# Clare Morell calls for radical tech exit to protect children from 'digital fentanyl'



Clare Morell, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, has recently released a thought-provoking book titled *The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones*. Launched on June 3, 2025, the book emerges from an urgent concern regarding the detrimental impact of digital technology on childhood. Morell's motivations stem from continuous inquiries from parents seeking actionable steps to shield their children in an increasingly digital world.

In her discussions, notably with cultural commentator Emily Jashinsky, Morell critiques the prevalent moderation strategies regarding screen time. She argues that these measures largely miss the mark, as they do not address the destructive nature of screens themselves, which she fittingly classifies as "digital fentanyl." This analogy underscores her belief that the real issue lies not in how much time children spend on their devices, but in the very nature of the devices themselves. Morell asserts that screens are “inherently harmful,” suggesting that merely moderating access does little to mitigate the potentially severe developmental and mental health risks associated with their use.

Morell's perspective complements a growing body of work highlighting the urgent need for a more holistic approach to children's interactions with technology. For instance, her call for a comprehensive "tech exit" aligns well with broader discourse sparked by works like Jonathan Haidt’s *The Anxious Generation*, which has gained significant traction in public discussions surrounding children's mental health and technology. Parents, Morell insists, should aim not merely to reduce screen time but to radically rethink their children’s engagement with technology. This approach mandates removing devices entirely for a set period, ideally replacing them with enriching activities like outdoor play to facilitate natural creativity and joy—the very essence of childhood that many fear is being lost.

Moreover, discussions surrounding children’s tech use have triggered bipartisan responses and policy reforms at various educational and governmental levels. More schools are now adopting phone-free environments, with state governments increasingly addressing the consequences of unchecked digital consumption. As societal awareness grows, Morell's book is poised to play a pivotal role in this critical conversation, offering not only policy suggestions but concrete steps parents can take to reclaim their children’s childhood from the gripping hold of screens.

In advocating for a detox period, Morell expresses a belief in the brain’s capacity for recovery. She argues that, despite the severe impacts of technology addiction, a structured break from screens can set children on pathways toward mental and emotional rejuvenation. This perspective offers a hopeful counter-narrative to current fear-based discourses surrounding tech usage, illuminating a path that prioritises outdoor experiences and human connection over digital interactions.

Overall, Morell's *The Tech Exit* aims to serve as a clarion call for both parents and policymakers—urging them to take robust action against the pervasive influence of digital technology in children’s lives. As the landscape of digital technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, the stakes for the younger generation remain high, making such interventions critical not just for individual families but for society at large.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://mindmatters.ai/2025/06/clare-morell-advocates-for-a-phone-free-childhood/), [[4]](https://www.ncregister.com/interview/generational-crisis-fighting-for-families-in-the-digital-age)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://mindmatters.ai/2025/06/clare-morell-advocates-for-a-phone-free-childhood/), [[2]](https://mindmatters.ai/2025/06/clare-morell-advocates-for-a-phone-free-childhood/), [[5]](https://www.mcnallyrobinson.com/9780593736296/clare-morell/tech-exit)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-tech-exit-clare-morell/1146289440), [[6]](https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2018/10/23/32-kilograms-fentanyl-worth-288-million-seized-and-two-dominican)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://mindmatters.ai/2025/06/clare-morell-advocates-for-a-phone-free-childhood/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://mindmatters.ai/2025/06/clare-morell-advocates-for-a-phone-free-childhood/> - Clare Morell, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, has authored 'The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones', released on June 3, 2025. In an interview with Emily Jashinsky, Morell discusses her motivations for writing the book, highlighting the need for concrete steps parents can take to protect their children from the harms of digital technology. She critiques current moderation approaches to screen time, advocating instead for a comprehensive 'tech exit' strategy to safeguard children's well-being.
3. <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-tech-exit-clare-morell/1146289440> - Clare Morell's forthcoming book, 'The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones', is set for release on June 3, 2025. The book offers a roadmap for parents to help their children break free from the detrimental effects of digital technology, aiming to reclaim the true essence of childhood. Morell argues that current strategies like parental controls and screen-time limits are insufficient, proposing a more effective approach to protect children from the harms of digital technology.
4. <https://www.ncregister.com/interview/generational-crisis-fighting-for-families-in-the-digital-age> - In an interview with the National Catholic Register, Clare Morell discusses her upcoming book, 'The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones'. She explains that the book provides a practical roadmap for families to free their children from the harms of digital technology and to recover the beauty and true purpose of childhood. Morell emphasizes that current strategies like parental controls and screen-time limits are not working, and advocates for a more effective approach to protect children from digital harms.
5. <https://www.mcnallyrobinson.com/9780593736296/clare-morell/tech-exit> - Clare Morell's book, 'The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones', is scheduled for release on June 3, 2025. The book aims to help parents free their children from the harms of digital technology and reclaim the true essence of childhood. Morell argues that current strategies like parental controls and screen-time limits are insufficient, proposing a more effective approach to protect children from the detrimental effects of digital technology.
6. <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2018/10/23/32-kilograms-fentanyl-worth-288-million-seized-and-two-dominican> - In October 2018, the DEA seized approximately 32 kilograms of fentanyl, valued at $28.8 million, and arrested two Dominican nationals for trafficking. This significant seizure highlights the potency and danger of fentanyl, underscoring the need for effective measures to combat its distribution. The operation involved multiple law enforcement agencies and resulted in the confiscation of a substantial quantity of the drug, demonstrating the ongoing efforts to address the opioid crisis.
7. <https://www.conservativereview.com/tag/clare-morell> - Clare Morell, director of the Technology and Human Flourishing Project for the Ethics and Public Policy Center, discusses the dangers of smartphones and social media for children. She argues that current strategies like screen-time limits and parental controls are insufficient, as these technologies are inherently addictive. Morell advocates for a comprehensive 'tech exit' approach, encouraging families to opt out of digital technologies to protect children from the harms associated with excessive screen time.