Expectations and levels of understanding when using mobile phones among 9–11-year olds in Wales, UK

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## Sample

57 children aged 9–11-years living in Wales

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

There is growing interest in examining the use of mobile technology among children.
The present study extended this literature among a sample of 9–11-year olds in
Wales, UK in three ways. First, to examine the level of mobile phone ownership;
second, to consider how mobile phones are used, investigate timescales and expectations
when communicating via a mobile phone; and third to explore the emotional
impact of not having a text or phone call responded to. A sample of 57 children
completed a self-report questionnaire focusing on the expectations and levels of
understanding when making and receiving mobile phone calls and text messages.
Results suggest that ownership and usage of a mobile phone is high amongst young
children; however a lack of developmental and emotional maturity, highlighted by
the expectation of immediate responses and the egocentric reasons given, may cause
unnecessary distress among a proportion of children. Directions for future work are
proposed.

# Outcome

92% of children owned a mobile phone. "all participants expected a
response to a text, however the immediacy of response differed depending on who the
text was from. Only 19.3% expected an immediate response to a text sent to a friend
compared to those who expected their primary caregiver to reply straight away (57.9%)
or within the same hour (5.3%)... over half
(56.1%) of participants thought it was ‘Very important’ or ‘Important’ to respond [TO A TEXT] as
soon as possible to avoid being rude... whilst the mobile phone can provide a
link to and from a parent/caregiver or a friend, for the child it can increase feelings of confusion and uncertainty especially when a phone call or text is not responded to in a
timely manner... young
children may be negatively affected by their usage as a result of not being able to consider
reasons for any lack of responses to calls or text messages." (Turley ET AL., 2014: 213-14).