UNPLUGGED CANADA

Media Toolkit

Updated June, 2026

Quick Facts

- Young people's excessive use of computer screens and smartphones are raising serious concerns among health and educational authorities. They have seen alarming levels of negative effects, including depression, anxiety, sleep problems, poor emotional regulation and even changes to the brain's gray matter volume. (Wacks & Weinstein, 2021)
- Social media platforms are designed to be addictive; heavy use of them is linked to loneliness and suicidal ideation. Smartphones also create a sense of dependency. (Columbia University Department of Psychiatry)
- Around one in four young people display problematic cell phone use that mirrors traits seen in substance abuse disorders and behavioural addictions. (BMC Psychiatry, 2019)
- By 2017, 20% of Ontario teens were using social media for more than five hours a day. Smartphone and social media use is correlated with mental distress and self-harm in young people. (Canadian Medical Association Journal, 2020)
- Social media use is linked to aggressivity and impulsivity in Canadian adolescents. (CBC)
- 31% of Canadian youth report having been cyberbullied – online bullies "follow victims everywhere they have their phone." (RCMP)
- Leaders of major tech companies have delayed providing their children with smartphones until adolescence. (Wait Until 8th)
- Psychologists recommend delaying smartphone use until a young person has developed their social awareness and ability to understand what the technology means. (Child Mind Institute)
- Provincial governments take seriously the dangers associated with young people's smartphone use, with guidelines published in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

About Unplugged Canada

Unplugged Canada is a non-profit organization – founded in Vancouver, B.C. in 2024 – dedicated to **delaying the use of smartphones in children until at least the age of 14**. Unplugged Canada believes that collective effort helps everyone succeed and shift the culture.

By encouraging parents to sign a pledge on our website, we aim to build a strong community with a united mission of protecting our children's mental health and safety. There is strength in numbers; together, we can create a supportive environment for device-free families across Canada.

Unplugged Canada is volunteer-run and has grown significantly in 18 months thanks to the passion and dedication of parent ambassadors across Canada, with pledges signed in every province. **Over 11,300 pledges in 1,400+ schools have already been signed by parents and caregivers** to protect their children's mental health, well-being, and cognitive development.

Mission

Our mission is to educate parents about the risks of early smartphone use and inspire a collective commitment to restore childhood. Through advocacy, resources, and an online pledge, we empower parents to unite in the creation of a smartphone-free childhood. By signing the pledge, families join a supportive community dedicated to prioritizing their children's mental health.

Vision

Our vision is that future generations of children grow up free from the distractions of smartphones. By intentionally protecting them from an addictive algorithm that has gone unchecked for too long, our children will have the freedom to be fully immersed in real life experiences that nurture their mental, emotional, and social well-being. We envision a world where childhood is safeguarded as a time for curiosity, creativity, and authentic human connection.

Advocacy

In September 2025, Unplugged Canada organized a petition calling on the federal government to restrict social media for anyone under 16, joining a global wave of action to protect children's mental health and privacy. The campaign, sponsored by MP Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver), follows Australia's groundbreaking legislation and builds on research linking social media use to skyrocketing rates of anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, and self-harm among teens. The petition has seen support from major organizations including the Canadian Medical Association, SickKids Policy Accelerator, Ontario's Lead Agency Consortium, and the Ontario Public School Boards Association.

We are currently active in meetings with MPs nationwide, advocating for age minimums of 16 and robust privacy protections for Canadian youth to ensure social media companies can no longer store or sell their data.

Company Information

Refer to the organization by its full name, Unplugged Canada.

Website

https://unpluggedcanada.com/

Social Media

Instagram: @unpluggedcanada
Facebook: @UnpluggedCanada
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@unpluggedcanada

Founder

Jenny Perez, MBA
Jenny is a mother and a skilled entrepreneur with qualifications in business and economics. Alongside running a successful immigration consulting firm, she has spent 15 years listening and talking with young people nearly every day.

Jenny has been passionate about the impact of online technologies on children's minds for over a decade. After encountering Brooke Shannon's Wait Until 8th campaign, which is active in the United States, she was inspired to start a similar movement in 2023 for families in Canada and founded Unplugged Canada, which officially launched in September 2024.

Ambassadors

Dr Michele Locke, PhD, Psych, Clinical Psychologist.
Tania Johnson, Registered Psychologist, co-author of The Parenting Handbook.
Jeffrey Kimel, Entrepreneur
Josette Calleja, Parent Coach
Kirsten Sweet, National Program Director
Jenna Poste, Technology Impact Advisor
More ambassadors here: https://www.unpluggedcanada.com/who-we-are

Industry Experts

Dr Alison Yeung, MD.
Alex Munter, CEO Canadian Medical Association

Partners, Supporters and Allies

The following organizations have partnered with us, written letters to support our pledge and/or advocacy, or shared our resources in some of their materials/communications. Please reach out to kirsten@unpluggedcanada.com for more information on how each organization is working with Unplugged Canada.

- SickKids Foundation
- Children First Canada
- Institute of Child Psychology
- Canadian Paediatric Society's Centre for Healthy Screen Use
- RAADD (Raising Awareness About Digital Dangers)
- Canadian Medical Association
- Toronto Public Library
- Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
- Sturgeon Public Schools, Alberta
- Toronto District School Board
- The Dais Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University
- PLEA Children of the Street
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association
- OECTA - English Catholic School Teachers Association Ontario
- AEFO - French Elementary Teachers Association Ontario
- Missing Children's Society of Canada
- The Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation
- RaiseHER Co.
- Future Ready Minds
- The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
- The Lead Agency Consortium

Local Chapters

- Toronto, ON
- Quebec, QC
- PEI
- Nova Scotia
- Edmonton, AB
- Rocky Mountain House, AB
- Vancouver, BC
- Nanaimo, BC
- Dufferin, ON
- Ottawa, ON
- Huron-Perth, ON
- Southern Georgian Bay, ON
- Kingston, ON
- Calgary, AB
- Yellowknife, NWT
- Ontario
- Springfield, MB
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Halton, ON
- Windsor, ON

For media enquiries, please contact:
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Region specific inquiries can go to our local chapters:

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Alberta: alberta@unpluggedcanada.com / 780-318-0048