

# Impact of Social Media on Children Under the Age of 10

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## ABSTRACT

*The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has led to widespread use among diverse demographics, including children under the age of 10. This review paper examines the multifaceted impact of social media on children in this age group, focusing on psychological, social, cognitive, and physical effects. By synthesizing current research, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of both the benefits and drawbacks of social media exposure for young children. Key areas of exploration include developmental implications, behavioral changes, educational potential, and safety concerns. Psychologically, while social media can enhance creativity and self-expression, it also exposes children to idealized images that can lead to anxiety, depression, and body image issues. Socially, social media can facilitate connections and a sense of community, but it may also result in reduced face-to-face interaction skills and feelings of isolation due to "fear of missing out" (FOMO). Cognitively, excessive screen time can hinder attention spans and academic performance, although educational content can promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Physically, increased social media use is linked to sedentary lifestyles and related health issues, though some platforms encourage physical activity through interactive challenges. This review concludes with recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers. Parents should set screen time limits, monitor content, and maintain open communication about online experiences. Educators need to integrate digital literacy into curricula to promote responsible social media use. Policymakers should develop guidelines to protect young children's well-being. Overall, a balanced approach involving vigilant parental guidance, educational support, and policy interventions is crucial to harness the positive aspects of social media while minimizing its risks.*

**Keywords:** - Social media, Children, Parental guidelines, Policies

## I INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media has revolutionized communication, entertainment, and information dissemination, reaching all age groups, including children under the age of 10. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are now part of their daily lives, providing both opportunities and challenges. This early exposure to social media raises significant questions about its impact on their development and well-being. Concerns range from psychological effects, such as anxiety and self-esteem issues, to cognitive impacts, including attention span and learning abilities. Social interactions are also affected, with potential changes in social skills and face-to-face communication. Furthermore, physical health concerns arise due to increased sitting behavior. This paper aims to critically evaluate existing literature on the topic, providing a nuanced analysis of how social media affects children under 10 years old. By examining both the benefits and potential drawbacks, the paper seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the developmental, behavioral, educational, and safety implications of social media use in young children. This analysis will inform recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to ensure the positive aspects of social media are maximized while mitigating adverse effects.

## II DEVELOPMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Cognitive Development** - Research indicates that excessive screen time, including social media use, can hinder cognitive development in young children. Studies show a correlation between high screen exposure and reduced attention spans, impaired language development, and lower academic performance. These issues arise as children spend more time on screens and less on activities that promote cognitive growth. Conversely, when used appropriately, interactive and educational content can foster cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. Educational apps and videos can provide engaging ways to learn new concepts, highlighting the potential benefits of balanced screen time (1-3).
- (b) **Emotional and Psychological Development** - Social media can significantly impact the emotional and psychological development of children. On the positive side, it can enhance creativity by providing platforms for children to express themselves through videos, art, and storytelling, and it can also facilitate social connections by allowing them to interact with peers and form supportive online communities (4). However, the negative impacts are substantial and well-documented. Constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles can lead to increased anxiety,

depression, and reduced self-esteem, as children may feel inadequate by comparison (5). Additionally, the potential for cyberbullying poses a serious threat, causing emotional distress and long-term psychological harm. These factors underscore the need for careful management of children's social media use to protect their emotional and psychological well-being.

### III BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

- (a) Social Behavior** - Social media exerts a significant influence on children's social behaviors, shaping their perceptions of norms and expectations. While some children may develop enhanced social skills and empathy through positive online interactions, others may exhibit antisocial behaviors and a decline in face-to-face communication skills. Platforms like YouTube and TikTok provide opportunities for children to engage with diverse communities and cultures, fostering empathy and understanding (6). However, excessive screen time and reliance on digital communication channels can lead to reduced face-to-face interactions, potentially hindering the development of crucial social skills (7). As children increasingly emulate behaviors observed on social media, it becomes essential for parents and educators to encourage healthy online interactions while also emphasizing the importance of real-world communication and empathy-building activities to ensure balanced social development.
- (b) Physical Activity and Health** - Increased social media use correlates with sedentary lifestyles, leading to various physical health issues, including obesity and sleep disturbances (8). However, there are positive aspects, as certain platforms actively encourage physical activity through interactive content and challenges. For instance, fitness challenges on platforms like Instagram and YouTube promote exercise and healthy living, potentially offsetting some of the negative effects associated with excessive screen time. These initiatives demonstrate the potential of social media to promote positive health behaviors and mitigate the adverse consequences of sedentary behavior.

### IV EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL

- (a) Learning Opportunities**- Social media offers extensive educational resources and interactive learning opportunities, particularly through platforms like YouTube, which host a plethora of educational videos covering various subjects and topics (9). These

resources can significantly enrich children's learning experiences by providing engaging and accessible content outside traditional classroom settings. However, the quality and accuracy of educational content on social media platforms can vary widely, ranging from well-researched and informative videos to misleading or inaccurate information. Therefore, it is imperative for parents and educators to take an active role in curating content and guiding children towards reliable sources. By encouraging critical thinking and digital literacy skills, caregivers can help children navigate the vast landscape of online educational resources and maximize the benefits of social media for learning purposes while mitigating potential risks associated with misinformation.

- (b) Digital Literacy** - Early exposure to social media plays a vital role in cultivating digital literacy skills necessary for children's future academic and professional endeavors. By engaging with online platforms under guidance, children learn essential skills such as discerning online safety practices, critically evaluating information authenticity, and mastering effective digital communication techniques (10). These competencies are increasingly indispensable in navigating the digital landscape and preparing children for success in an ever-evolving technological society. Therefore, supervised exposure to social media can serve as a valuable educational tool in equipping children with the digital literacy skills crucial for their future endeavors.

### V SAFETY CONCERNS

- (a) Privacy and Security** - Children's engagement with social media platforms presents notable privacy and security challenges. The vulnerability of personal data and the potential exposure to inappropriate content pose significant risks (11). Children's online activities may inadvertently expose sensitive information, making them susceptible to privacy breaches or even exploitation by malicious entities. To mitigate these risks, it is imperative for parents and guardians to implement effective parental controls, including monitoring and restricting access to certain content or features. Moreover, educating children about safe internet practices, such as avoiding sharing personal information online and recognizing potential threats like phishing scams or cyberbullying, is essential. By empowering children with the knowledge and tools to navigate the digital realm safely, caregivers can help safeguard their privacy and protect them from potential online threats, fostering a secure and positive online experience.

**(b) Cyberbullying** - Cyberbullying persists as a pervasive issue, exerting significant psychological tolls on young children. The anonymity and ubiquity of online platforms amplify the harmful effects of bullying behaviors, leading to increased feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression among victims (12). Proactive measures are crucial to safeguarding children from the detrimental impacts of cyberbullying. Awareness programs aimed at educating children, parents, and educators about the signs of cyberbullying and appropriate responses can help mitigate its prevalence. Additionally, establishing robust support systems, including counseling services and reporting mechanisms, enables swift intervention and support for victims. By implementing proactive measures, society can create a safer online environment for children, fostering their emotional well-being and resilience in the face of cyberbullying incidents.

## VI PARENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

- (a) Role of Parents** - Parents serve as pivotal mediators in managing their children's social media engagement. Implementing screen time limits, actively monitoring the content accessed, and promoting diversified activities are essential strategies in navigating children's online experiences (13). By setting clear boundaries and guidelines, parents can regulate the amount and nature of their children's digital interactions, fostering a healthy balance between online and offline activities. Moreover, maintaining open lines of communication about online experiences enables parents to stay informed about their children's digital interactions, identify potential risks, and address any concerns promptly. By actively engaging with their children in discussions about online safety, privacy, and responsible digital citizenship, parents empower their children to make informed decisions and navigate the digital landscape confidently. This proactive involvement not only mitigates the negative impacts of excessive social media use but also fosters a supportive and secure online environment for children.
- (b) Educational Policies** - Schools and educational institutions hold a crucial role in fostering digital literacy among students by integrating it into their curricula. By incorporating lessons on responsible social media use and online safety, educators equip students with the necessary skills to navigate digital platforms confidently and responsibly (10). Moreover, fostering collaboration between educators and parents

facilitates a holistic approach to supporting children in navigating social media safely. By working together, schools and parents can create a supportive environment where children receive consistent guidance and education on using social media responsibly, thereby promoting their overall digital well-being.

## VII CONCLUSION

The impact of social media on children under the age of 10 is indeed complex and multifaceted. On one hand, social media platforms offer a wealth of educational resources and interactive learning opportunities that can enhance children's cognitive development and expand their knowledge base. Through platforms like YouTube and educational apps, children can access a wide range of content spanning various subjects, from science and history to language and arts. Furthermore, social media facilitates social connectivity, allowing children to interact with peers, family members, and educators in virtual spaces. This connectivity can foster a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for collaborative learning and creative expression. However, alongside these benefits, social media also presents significant risks and challenges for young children. Psychologically, exposure to social media can lead to issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, particularly when children are exposed to unrealistic beauty standards or experience cyberbullying. The constant comparison with curated and idealized online personas can distort children's perceptions of reality and contribute to negative body image issues. Socially, excessive social media use may impede the development of interpersonal skills and lead to social isolation or reliance on digital communication at the expense of face-to-face interactions. Moreover, the anonymity and distance afforded by online platforms can facilitate cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content, posing significant risks to children's emotional well-being and safety. Additionally, increased screen time associated with social media use can contribute to sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and sleep disturbances, highlighting the importance of promoting healthy screen habits and physical activity. In response to these challenges, a balanced approach is essential. Vigilant parental guidance is crucial in monitoring children's social media use, setting appropriate boundaries, and facilitating open communication about online experiences. Educational support is also vital, with schools and educators integrating digital literacy into curricula to equip children with the skills to navigate social media responsibly and critically evaluate online content. Furthermore, policy interventions are necessary to address broader societal issues such as online safety, data privacy,

and digital access. By adopting a comprehensive approach that combines parental vigilance, educational initiatives, and policy interventions, society can maximize the benefits of social media for young children while mitigating its potential risks and promoting their overall well-being and development.

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