

# Is your child showing WARNING signs?

## Addiction indicators in young children

You know your child better than anyone.

Here are some indicators to be aware of.

Your child's experience on technology generally starts to manifest in your physical world.

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
- Anxiety
- Fear to use technology
- Becomes more withdrawn
- Does not want to speak about technology
- Tries to conceal what they are doing
  - Passwords they don't share
  - Locked doors
  - Sneaks technology after lights out/technology off times
- 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)
- Asking questions about things or topics that seem unusual/unexpected
- Nightmares
- Change in behaviour or demeanour

*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. 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 requires swift action.

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

You are responsible for the solution and correcting this terrible problem quickly, before it does significant damage to your child, potentially setting her/him for a lifetime of addictive behaviours.

The World Health Organisation provides information in relation to gaming disorder.

The eSafety Commission provides valuable information on recommended screen time.

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