



## ‘EACH YEAR YOU DELAY GIVING A PHONE IS A BIG WIN’: CHILD SCREEN-TIME SOLUTIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Photograph: Yeon Li from Unsplash

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If the advent of the affordable mobile phone has given parents a new way to stay in touch with their children, it has also prompted countless arguments about screen time, safety and social media.

### **Australia: ‘Making sure children have a childhood’**

Australia made global headlines in November, when its parliament passed a law to ban under-16s from social media. But much of how it will work, and which services it will apply to, remains unclear.

While some states in Australia ban the use of mobile phones in school, the federal government’s new ban will restrict children under 16 from social media entirely by the end of this year. The legislation will empower the communications minister to determine which platforms will be restricted, but it is widely expected it will at least apply to Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

### **Spain: ‘You can use ours’**

Spain’s socialist-led coalition government is preparing legislation that would raise the age for opening a social media account from 14 to 16 and calls for the tech companies to install age-verification systems.

### **France: ‘Taking back control of screens’**

The French president, Emmanuel Macron, commissioned a report into the issue, saying the country needed to “take back control of our screens”, which were closing children

in on themselves rather than liberating them. He said “the future of our society and democracy” depended on a sensible approach.

The report, presented last April, said children should not be allowed to use smartphones until they are 13 and should be banned from accessing conventional social media such as TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat until they are 18.

### **Italy: School bans**

The use of smartphones and tablets in Italian classrooms in primary, elementary and lower secondary schools was banned completely from September, even for teaching purposes.

### **Germany: ‘The longer you can put off children using smartphones, the better’**

Although German schools cannot bar pupils from bringing in mobile phones, they can ban pupils from using them in the classroom or during breaktimes.

Teachers routinely exercise the right to confiscate phones deemed to be a problem on a case-by-case basis, but experts note the legal footing for this is shaky.