

Apple investors press for parental controls on iPhones

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(HealthDay)—Parents aren't the only ones worried about their kids'

smartphone habits. Some big Apple investors want the iPhone developer to make it easier for Mom and Dad to manage their children's phone time.

Apple also needs to explore potential mental health effects of smartphone overuse, says a letter sent to the technology giant this weekend by Jana Partners LLC and the California State Teachers' Retirement System (Calstrs).

Jana, a leading activist [investor](#), and the pension fund control about \$2 billion of Apple shares, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The letter states that "Apple can play a defining role in signaling to the industry that paying special attention to the health and development of the next generation is both good business and the right thing to do," the *Journal* reported.

In the letter, the investors cite a "growing body of evidence" of "unintentional negative side effects" from excessive smartphone use by the so-called "iGen."

Some worry that as screen time replaces face-to-face socializing, rates of depression and suicide are rising as well. The authors cited worrisome research by Jean Twenge of San Diego State University and others, plus observations from teachers, according to the news report.

The investors want Apple out front in attempting to learn what is optimal usage and in simplifying parental controls. The company shouldn't wait for consumers or regulators to demand action, the investors contend.

"There is a developing consensus around the world including Silicon Valley that the potential long-term consequences of new technologies need to be factored in at the outset, and no company can outsource that

responsibility," the shareholders wrote.

They have drawn big names to an advisory board, including rock musician Sting and his wife Trudie Styler, and Sister Patricia Daly—the nun who took on Exxon Mobil Corp. over environmental concerns, the news report noted.

Media expert Michael Rich, an associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, likened the movement to other public-health science campaigns.

"How can we apply the same kind of public-health science to this that we do to, say, nutrition?" Rich told the *Journal*. "We aren't going to tell you never go to Mickey D's, but we are going to tell you what a Big Mac will do and what broccoli will do."

More information: Common Sense Media has tips for parents for [managing kids' cellphone use](#).

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