

Do they really need all those gadgets?

The video above, with English kids talking about how their parents use their electronic devices, is either hilarious or terrifying, depending on your point of view.

Based on these conversations, market researchers for [Start-rite](#), a British company which sells stylish shoes for children, reached some startling conclusions about how youngsters used their mobile phones, tablets and computers. [It's not a rigorous study](#), but surely there must be more than a grain of truth in it.

- Do Mum and Dad set a good example? Happily, 64% say that their parents do not spend “too much time” on their gadgets – although we are in the dark about what “too much time” might be. Unhappily, 34% do think that Mum and Dad spend too much time.
- Children between 7 and 11 overwhelmingly own electronic devices (93%), including 69% who have a tablet computer and 59% a games console. Only 42% own a laptop and only 38% a mobile phone.
- The older they are, the more devices they own. Seven and 8-year olds own 1.6 devices, but by the time they are 9, 10 or 11, they already have 2.5.
- Surprisingly, 62% of 7 to 11-year-olds don't own a mobile phone, but most of them think that they will have one by the time they turn 13.
- How about rules? Nearly half (45%) of children who own devices say that there are no time limits at home – and another 9% say that the rules are not enforced. Half say that their parents are likely to confiscate devices as a punishment.
- More than half of the children interviewed spend at

least 2 hours a day on their gadgets – but 21% said that they spend more than 4 hours daily.

- Why do kids need tablets anyway? *To do their homework, of course!* Well, that's the official story. We all know what the real story is. According to the survey, 59% spend most of their time on games and apps and watching videos. Only 9% – probably nerdy types with horn-rimmed spectacles – spend most of their time doing homework.
- Is hanging out with a tablet kids' idea of fun? No. Only 9% are looking forward to holidays so that they can spend more time with their devices. About 24% want to spend more time with family; 20% want to run around outdoors; and 15% want to hang out with friends.
- Are 7 to 11-year-olds using Facebook? It may disappoint the sterner critics of devices to learn that only 11% of them have a Facebook profile. On the other hand, 29% want one, and 96% know what Facebook is. As a brand, Facebook is gold.

What's the take-away? Perhaps that parents need to detox from their devices first, before complaining about how involved their children are. Children would prefer to spend their time with family and friends. But if Mum is busy posting on Facebook and if Dad is checking the sports results, they have a right to think that family life is a lost cause.

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