



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **7887**

Introduced by REP. HENRY "INDY" F. OAMINAL JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Children are the foundation of our nation's future. They carry the promise of a stronger, more capable, and resilient Philippines. For this potential to be fully realized, every child must have the opportunity to grow properly, develop essential life skills, and strengthen traits that prepare them to become responsible and productive citizens. Among the most critical developmental functions are focus, patience, emotional regulation, social interaction, and early cognitive formation—skills best nurtured through real human engagement and structured learning environments.

However, this natural developmental trajectory is increasingly threatened by overuse and overreliance on electronic gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, and similar devices. While these tools offer convenience and opportunities for learning, in many households – and even in schools – they have become substitutes for parental guidance, play, and interpersonal interaction. In extreme – tragic – cases, gadgets function as the primary “caregivers” of infants and young children, exposing them to the risks of impaired cognitive growth, shortened attention spans, and reduced emotional resilience.

International research consistently shows that excessive and unregulated screen time during early childhood is associated with weaker language development, delayed social skills, and diminished ability to concentrate – competencies essential for academic readiness and long-term success.¹ Recognizing these risks, countries such as, Finland, France, Singapore, China, and Spain have implemented strong national measures to regulate children's gadget use, including limits on screen time, restrictions in schools, and structured digital wellness guidelines.² These examples

¹ Ponti, M., Canadian Paediatric Society (“CPS”), (2022). Screen time and preschool children: promoting health and development in a digital world, accessed at <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-preschool-children#ref19>.

² Bryant, Miranda, The Guardian. April 2025. Finland restricts use of mobile phones during school day, accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/apr/30/finland-restricts-use-of-mobile-phones-during-school-day>; Chrisafis, Angelique, The Guardian. April 2025. France to tighten

illustrate that regulating gadget use is both necessary and feasible when anchored in organized and accountable environments.

This measure establishes a practical framework for protecting children from the ill-effects of excessive technology use. It prohibits unregulated use of electronic gadgets in home and community settings, along with schools and during school-sanctioned activities, with allowances for specific academic, health, or emergency needs. It also mandates a graduated implementation system, recognizing that older students in Senior High School may require regulated access for instructional purposes.

Complementing school-based measures, the bill introduces a parental and communal approach to implement the necessary regulations. It hopes to provide caregivers with guidance on limiting non-instructional screen time at home, promoting play-based activities, and fostering positive routines. All parental components are advisory and supportive, emphasizing education rather than enforcement.

As *parens patriae*, the State has both the authority and obligation to safeguard the welfare of minors – physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. This bill seeks to ensure that technology serves the child, rather than the other way around, balancing the benefits of digital literacy with the developmental needs of the Filipino youth.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



REP. HENRY "INDY" F. OCMINAL JR.
ASENSO PINOY PARTY-LIST

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<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/30/1032489883/china-kids-video-games-limits>; Jones, S. (2025, March 20). Madrid plans to limit computer and tablet use in primary schools to two hours a week.

The Guardian. Accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/mar/20/madrid-plans-to-limit-computer-and-tablet-use-in-primary-schools-to-two-hours-a-week>.



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AN ACT
PROTECTING THE FILIPINO YOUTH AND STUDENTS FROM THE ILL-EFFECTS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY BY REGULATING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC GADGETS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the "Children's Gadget Use Regulation Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to adopt measures that will ensure the holistic development of the Filipino youth and safeguard them from conditions detrimental to their health and moral well-being, as well as regulate their exposure to and use of electronic gadgets and digital media, particularly during the formative years of childhood and adolescence.

It is further recognized by the State that technology has numerous benefits to the development of the youth, but the use of such requires regulation as its excessive use eventually causes more harm than good to their overall growth. The State shall ensure that gadgets and digital media must never serve as a substitute for parental attention and ensure that it does not displace physical activity, social interaction, foundational learning, or adequate sleep.

The State, as *parens patriae*, has the authority and obligation to safeguard the welfare of the youth physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- A. **Electronic Gadget** – refers to any portable electronic device that can enable its user to make calls, capture photos, stream or play video, play games, or send, receive, data or electronic messaging, through the internet or wireless connection, such as but not limited to, smartphones, cellular phones, tablet computers, pocket personal computer, smart watches, laptops, video games consoles, virtual reality headsets, smart glasses, wearable cameras and other similar contraptions;
- B. **Basic Education Level** – refers to the education provided for the children in the Kindergarten, Elementary, and Secondary levels, including four (4) years of Junior High School and two (2) years of Senior High School, as defined in Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the *Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*;
- C. **Private Educational Institutions** – refers to educational institutions maintained and administered by private individuals or groups, which are established, authorized, and recognized by the Department of Education (DepEd) to operate educational programs in accordance with law and the prescribed policies and rules of the Department;
- D. **Public Educational Institutions** – refers to educational institutions established and administered by the government;
- E. **School Premises** – refers to all property owned, leased, subleased, licensed, or occupied and operated by the school that is considered part of the school's physical boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to, the school campus, buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, offices, playgrounds, emergency exits, assembly areas, entertainment and educational facilities, auditoriums, and halls used by students, staff, faculty, or other groups. All such areas are subject to the school's control and supervision;
- F. **School-Sanctioned Activities Outside School Premises** – refers to any activity, event, or undertaking organized, approved, authorized, or supervised by the school or any of its officials, teachers, or personnel, and participated in by students outside the physical premises of the school.

Such activities include, but are not limited to, educational field trips, immersion programs, academic competitions, sports meets, cultural presentations, leadership training, scouting activities, retreats, camping, community extension programs, or any similar school-endorsed engagement conducted beyond the school grounds;

- G. **Use of Electronic Gadgets** - refers to the act of operating, handling, interacting with, or otherwise engaging with any electronic gadget. This includes, but is not limited to, activities such as viewing, playing, listening, typing, swiping, browsing, recording, messaging, engaging in voice or video calls, gaming, streaming, or accessing the internet or digital applications through such devices, whether for entertainment, communication, educational, or any other purpose.

Passive possession, storage, or transport of a turned-off device shall not constitute “use” under this Act;

- H. **Home Setting** - refers to the private residence and family environment where parents or guardians exercise their primary responsibility for child-rearing, governed by advisory guidelines that respect the sanctity and privacy of the home; and
- I. **Community Setting** - refers to the social and public environment outside the home and school premises, including public spaces and private establishments, where Local Government Units (LGU) conduct health-based monitoring and educational activities to promote responsible gadget use.

SEC. 4. Coverage. This Act shall apply to A.) all persons under eighteen (18) years of age, and B.) all students, regardless of age, who are currently enrolled in the Basic Education Level as defined in Section 3 of this Act, but only insofar as their conduct within school premises or during school-sanctioned activities is concerned. Furthermore, children in homes and community settings, which includes public spaces and private establishments, are likewise included in the coverage.

SEC. 5. Age Appropriate Regulations. The regulation of electronic gadget use by children under this Act shall be guided by the following age-appropriate key pediatric recommendations:

- A. **Ages 0-2 years:** Screen time is prohibited, recognizing that this developmental stage requires exclusive direct human interaction for proper brain development;
- B. **Ages 2-5 years:** Screen use shall be strictly limited to less than one (1) hour per day of high-quality, age-appropriate educational content, preferably under adult supervision;
- C. **Ages 6-12 years:** Screen use shall be limited to up to two (2) hours per day of high-quality, age-appropriate educational content, preferably under adult supervision; and
- D. **Ages 13 years and above:** Regulation shall emphasize digital literacy, responsible use, and supervised independence, including measures to discourage excessive or unsupervised gadget use, particularly during nighttime hours.

Notwithstanding the above guidelines, use of electronic gadgets shall be allowed for emergency related exceptions in response to any perceived threat or danger to the safety and security of children, teachers, school personnel, parents, guardians, relatives, or the general public, whether occurring within school premises, during school-sanctioned activities, or in home and community settings.

SEC. 6. *Periodic Update of Age-Appropriate Standards.* The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCD Council), and recognized experts in child development and neurology, shall conduct a mandatory review of the age-appropriate pediatric recommendations provided under Section 5 of this Act every three (3) years, or sooner as emerging scientific evidence may require.

Should new clinical findings, international best practices, or significant shifts in digital technology emerge, the DOH, in coordination with the ECCD Council, is hereby authorized to update these guidelines through the issuance of a Department Circular.

Such updates shall be integrated into the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act and shall be disseminated by the DOH and DepEd to all schools, while the DILG and LGUs, through their BHWs, shall disseminate the same to their respective jurisdictions, to ensure that the national regulation remains consistent with the latest global standards for child health and brain development.

SEC. 7. *Regulation of Gadget Use in Home and Community Settings.* The use of gadgets by children in Home and Community Settings shall be regulated pursuant to Sections 5 and 6 of this Act, subject to the following guidelines:

- A. For children five (5) years of age and below in home and community settings, including those not yet enrolled in school or outside school hours, the regulation on electronic gadget use shall be implemented by the ECCD Council, in coordination with the DOH and LGUs through their Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) and Barangay Child Daycare Workers (BDWs);
- B. As for children ages six (6) upwards in home and community settings, including those not yet enrolled in school or outside school hours, the regulation on electronic gadget use shall be implemented by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with the DOH, LGUs through their BHWs and BDWs; and
- C. In home and community settings involving children across the aforementioned age groups, gadget use shall be guided and monitored through parental supervision, with the assistance of BHWs and BDWs, and must strictly adhere to the health-based and age-appropriate standards set forth in this Act.

SEC. 8. *Use of Electronic Gadgets in Home and Community Settings, When Allowed.* In addition to the limited allowable use under Sections 5 and 6 of this Act, parents or guardians may permit children to use electronic gadgets in the following limited circumstances:

- A. Health and Well-Being. — Children with health conditions requiring electronic gadgets may use such devices as medically necessary; and

- B. Voice or Video Communication. — Children may be allowed to use electronic gadgets for voice or video calls, *provided* such use does not displace physical activity, social interaction, foundational learning, or adequate sleep.

SEC. 9. *Regulation of Gadget Use By Students At The Basic Education Level.* Students enrolled at the basic education level, whether in public or private institutions, shall be subject to regulation in their use of electronic gadgets within school premises and during school-sanctioned activities outside school premises, in accordance with the guidelines under Sections 5 and 6 of this Act.

Schools shall implement guidelines that prescribe procedures for confiscating, securely storing, and returning electronic gadgets, in accordance with the rules and regulations that DepEd will issue. These procedures shall require the school to notify the student's parent or guardian immediately upon confiscation and maintain a clear chain of custody against loss or damage.

SEC. 10. *Use of Electronic Gadgets in Schools, When Allowed.* Schools may permit students to use electronic gadgets in the following limited circumstances, subject to the age-appropriate, developmental, pediatric, and public health standards under Sections 5 and 6 of this Act:

- A. Instructional Use. — Schools may allow gadget use for supervised instructional activities, classroom presentations, assessments, or approved learning applications, including assistive technologies for students with learning disabilities or developmental needs; and
- B. Health and Well-Being. — Students with health conditions requiring electronic gadgets may use such devices as medically necessary.

School-owned digital equipment, devices, or tools used in officially approved instructional activities remain permitted under this Act, subject to the limits in Sections 5 and 6. Teachers or authorized personnel shall directly supervise all such use.

SEC. 11. *Disciplinary Measures for Students.* The DepEd shall promulgate the necessary guidelines governing disciplinary measures for students who violate the provisions of this Act; *provided*, that such measures are remedial in nature, proportionate to the offense, and compliant with existing child protection policies and due process.

SEC. 12. *Framework for Implementation.* The DOH, in coordination with the ECCD Council, is responsible for setting and updating the guidelines and policies regarding the regulation and use of electronic gadgets by children. Additionally, for children between 0 and 5 years old, the ECCD Council shall take the primary role in ascertaining that the concerned departments and agencies are implementing this Act.

For children between 6 to 18 years of age, or those beyond 18 years of age but are still enrolled in the basic education program, the DepEd shall implement this Act in schools and even outside school premises during school-sanctioned activities.

As for children between 6 to 18 years of age, the DILG shall be responsible for the implementation of this Act in home and community settings, including public places and private establishments, with the assistance of LGUs through their BHWs.

In instances where a school-sanctioned activity occurs within a public or community setting (e.g., field trips, off-campus competitions), the authority and disciplinary guidelines of the DepEd shall take precedence over LGU-level monitoring for the duration of the activity.

SEC. 13. *Safeguards for Privacy and Home Sanctity.* In the implementation of this Act, the government shall at all times respect the privacy of the home and the primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of their children. The implementation of community-level monitoring shall be subject to the following protections:

- A. **Non-Intrusive Monitoring:** Community-level monitoring by BHWs and CDWs shall be conducted through voluntary consultations, health center visits, and community assemblies. No provision of this Act shall be construed as authorizing BHWs or any government official to conduct unannounced inspections or warrantless entries into private residences for the purpose of gadget use surveillance;
- B. **Voluntary Engagement:** All household participation in "Digital Wellness Pledges" or home-based screen time tracking shall be strictly voluntary and incentivized rather than coerced;
- C. **Confidentiality of Information:** Any information gathered by BHWs and CDWs regarding a family's digital habits or a child's developmental status shall be treated as privileged medical/social work information and shall be protected under Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the 'Data Privacy Act of 2012'; and
- D. **Advisory Nature of Guidance:** Guidelines issued for home settings shall remain advisory, emphasizing education, parental empowerment, and supportive intervention rather than punitive enforcement against parents or guardians.

SEC. 14. *Sanction for Noncompliance.* The DepEd and DILG, in consultation with the ECCD Council and DOH, shall determine the administrative sanctions for those who fail to implement this Act, insofar as to persons under their respective authority are concerned.

Additionally, failure of private establishments engaged in business operations to implement this Act shall serve as sufficient basis for the suspension or cancellation of their business permits by the LGU concerned, subject to due process.

SEC. 15. *Annual Reporting to Congress.* - The ECCD Council, DepEd, DOH, and DILG shall submit to the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress an annual report on the implementation of this Act. The report shall include, but will not be limited to the following:

- A. Compliance rates among schools;
- B. Statistics on violations and disciplinary actions;
- C. Status of ICT integration and digital wellness curriculum;
- D. Effectiveness of implementation in home and community settings;
- E. Identified challenges and recommended amendments; and
- F. Other matters that they may deem relevant for the implementation of this Act.

The first report shall be submitted one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act, and annually thereafter.

SEC. 16. *Periodic Review.* - The ECCD Council, DepEd, DOH, and DILG shall conduct a periodic review of this Act every three (3) years to evaluate its effectiveness, consider emerging technologies and educational practices, and recommend amendments to Congress, as necessary.

SEC. 17. *Transitory Period.* - A transitory period of six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act shall be provided for full compliance by all concerned entities.

SEC. 18. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, the ECCD Council, DOH, DepEd, and DILG, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 19. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 20. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 21. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.