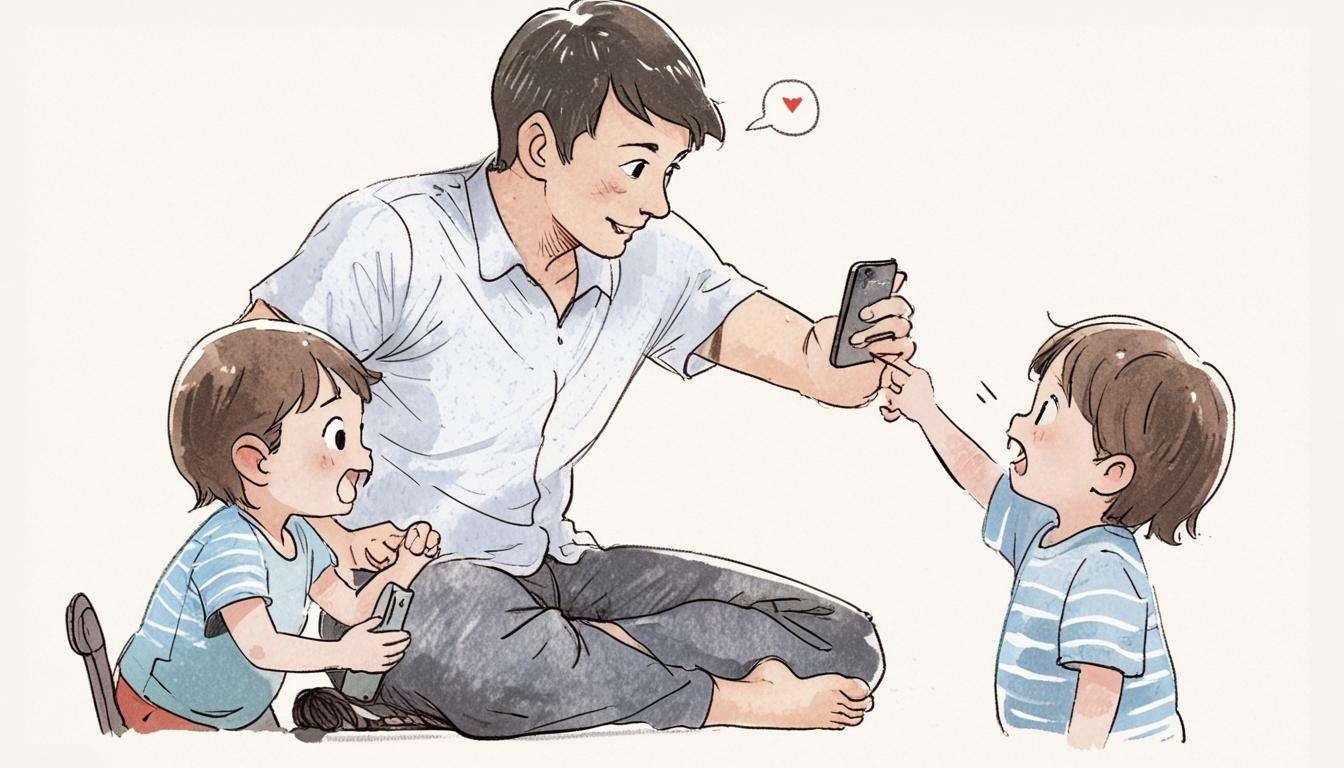
# Parental technology use linked to impaired development in children under five



A recent study has highlighted the detrimental effects of parental technology use on young children's development, particularly focusing on children under five years old. Conducted by researchers at the University of Wollongong in Australia, the study underscores the concept of "technoference," defined as the interference of technology in interpersonal relationships, especially within families.

The researchers synthesised data from 21 previous studies, analysing responses from approximately 14,900 parents worldwide who have children aged between 0 and 4.9 years. Their findings indicate that parental technology use in a child's presence significantly correlates with several adverse outcomes for the child, including impaired cognition and prosocial behaviour, lower emotional attachment, and increased behavioural problems. The report, published on May 5, warns of the potential negative impact on children's health and development, stating, “Parental technology use in their child’s presence was significantly associated with poorer cognition and prosocial behaviour, lower attachment, higher levels of internalising and externalising problems, and higher levels of screen time.”

The study posits that when parents frequently distract themselves with digital devices—be it through social media or other online activities—the interactions between parent and child are disrupted. This interruption can foster feelings of neglect in children, as they may perceive a need to compete for their parents' attention. The clinicians involved noted, “Such intrusions may disrupt the natural flow of interactions, which is particularly important as young children are acquiring critical social and language skills.”

Importantly, the implications of these findings not only pertain to cognitive and social skills but also extend to physical activity and sleep patterns among children. The research highlights the idea that persistent distractions from technological devices could lead children to misinterpret their parents' behaviours, further complicating the child-parent dynamic.

These findings resonate with previous investigations into technoference, which suggest that excessive screen use by parents can adversely affect children's language development. Tiia Tulviste, a lead author of another study from the University of Tartu, commented on the significance of face-to-face interactions, stating, “While reading e-books and playing some educational games may offer language learning opportunities, during the first years of life, the most influential factor is everyday dyadic face-to-face parent-child verbal interaction.”

As parents and caregivers navigate the complexities of modern technology, the research presents a compelling consideration of the potential ramifications on the crucial early years of child development, reinforcing the importance of meaningful engagement over screen time.

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

## Bibliography

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