Today’s piece was prepared by Christine Maloney, MD based on a Seattle Times article [Panicking about your kids and their phones? Don’t, says new research](https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/panicking-about-your-kids-and-their-phones-new-research-says-dont/).

This article is based on a research study published in January that examined the link between social media use and anxiety and depression among adolescents which concluded that the link was small and inconsistent. They claim that in most cases “the phone is just a mirror that reveals the problems a child would have even without the phone”. They argue that by putting so much effort and focus on the harms of phones it is creating unnecessary fear and minimizing the potential positive effects of social media.

While this article concludes that there is a lack of direct evidence-based causation between social media and anxiety and depression, it overlooks the complexity of the issue and the many confounding links. The article argues that phone use should not be seen as such a risk because other factors, such as diet and exercise, are bigger contributors to anxiety and depression in adolescents. However, this perceived smaller risk may also warrant moderation and should not be overlooked just because other factors are more impactful. Pediatricians can advocate for moderation in all of these areas simultaneously. While the article itself does mention the lack of consensus amongst providers, the title itself directly tells parents to adopt one conclusion: that social media use is definitively not harmful to your teenager. This is a difficult to research topic and such absolute conclusions should be avoided.

**RESOURCES ON MEDIA FOR FAMILIES**

[Media and Children Communication Toolkit](https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx) *American Academy of Pediatrics*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!