Associations between child mobile use and digital parenting style in Hungarian families

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1270 Hungarian parents of 0-7 years old children

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

Mobile touch screen device (MTSDs) use is becoming widespread in children and has negative and positive consequences. Yet, factors associated with greater use remain unexplored, despite the importance of their identification for intervention purposes. It stands to reason that parents can influence child MTSD use, via their attitudes, beliefs, role-modelling, and style of parenting. Here, we examined the associations between these parental characteristics and child MTSD use and whether parenting styles specifically with regard to child MTSD use exist. Hungarian parents (N = 1283) were surveyed about their children’s digital activities, their own attitudes and beliefs regarding the child’s MTSD use, and their own attachment to- and use of mobile phones. Taking a data-driven approach, distinct “digital parenting styles” were identified and these resembled general parenting styles. Findings further suggested that children spent more time with MTSD use if their parents: were more permissive, more authoritative and less authoritarian; had a lower educational level; exhibited greater attachment to their mobile phones; and had more positive attitudes towards, and attributed less harm and more benefits to, early device use. These results are the first evidence for existence of digital parenting styles and suggest that parental characteristics are potential prevention and treatment targets.

# Outcome

The authors differentiated four characteristic digital parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, authoritative and laissez-fair. Parents’ digital parenting style is associated with amount and type of child MTSD use. This association is primarily associated with parental involvement/warmth. The more positive attitude the parents have regarding early MTSD use, the more time the child spends engaging in such use. The amount of parental mobile use was not, but degree of parental mobile attachment was, associated with amount of child MTSD use.

"In conclusion, results suggest that parents may influence their children’s MTSD use, through
modelling behavior, digital parenting style, attitudes and beliefs about early MTSD use, and
their educational level. Future studies should clarify how these variables are related, including by assessing potential mediating and moderating mechanisms, and examining whether
digital parenting styles explain child MTSD use above and beyond other parental factors." Veronika Konok, Nóra Bunford Ádám Miklósi (2020) Associations between child mobile use and digital parenting style in Hungarian families, Journal of Children and Media,
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