



The Winston Center for Technology and the Developing Mind at the University of North Carolina is the nation’s leading authority on how technology and social media impact the developing mind and brain.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create and disseminate knowledge regarding the use of technology and social media on the developing mind and brain. We study positive and detrimental uses of technology on neural, social, behavioral, and psychological outcomes.

NOTABLE RESEARCH

Social media use may alter how teen brains develop

A groundbreaking study, published in JAMA Pediatrics in 2023, found that after using social media to connect with peers, teens feel increased sensation seeking and crave more social interactions.

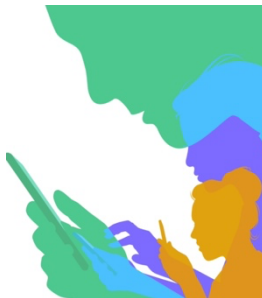
Social media use leads to poor sleep habits

Using social media within one hour of bedtime leads to less sleep, which can disrupt neurological development in adolescent brains.

Body image comparisons can lead to depression

Teens often use social to compare themselves against other and solicit feedback on their physical appearance. Research shows this can lead to a poor body image, eating disorders, and symptoms of depression, particularly among young girls.

“Social media is here to stay. So we need to teach kids how to get the best they can from it and avoid the worst.”
Mitch Prinstein
“Adolescents around the age of 12 who are habitually checking their social media accounts are showing differences in the way their brain is developing... Their brain is showing increases in sensitivity to this peer feedback. And this is really setting the stage for how their brain is going to continue to develop well into adulthood.”
Eva Telzer



Teens + Social Media

95%

Number of teens who report using social media.

100+

Times a day, on average, that teens pick up their phones.

37%

Number of teens who say they use social media “almost constantly.”

CAROLINA RESEARCHERS LEAD WINSTON CENTER



Eva Telzer, Co-Director

Eva is a professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and co-director of the UNC Winston Center for Technology and the Developing Mind. She was the lead author on a groundbreaking study published in JAMA Pediatrics in January 2023 that found habitual checking of social media may impact young adolescents' brain development.



Mitch Prinstein, Co-Director

Mitch is the John Van Seters Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He serves as the American Psychological Association's Chief Science Officer and was co-chair of the expert advisory panel that developed the APA's Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence. He has testified as an expert before the U.S. Senate about how social media impacts teenagers.

HISTORY

The Winston Center, located within the University of North Carolina's Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, was established with a \$10 million gift from the Winston Family Foundation in 2022. This foundational gift allowed UNC researchers to develop a dedicated research center to expand on existing efforts to study the impact of social media on teens and adolescents.

Winston Center for Technology and the Developing Mind

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