# Parents spend 96 hours a year arguing over children’s screen time amid rising addiction fears



Parents today find themselves engrossed in an exhausting battle over screen time, spending an estimated 96 hours each year arguing with their children about their use of devices. This alarming statistic, revealed by a recent survey of 2,000 parents of children in kindergarten through fifth grade, underscores the strain modern technology places on familial relationships. As screens become more embedded in daily life, these conflicts are not merely routine disagreements but are symptomatic of deeper concerns about the implications of screen addiction on childhood and family dynamics.

The survey, conducted by Talker Research for AngelQ—an age-appropriate browser for kids—uncovered significant worries among parents regarding their children's online activities. Nearly two-thirds express anxiety about losing valuable moments with their children to screen addiction. In conjunction, 41% of parents fear technology is robbing their kids of their childhood altogether. Concerns primarily centre around exposure to online predators, inappropriate content, and the overarching spectre of screen addiction, with significant numbers also worried about cyberbullying and adverse impacts on mental health.

Furthermore, parents identify profound developmental concerns linked to excessive screen time. Approximately 61% believe that important aspects of childhood, such as social skills and empathy, are being sacrificed to the allure of screens. This echoes broader findings, with nearly 70% of parents reporting that screens distract from family time and regularly spark disputes—data corroborated by multiple research efforts, illustrating a common struggle across different demographics.

The impacts of screen-induced conflicts manifest in various detrimental side effects on children's behaviour. Irritability, mood swings, and tantrums are common reactions among children subjected to excessive screen time, signaling potential underlying issues that might extend beyond mere disobedience. Some parents have noted changes in their children’s attention spans, which result in difficulties engaging in offline activities such as homework, while others report heightened anxiety levels.

Interestingly, the findings also reveal a complex power dynamic in parent-child relationships. Nearly 65% of parents admit to surrendering when their children resist turning off devices, a trend most pronounced among Gen Z parents. This response tends to reinforce screen-dependent behaviours, thereby potentially diminishing parental authority and complicating family interactions. Conflicts typically arise during pivotal family moments, particularly around dinner time, revealing a disturbing trend where cherished bonding experiences are overshadowed by digital distractions.

Despite the challenges, parents acknowledge some positive facets of screen time. Many value the opportunities for children to explore interests and access educational content. Over half of parents express a desire for balanced technology use, believing it can enhance their children’s learning and social awareness rather than detract from it. As Tim Estes, CEO of AngelQ, articulated, “Technology should educate and empower, not distract and divide families,” advocating for a reimagining of technology's role in childhood development.

Given these findings, many parents regret introducing screen devices too soon, with 52% wishing they had delayed this decision. This sentiment is particularly strong among younger parents, who cite their own experiences with technology as influencers in their approach to parenting, with approximately 34% noting an impact on their parenting style.

As families navigate the complexities of balancing screen time with upbringing, it becomes increasingly clear that an informed approach is essential. While screens are not inherently detrimental, the current landscape of digital engagement poses significant risks. Establishing boundaries around screen use, encouraging parental engagement, and nurturing an environment conducive to healthy interactions are vital steps in reclaiming family time from the clutches of technology. The journey may be fraught with resistance, but the imperative to prioritise meaningful connections over screens remains a pressing goal for many households today.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
2. Paragraph 3
3. Paragraph 3
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5. Paragraph 2
6. Paragraph 7
7. Paragraph 4

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://nypost.com/2025/05/14/lifestyle/how-long-do-parents-spend-fighting-with-their-kids-over-screen-time/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.qustodio.com/en/research/family-survey-screen-time/> - A Qustodio survey reveals that nearly 70% of parents report screens sometimes or frequently distract them from family time, with 49% of households experiencing weekly or daily arguments over screen time. The study highlights the challenges parents face in managing their children's technology use and the impact on family dynamics.
3. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/03/11/how-teens-and-parents-approach-screen-time/> - A Pew Research Center survey indicates that 38% of parents and 38% of teens argue about phone use, with 10% in each group reporting frequent disagreements. Additionally, 46% of teens say their parent is at least sometimes distracted by their phone when trying to talk to them, highlighting the impact of screen time on parent-child interactions.
4. <https://parents-together.org/new-study-one-year-into-the-pandemic-82-of-parents-are-concerned-about-their-kids-screen-time-2/> - A ParentsTogether survey reveals that 82% of parents are concerned about their children's online screen time, with 43% reporting that excessive device use has caused family conflicts. The study also links increased screen time to declining mental health in children, emphasizing the need for balanced technology use.
5. <https://www.valuepenguin.com/kids-screen-time-survey> - A ValuePenguin survey shows that 85% of parents monitor their children's screen time, with 39% desiring further restrictions. The study also highlights that 37% of parents admit screen time has caused family disagreements, and 23% suspect their child's mental health issues are linked to device use.
6. <https://www.kidsmentalhealthfoundation.org/about/media-center/2023-2025-news-releases/classroom-connections> - A Kids Mental Health Foundation poll finds that 50% of parents believe excessive technology use hinders children from forming meaningful classroom connections. The survey identifies challenges such as too much screen time, bullying, and the social impact of the pandemic affecting children's ability to connect with peers and teachers.
7. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/07/28/parenting-children-in-the-age-of-screens/> - A Pew Research Center study reveals that 71% of parents of children under 12 are concerned about their child spending too much time in front of screens. The study also highlights that 68% of parents report being distracted by their smartphones when spending time with their children, indicating the pervasive impact of screen time on family interactions.