

UNPLUGGED CANADA

Media Toolkit

Updated Jan. 28 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 7,000 parents and caregivers from over 1,000 schools have already signed the pledge** 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

Sara Austin, Founder & CEO, Children First Canada

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. 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
- 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's Lead Agency Consortium
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association
- Canadian Pediatrics Society
- Missing Children's Society of Canada
- The Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation
- Future Ready Minds
- The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
- The Ontario Public School Boards' Association
- The Lead Agency Consortium

Local Chapters

- Toronto, ON
- Quebec, QC
- PEI
- Nova Scotia
- Edmonton and Area, AB
- Vancouver, BC
- Nanaimo, BC
- Ottawa, ON
- Huron-Perth, ON
- Southern Georgian Bay, ON
- Calgary, AB

For media enquiries, please contact:

Jenny Perez, Founder (Vancouver)

info@unpluggedcanada.com

Region specific inquiries can go to our local chapters:

Toronto: toronto@unpluggedcanada.com / 416-557-5283

Nova Scotia: ns@unpluggedcanada.com / 902-301-6838

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