SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

SMARTPHONES: KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

1. Smartphones and social media are the **biggest** contributing factors to poor mental health in children and the major cause of the mental illness epidemic.
2. Evidence shows that ages 10-13 is **the most dangerous time** for children when it comes to social media.
3. Algorithms are designed to push children and teenagers into rabbit holes of **toxic & harmful content**, features like 'infinite scroll' and persistent alerts hook young users.
4. Excessive screen time is known to **alter the brain**, increase the risk of mental disorders, impair acquisition of memories and learning which are known risk factors for dementia.
5. MRI scans of young children have shown screen time **reduces the size of brain areas** responsible for visual processing, empathy, attention, memory & early reading skills.
6. Night-time addiction is greatly **impacting** children's sleep.
7. **90%** of girls and **50%** of boys say they have been sent explicit pictures or videos they don't want to see.
8. Boys **as young as 13** have been targeted for sextortion scams.
9. **80%** of teenage girls are being put under pressure to provide sexual images of themselves.
10. A global study of the first generation of children to be given smart phones, who are now adults found that the younger they got given their first smartphone, **the worst their mental health is today.**

There are plenty of alternative brick phones available to buy which enable a child to call, message and listen to music. Air tags are also relatively cheap and easy to use to track your child's location.

SOURCES: Not all screen time is created equal: associations with mental health vary by activity and gender, Twenge & Eric Farley, August 2020 / Cecilia Kang & Natasha Singer /NY Times: Meta Accused by States of Using Features to Lure Children to Instagram and Facebook, April 2019/ JAMA: Association Between Portable Screen Based Media Device Access or Use and Sleep Outcomes, 2016/IMR Press, National Library of Medicine Digital dementia in the internet generation: excessive screen..., January 2022/ Screen Usage Linked to Differences in Brain Structure in Young Children, November 2022 Young People, Pornography and Age Verification, British Board of Film Classification, March 2022/Review of sexual abuse in schools.../ Ofsted Report, June 2021 / Boys Targeted in Sextortion Scams, Police Scotland Report, 2023/ Parent Like a Tech Exec, Brooke Shannon & Dr. Richard Freed, April 2019