether they should have their own phone or if it could be a family device.
- **What safety features does the device offer?**
  - Activate parental controls before handing it over to them to limit access to unsuitable content.
  - Explore apps on your phone to monitor their usage.
  - Research the device to understand the available safety features.
- **What boundaries should be set to ensure your child's safety when using a smartphone?**
  - Establish clear rules regarding phone usage, including when and how it can be used, permitted apps and guidelines for communication with others.
  - Discuss consequences for not following the boundaries and model healthy smartphone habits yourself to set a positive example for your child.

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- Better sleep routines
- App focus: Snapchat

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SETTING BOUNDARIES WHEN GIVING YOUR CHILD THEIR FIRST PHONE:

1. Parental access:
- Passwords shared
- Regular checking of social media and messaging services
- Approval of apps before download

2. Phone-free time:
- Daily limits
- Phone-free activities
- Designated time set aside for phone use, then returned to a central place when not in use

3. Phone-free areas:
- Phones are not to be taken into bedrooms or bathrooms
- Phones turned off and stored in a central place (for charging), 30 minutes before bed

4. Conduct:
- Respect and kindness shown whilst using the phone
- Open dialogue and no secrecy about what it is been used for

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10 WAYS TO IMPROVE SLEEP FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Consistent bedtime
Aim to put your child to bed at a similar time every night.

Sleep - friendly environment
Create a quiet, cool, dark room with as little distractions as possible.

Limit screen time
Avoid all types of screens for at least 30 minutes before bed. Swap for a calm activity.

Encourage physical activity
Encouraging physical activity can tire them out, aiding in better sleep.

Diet and nutrition
Avoid sugary, rich and heavy foods in the evening as these can disrupt sleep.

Address anxieties
If your child has fears about bedtime, spend time reassuring them.

Be mindful of naps
Avoid naps, especially in the afternoon and evening.

Teach self-soothing
Teach them to fall to sleep and get back to sleep by themselves.

Calm routine
Create a calm routine before bed which. includes activties such as reading, colouring or gentle play.

Model good sleep habits
Let your children see you prioritising sleep and maintain a consistent routine.

The Significance of Sleep

For children, sleep plays a crucial role due to the significant changes happening in their bodies and minds. Here are some key reasons highlighting the importance of sleep:

- Physical growth and development: Sleep triggers the release of growth hormones necessary for physical growth.
- Brain development: Quality sleep is essential for brain development, especially in areas related to decision-making, impulse control and emotional regulation.
- Emotional well-being: Sleep aids in emotional regulation, stress reduction and is closely linked to mental health.

Ensuring that children get enough quality sleep is essential for their growth, learning and overall well-being. The National Sleep Foundation recommends that children aged 5-12 get 9-11 hours of sleep a night.

Barriers to good sleep

There are many reasons that children don't get good quality sleep. Some of these are:

- Irregular sleep schedules, especially on weekends., can disrupt a child's sleep routine.
- Use of electronic devices late into the night can be a significant barrier to a good night sleep.
- A noisy or brightly lit room can make it difficult for children to fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Consuming caffeinated or sugary foods and drinks, especially in the evening can impact on a child's ability to fall asleep.
- Children might underestimate the importance of sleep, leading to a reluctance to create good sleep habits.

Snapchat: A leading social media platform for kids

Despite the minimum age requirement of 13, many younger children sign up for Snapchat as there is no age verification process.
Here are some safety tips for parents and carers of children who use the app.

KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ON SNAPCHAT

Restrict who can see them
Go to the settings menu, under 'Who can...' adjust 'Contact me' and 'View My Story' to 'My Friends'. This prevents strangers from send messages or viewing their content.

Privacy

Discuss the risks
Teach children not to share personal details, locations, photos. Talk to them about why strangers contacting them through the app and to be vigilant.

Educate

Regularly review
Check who their friends are to ensure they are trusted connections. Ensure privacy settings remain secure as Snapchat updates the app.

Monitor

Snapchat Family Centre
This tool allows parents to see who their child is communicating with. However, it doesn't allow parents to see the content of messages.

Tools

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