vivo

Switch Off
Research Report

The Impact of Excessive Smartphone Usage on Parent-Child Relationships

**Connecting by Switching Off,
One Dinner at a Time**

1.

Children and parents want to spend more time with each other. For children at formative stages of life, their relationships with parents depend on the amount of quality time spent together.

Parents feel they do not spend enough quality time with their children, while children have a greater appreciation for the quantity of time spent together. **1 in 3 parents** spend less than an hour with their children, **2 in 3 spend <2 hours** with them. Parents evaluate time based on depth and engagement, while children evaluate it based on presence and routine, creating a natural perception gap.

Frequency of Time with Kids/Parents

Parents   Children

36%	28%	16%	21%
Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-4 hours	More than 4 hours
25%	15%	18%	42%
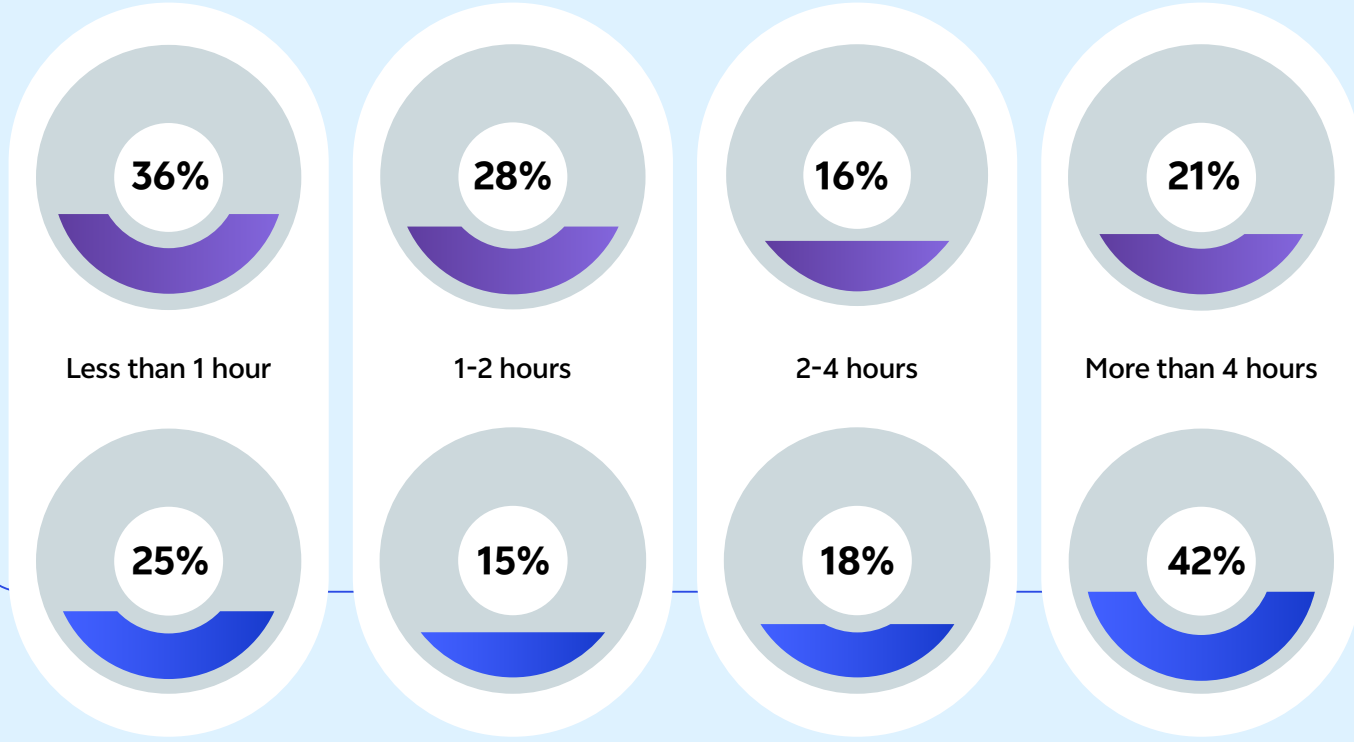
While spending time together, the quality of this time is impacted negatively by their usage of smartphones. While physically being present in the same space, mentally they are occupied with the digital world, leading to an overwhelming sense of detachment and alienation. Across the board, usage of smartphones while spending time with parents/children has gone up considerably, making it more socially acceptable, resulting in a cycle of higher smartphone usage and lower quality of time spent together, ultimately impacting the relationships themselves.
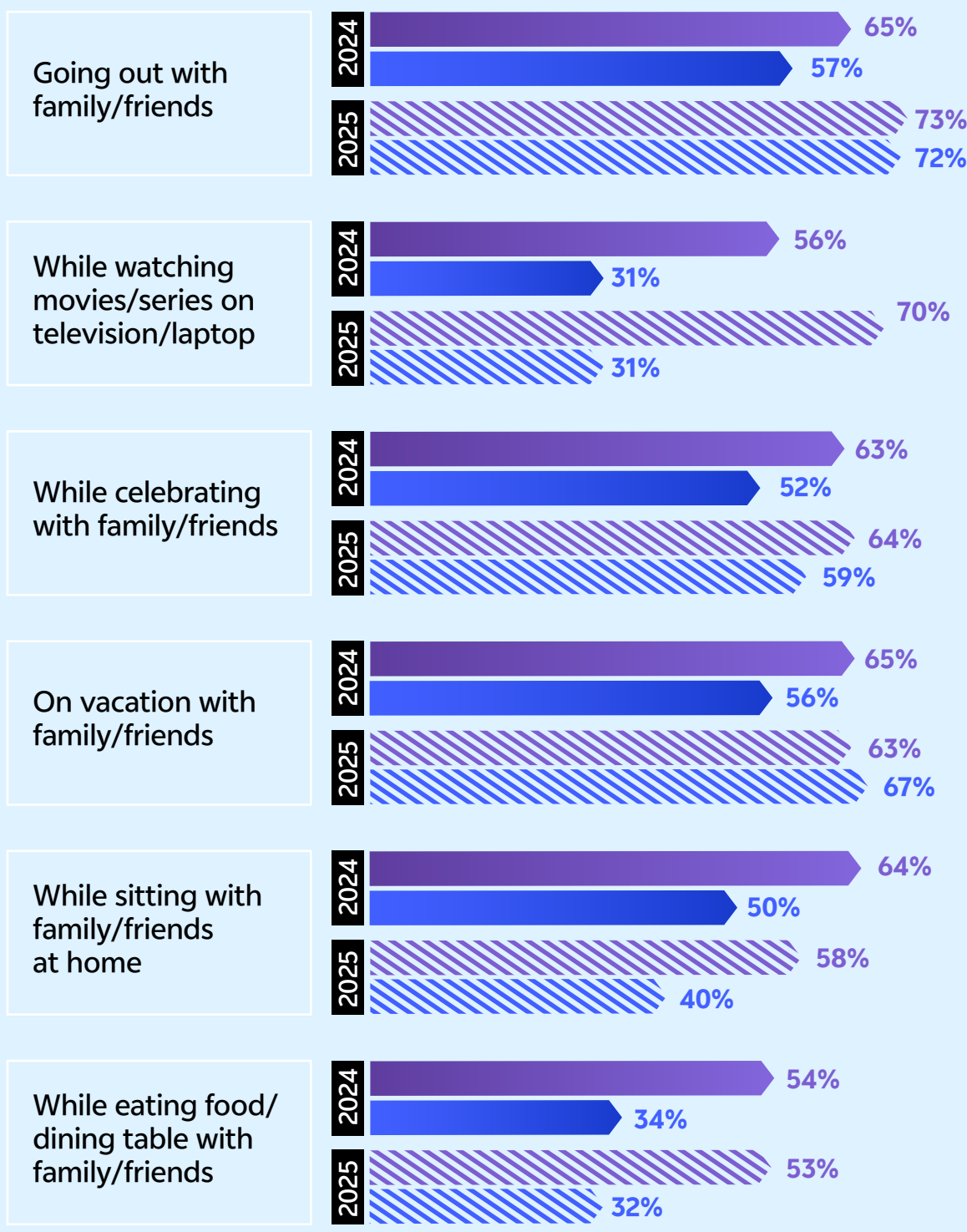
Usage of Smartphones in Social Situations

Parents   Children 2024   Parents   Children 2025

Going out with family/friends
- 2024: 65% / 57%
- 2025: 73% / 72%

While watching movies/series on television/laptop
- 2024: 56% / 31%
- 2025: 70% / 31%

While celebrating with family/friends
- 2024: 63% / 52%
- 2025: 64% / 59%

On vacation with family/friends
- 2024: 65% / 56%
- 2025: 63% / 67%

While sitting with family/friends at home
- 2024: 64% / 50%
- 2025: 58% / 40%

While eating food/ dining table with family/friends
- 2024: 54% / 34%
- 2025: 53% / 32%

They claim to use their smartphones because of work and other urgent reasons.

The major challenge faced by parents and children is the parents' habitual checking of their devices even while they are trying to maintain a no-phone environment. **72% Parents** cite this as the top reason, while **30% of kids** have the same feeling about their parents' habit of checking their phones. These challenges do not just break 'phone-free rules' but also break the connection and emotional presence.

The dependence on smartphones is visible in the amount of time they spend on their devices, with parents spending nearly **4.5 hours/day** and children spending over **3.5 hours/day**, with a vast majority of this time (**>90%**) spent on Social Media and Entertainment. This adds up to **over 2 months in a year**, simply spent on Social Media & Entertainment on smartphones.

Daily Smartphone Usage

Parents   Children

Upto 4 hours
- 43%
- 66%

5 to 6 hours
- 24%
- 21%

More than 6 hours
- 33%
- 13%
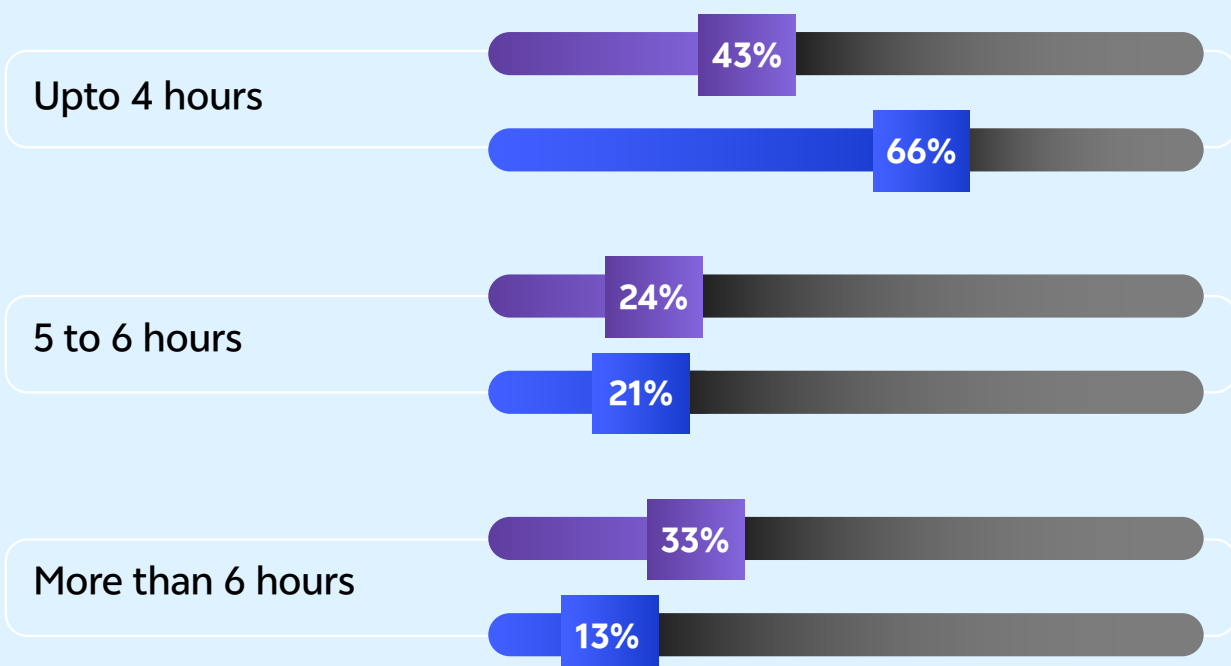
The recent proliferation of AI

OpenAI x PhonePe | Gemini x Jio | Perplexity x Airtel

has added an additional deterrent to living lives away from smartphones. Children use AI for curiosity, creativity and academic support shaped by their evolving needs. **54% of children aged 10-16 years** have become early adopters using these AI tools freely in their daily lives.
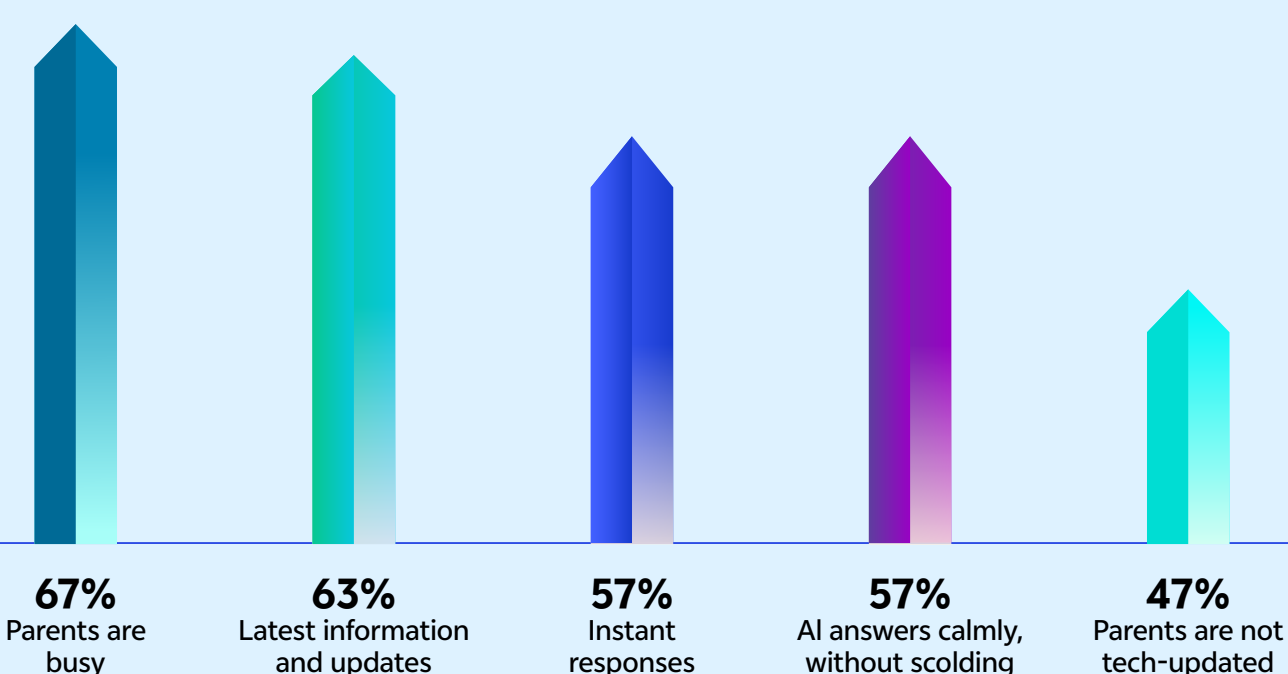
Adoption of AI by Children

10 - 12 Years Old	13 - 14 Years Old	15 - 16 Years Old
40%	69%	59%
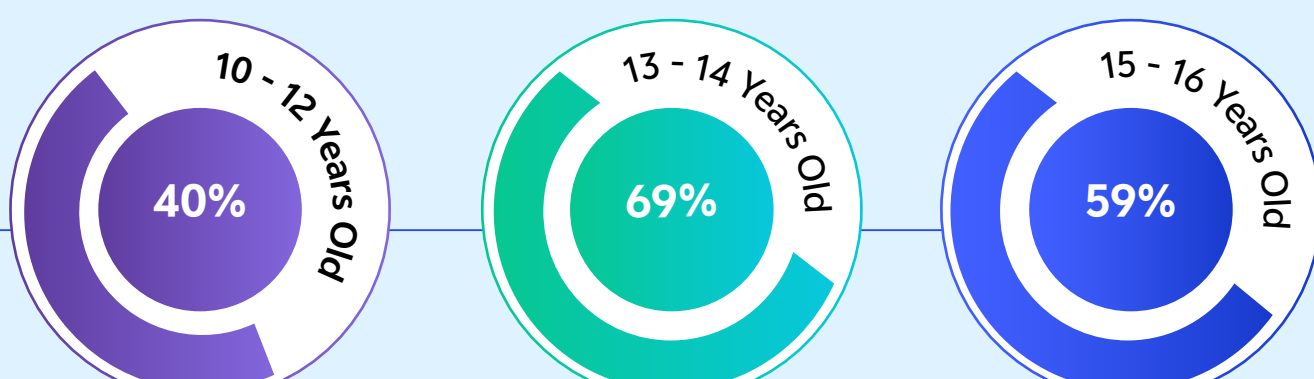
They use them for all kinds of purposes, from homework and assignments (**61%**) to personal growth and development (**63%**), with **33%** even treating them as companions, substituting for real-life relationships with personal/intimate conversations with AI Chatbots at a young age of **13 years old** on average.

The main reason they turn to these AI chatbots and prefer them over their parents is that they feel their parents are busy (**67%**). This, they believe, has led to them spending even less time with their parents, with **1 in 4 children** explicitly claiming to speak less to their parents because of AI.

Reason for Preference of AI over Parents

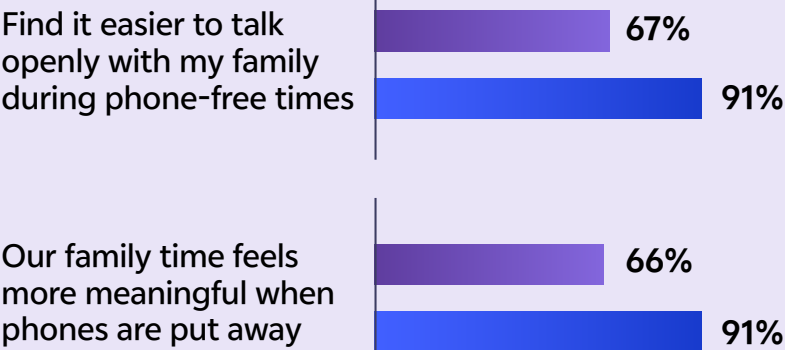| 67%	63%	57%	57%	47%
Parents are busy	Latest information and updates	Instant responses	AI answers calmly, without scolding	Parents are not tech-updated

2. The solution they believe lies in rituals. Moving from mindless, automatic behaviors to intentional and mindful habits. Phone-free rituals can be powerful tools to incorporate consistent habits aimed at strengthening relationships between parents and children.

✖ Children find it easier to talk to their parents when phones are kept aside **(91%)**, which in turn leads to the quality of time spent feeling more meaningful and enriching **(91%)**. At the end of the day, they believe that results in stronger family bonding **(86%)**.
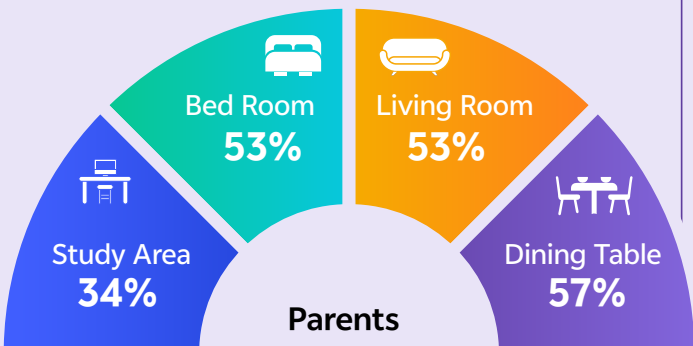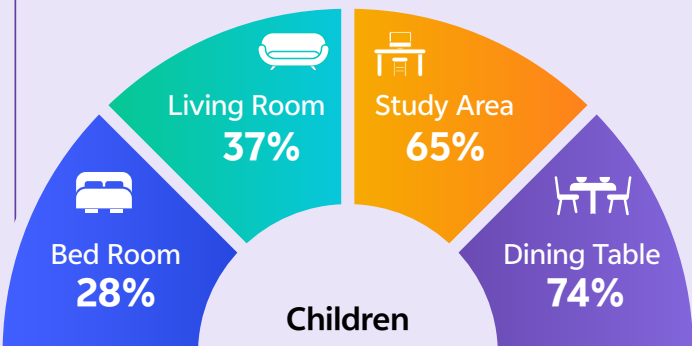
Result of Phone-free Rituals

● Parents ● Children

Find it easier to talk openly with my family during phone-free times
- 67%
- 91%

Our family time feels more meaningful when phones are put away
- 66%
- 91%

✖ Children spend most of their time with parents during dinners **(72%)**

✖ So, it makes sense that both children and parents overwhelmingly want dining tables to be phone-free **(74%)**. Even while most areas in the home are meant for spending quality time with each other, including the living room **(53%)** and bedroom **(53%)**, since most conversations happen at the dining table, there is increased focus on making this a phone/free zone at home.

Preferred Phone-Free Zones

Children
- Bed Room 28%
- Living Room 37%
- Study Area 65%
- Dining Table 74%

Parents
- Study Area 34%
- Bed Room 53%
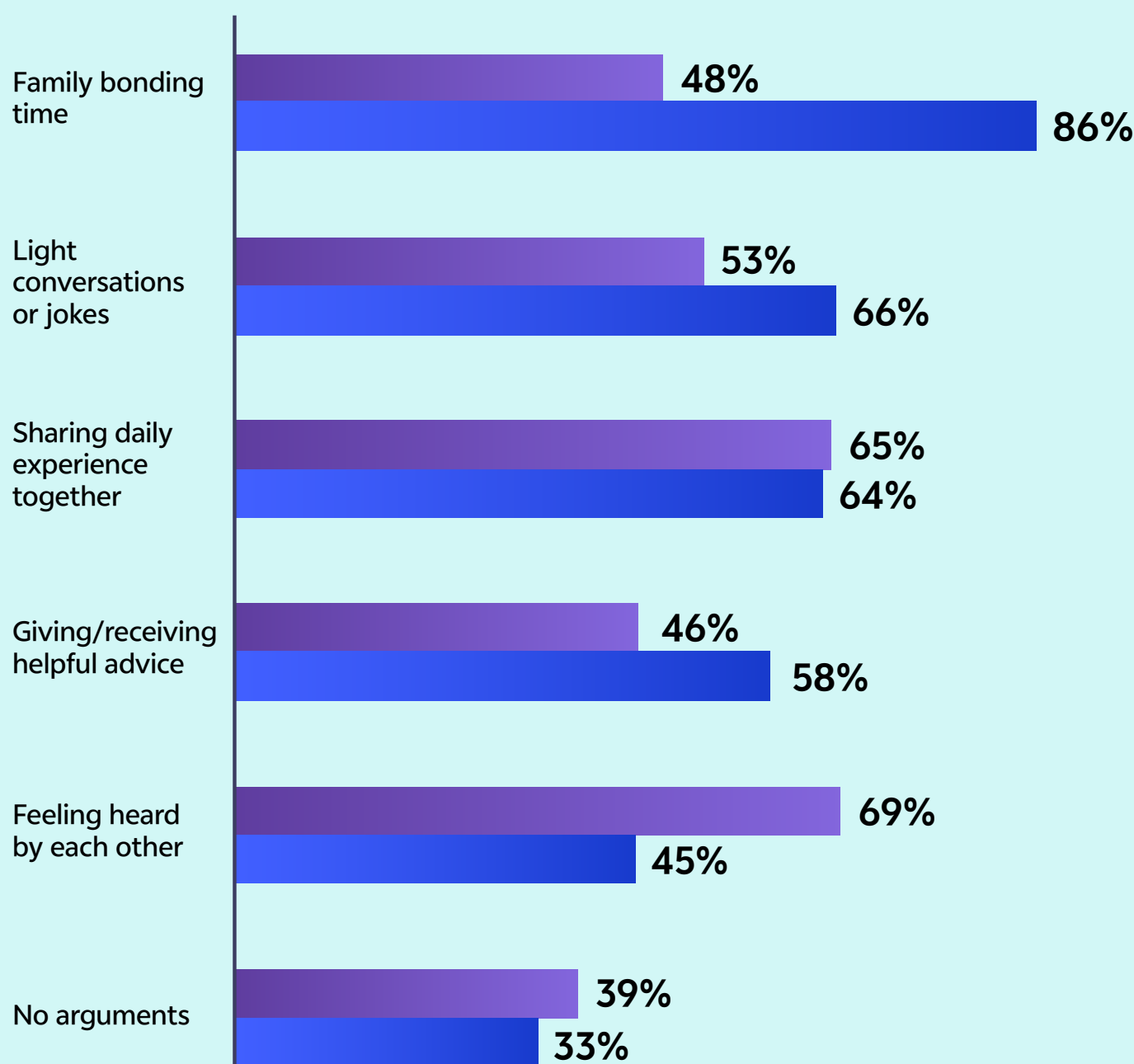- Living Room 53%
- Dining Table 57%

3. Caught up in their hectic lives, dinner is the time of day when both parents and children find time to sit together and share a meal. This gives them an opportunity to spend time, connect and build stronger relationships. Keeping devices away from this space helps eliminate distractions, makes conversations more meaningful, and leads to quality bonding time.

✳ Dinner gives them a chance to talk about their experiences (65% parents), have lighthearted discussions (53% parents, 66% children), give and receive helpful advice (58% children) and most importantly, feel heard by each other (69% parents, 45% children) without any arguments/ conflicts (39% parents, 33% children).

Dinner Time Conversations

Parents **Children**

Category	Parents	Children
Family bonding time	48%	86%
Light conversations or jokes	53%	66%
Sharing daily experience together	65%	64%
Giving/receiving helpful advice	46%	58%
Feeling heard by each other	69%	45%
No arguments	39%	33%

✳ Majority of families have tried no-phone dinners at home, which shows cognizance of the problem and recognition of a feasible solution.

Both parents (73%) and children (78%) tried no phone dinners, turning to them as a simple way to feel more connected.

✳ The exciting thing is that most families who have tried this practice have found it to be promising in helping conversations feel better, where they are able to talk more freely (87% children), making conversations more meaningful (91% children). This makes them feel more connected as a family and strengthens the relationship (90% children).

Parents on No-Phone Dinners

71% Parents want to make no-phone dinners a regular ritual at home.

65% Parents try to have at least one family meal together every day.

65% Parents feel that keeping smartphones away helps them talk more openly with their children.

62% Parents feel that usage of smartphones during dinner time weakens family bonding.

Children on No-Phone Dinners

91% Children feel that keeping phones away helps them talk better with their parents.

90% Children want to make no-phone dinners a regular ritual at home.

90% Children feel that phone-free dinners help them feel more connected with their family.

88% Children feel that using smartphone during dinner time reduces family conversation.

✳ Both parents and children have a strong desire to make no-phone dinners a regular ritual (71% parents, 90% children). They want to have these meaningful conversations and build a stronger relationship with each other.

✳ The major challenge to making this happen, cited by both parents and children as the top concern, is parents' habit of checking their phones during dinner and the proposal of no-phone dinners (72% parents, 30% children).

Challenges faced by parents

My habit of checking the phone **72%**

Work-related calls and messages **40%**

Irregular family dinner timings **45%**

Challenges faced by children

30% My parents use their phone too

30% Hard to follow the rule everyday

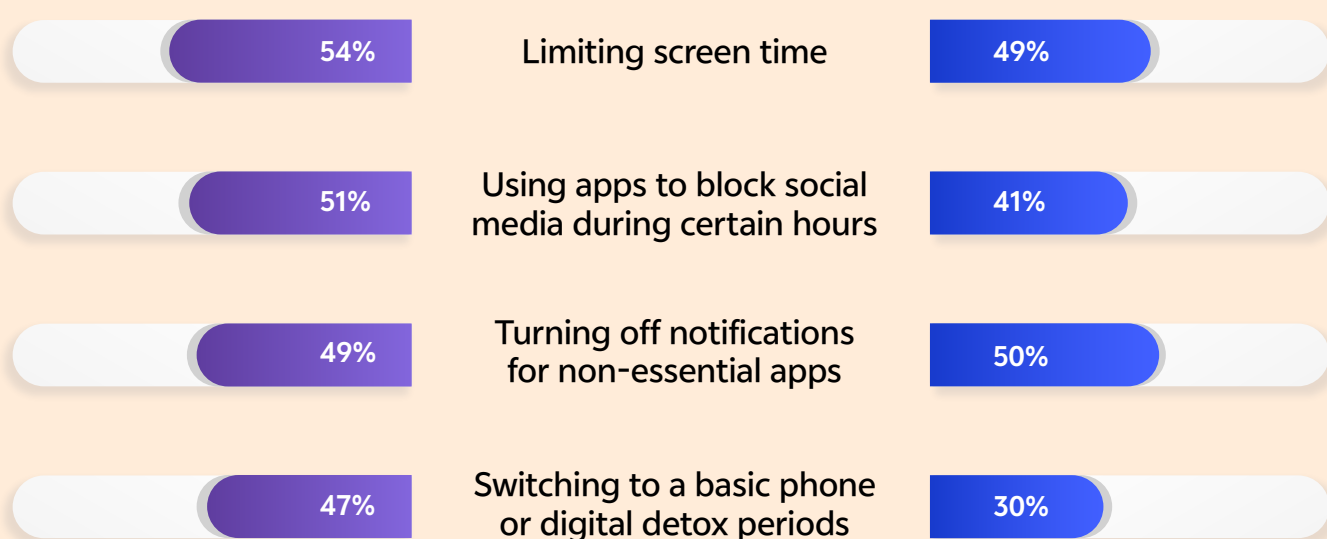**27%** I get messages/ notifications

4. As a society with increased dependence on our smartphones in our day-to-day lives, from the simple act of ordering 10 min. From grocery delivery to scheduling salon appointments to even making the smallest payment, they have made our lives infinitely better and more convenient. It is when this convenience turns into dependence and addiction that we need to solve the issue at a societal / community level. This requires an overall approach of 'Collective Action' from all parties involved. Human relationships being social creatures, we need in-person connections and relationships more than ever. So, it is important to identify when our habits turn problematic, call them out, create meaningful systematic solutions, which can lead us into asking the simple questions of What for? Why now? And how else? We can deal with these needs. We need to focus on societal solutions to help build strong relationships, connecting with the people in our lives, and living in the moment.

※ Most respondents have tried some or the other methods of reducing their smartphone addiction (**At least 82% parents, 71% children**), with most trying to limit their screen time (**49% children, 54% parents**) or turning off notifications for non-essential apps (**50% parents, 49% children**).

Another approach that has worked well is blocking social media and non-essential apps at certain hours of the day (**41% parents,51% children**) helping them focus. Some have even gone to the extremes of switching to a basic phone for a digital detox/reset (**30% parents, 47% children**).
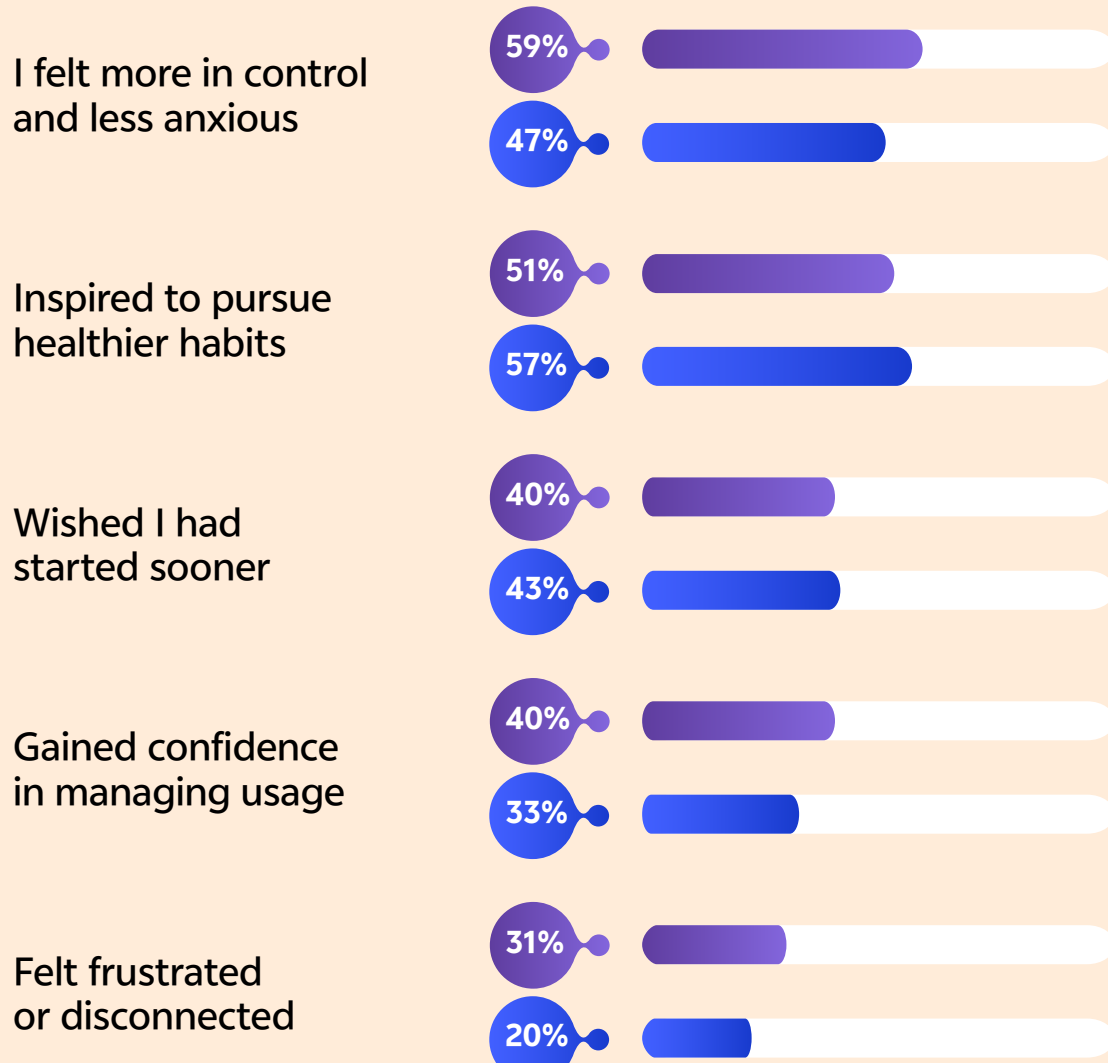
Solutions to Reduce Screen Time

Parents | Children

Solution	Parents	Children
Limiting screen time	54%	49%
Using apps to block social media during certain hours	51%	41%
Turning off notifications for non-essential apps	49%	50%
Switching to a basic phone or digital detox periods	47%	30%

※ This helped people feel more in control and less anxious (**59% parents**), gaining confidence in their ability to manage their usage of smartphones (**40% parents**). They were inspired to pursue healthier smartphone relationships (**51% parents, 57% children**), wishing they had started practicing these habits even sooner(**40% parents, 43% children**).

Impact of the Solutions

Parents | Children

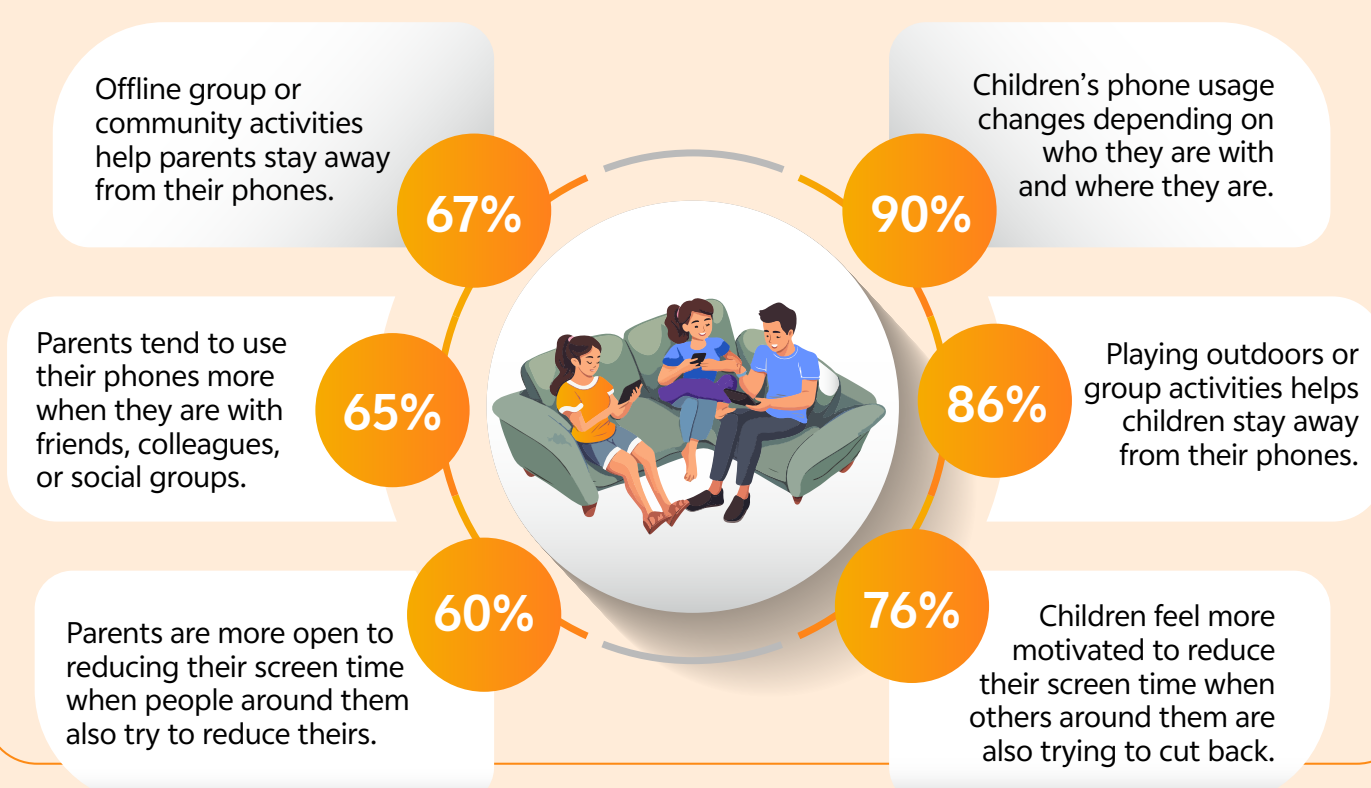|	Parents	Children
I felt more in control and less anxious	59%	47%
Inspired to pursue healthier habits	51%	57%
Wished I had started sooner	40%	43%
Gained confidence in managing usage	40%	33%
Felt frustrated or disconnected	31%	20%

※ There is a strong call for community and collective action from both parents and children. Both groups claim that offline group or community activities, including playing outdoors or group activities, help manage smartphone usage and build stronger relationships (**86% children, 67% parents**). Especially for children, there is strong agreement that smartphones should not be used in schools from the start to the end of class (**90%, 16% higher than 77% of students in 2024**).

There is a strong sense of reciprocity as they tend to use their phones depending on the usage of the people around them (**90% children**). They are motivated to reduce their screen time if people around them try to reduce their screen time as well (**60% parents, 76% children**).
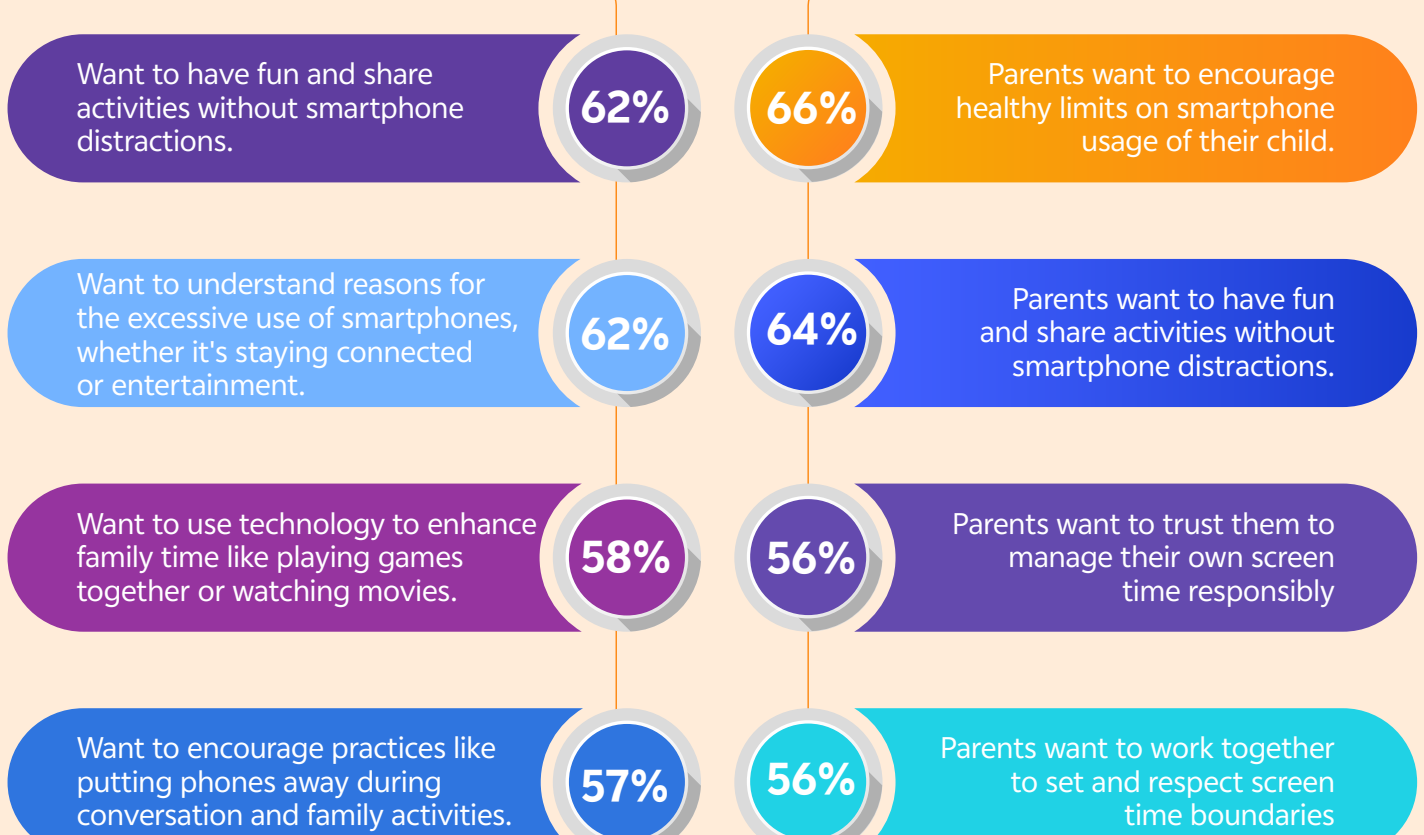
Children's Social Phone Usage Patterns

67% Offline group or community activities help parents stay away from their phones.

65% Parents tend to use their phones more when they are with friends, colleagues, or social groups.

60% Parents are more open to reducing their screen time when people around them also try to reduce theirs.

Parents' Social Phone Usage Patterns

90% Children's phone usage changes depending on who they are with and where they are.

86% Playing outdoors or group activities helps children stay away from their phones.

76% Children feel more motivated to reduce their screen time when others around them are also trying to cut back.

※ There is strong intent for action, and both parents and children share the desire to have fun and share activities without smartphones (**64% parents, 62% children**). Especially in the times when they are together, they want to practice putting phones away for conversations or any other activity (**57% children**). They want technology to enhance family time rather than affect the quality of it (**58% children**).

Children's desires

62% Want to have fun and share activities without smartphone distractions.

62% Want to understand reasons for the excessive use of smartphones, whether it's staying connected or entertainment.

58% Want to use technology to enhance family time like playing games together or watching movies.

57% Want to encourage practices like putting phones away during conversation and family activities.

Parents' desires

66% Parents want to encourage healthy limits on smartphone usage of their child.

64% Parents want to have fun and share activities without smartphone distractions.

56% Parents want to trust them to manage their own screen time responsibly

56% Parents want to work together to set and respect screen time boundaries

vivo Switch Off

vivo encourages parents to give your children the **gift of switching off**

- ☑ vivo invites parents to create a habit of phone-free dinners.

- ☑ Create opportunities to connect offline with people in phone-free environments.

- ☑ Shared meaning comes from shared presence.

- ☑ Parents & children associate meaningful family time with

| 1. Fewer Interruptions | 2. More Eye Contact | 3. Conversations that do not drop mid-sentence | 4. Paying attention to each other |

- ☑ Support (and lead) efforts to make schools phone-free : 77% of children believe that phones should be banned in schools.

- ☑ Join together with other parents to agree not to let your children use social media platforms untill they are at least 16.

- ☑ Take time to set up parental controls and time limits on your children's phones.

The vivo Switch Off Study 2025 contains insights from a Quantitative study followed by a Qualitative Study to understand the insights in depth. The Quantitative study covered 1517 smartphone owners comprising 1017 parents and 500 children across the top 8 cities of India: New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Pune. The Qualitative Study covered 18 smartphone owners comprising 12 parents and 6 children across New Delhi and Mumbai. The parents surveyed were in the 35-50 year age bracket who had children who were 10-16 years old. The children surveyed were 10-16 years old.