

A Few Tips to Teach Our Children on How to Enslave Their Smartphones

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Smartphone is one of the most powerful inventions of the 21st century which can immensely benefit humanity if used wisely. Its misuse, on the other hand, has a tendency to enslave you. If the last thing you see before going to bed is your smartphone, and the first thing you do after getting up is to scan your smartphone for emails or important news, you might already be its victim. Think about your children! There are many more attractions for them on smartphone than email or news items. The most popular stops for children and teens on smartphones are YouTube and social media e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. If not sensibly guided, the excessive and unnecessary use of smartphones could pose a serious threat to your children's physical, moral, and spiritual health.

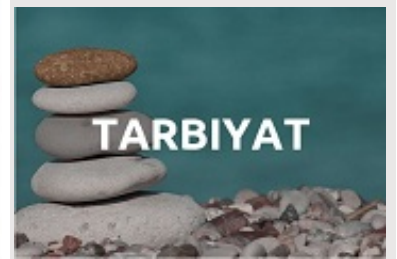


It is perhaps the best if you could resist getting your children a smartphone until they are in high school. Once you decide to get your children a smartphone, the next challenge is to teach them its healthy and responsible use. This will prepare them to go to college with their smartphones acting as powerful slaves nicely kept in their pockets as opposed to demanding masters stuck to the palms of their hands.

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After talking to many involved parents, I have sensed that there is a continuous struggle by many fathers like myself who have growing teens at home to find a magical formula to teach their children to cherry pick smartphone's benefits while shunning away its harms. There is no doubt that as a father, your prayers for your children can do the magic as long as you lead by example showing them healthy and prudent use of your own device within proper limitations. A few simple and

implementable limitations to promote balanced use of a smartphone are suggested below:

1. **Reward for excellence and hard work:** You do not have to get your children a smartphone just because all of their friends have it. Instead, make it a rewarding experience for them when they meet or exceed certain standards either in schoolwork or Jama'at activities. For example, you can get your child a smartphone on getting straight As in 9th or 10th grade and/or upon memorizing certain chapters of the Holy Qur'an.
2. **No smartphones at dinner table:** This simple rule will not only help you consume less calories but also provide you an opportunity to have a loving conversation with your children to develop a valuable bond with each other.
3. **Smartphones stay out of bedroom:** Screen time before bedtime has been shown to influence sleep patterns and lead to less sleep and increased behavior problems. Besides, your children need a good night sleep to get up for Fajr and concentrate on school work.
4. **No secret smartphone passcodes or passwords:** This policy will not only make it easy for everyone at home to stay open and honest but will also help strengthen family bonding by providing opportunities to discuss with each other their unique and healthy ways to benefit from their smartphones.
5. **Limit time for casual smartphone use:** You should impose a time limit for children's casual and exploratory use of smartphones especially in the beginning when they get their first smartphones. Usually, homework does not leave more than an hour during weekdays, and if more than two hours are spent playing with smartphone on weekends, it leaves little time for more creative and useful activities.

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First 111

The names of the first 111 members who said Labbaik to the call of Sadr Majlis to register for Ijtima 1111 were sent to Huzoor (may Allah be his helper) for prayers. The names of these first Labbaik-sayers are presented in the following (thanks to many of the Ansar National Amila members and Ijtima organizers who were among the first 111 registrants but are not included in this list for obvious reasons.)

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