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Older children with emotional problems and high levels of sensation seeking are most at risk of excessive internet use.

Older children with emotional problems and those who have high levels of sensation seeking are most at risk of developing of excessive internet use a new report by EU Kids Online has found.

Parents with concerns over their children's internet use, however, should not simply focus on

especially, but not only, when a child has been bothered by something online. Commenting on the report, the main author Dr David Smahel, said: "When these matters are addressed directly, though parents talking and communicating openly about these issues, it is more likely to mean that time spent online, and the development of digital skills, will help the child move towards a healthy use of the internet as they get older"

The research suggests that protective strategies start offline and at an early age, taking notice when children display relevant psychological characteristics such as sensation-seeking and emotional problems.

It is important to note that restricting the time young people spend online is not the best way to deal with excessive internet use since it ignores the causes of this behaviour.

If the child already experiences pathological excessive internet use, demonstrated by displaying all of the behavioural components identified earlier, the report recommends that parents ask for help from relevant professionals, such as clinical or educational psychologists, or school counsellors, who can help to solve the associated offline problems the child is likely to experience.

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For more information:

The report "*Excessive Internet Use among European Children*" surveys European children's risk of excessive Internet use, and the national differences that exist. The study is an in-depth analysis of 19,834 European 11-16 year olds in 25 European countries who have one or more indicators of excessive use.

For the full report, *Excessive Internet Use among European Children* by David Smahel, Ellen Helsper, Lelia Green, Veronika Kalmus, Lukas Blinka and Kjartan Ólafsson, see <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20III/Reports/ExcessiveUse.pdf>

For more information please contact Dr Leslie Haddon at l.g.haddon@lse.ac.uk or see www.eukidsonline.net

Information about the project and survey:

The EU Kids Online project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, and thereby to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children. The project is funded by the EC Safer Internet Programme (SI-2010-TN-4201001).

EU Kids Online conducted a face-to-face, in home survey of 25,000 9-16 year old internet users and their parents in 25 countries, using a stratified random sample and self-completion methods for sensitive questions.

Countries included in the survey are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. In addition the project includes research teams from Croatia, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Russia, Slovakia and Switzerland.

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For more findings, see Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., and Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full findings*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. Other reports and technical survey details are at www.eukidsonline.net