



Kanton Zürich
Gesundheitsdirektion

Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung

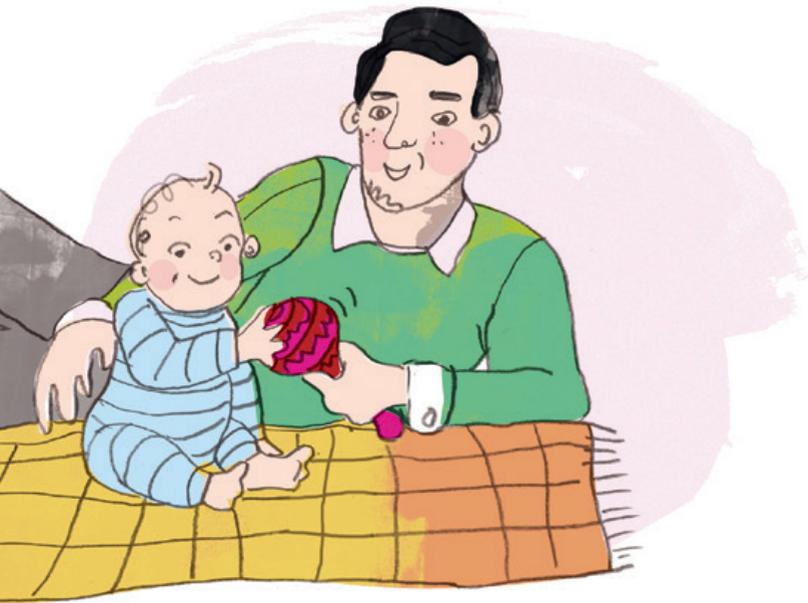
Focus on
use of media



Tips for parents of children aged up to 4

Supporting children

Englisch



Help children to learn with all their senses

Little children discover the world through play. They learn with all their senses because they listen, smell, touch, taste and see. This is why direct contact with other people, real things and nature is so important. Banging on a saucepan with a wooden spoon, putting everything in their mouths, touching a snail, or smelling a flower – such experiences cannot be replaced by an app.

Give them your full attention

In the early years it is important to develop a strong relationship with your child. A strong relationship develops when you quickly notice when your child needs you and respond suitably, such as when your child needs something to eat, needs comforting, is tired and needs to sleep, needs a cuddle, or a nappy change. Little children need their parents' full attention – parents who talk to them, look at them and look after them. If you are often distracted by your mobile phone, it is not good for your relationship with your child.

Ensure relaxed meal times

Eating together strengthens family relationships. Switch off digital media at meal times, so that people can talk to each other. Studies show that people are more likely to recognize that they are full and that they enjoy a meal more if digital devices are not being used during the meal.

In the case of babies, breast or bottle feeding is a good opportunity to build a relationship. Give the child as much of your attention as possible. If you read or watch television when breastfeeding, you should still pay attention to signals given by the child and respond immediately. Experts recommend that you should try to avoid using devices that emit radiation near babies and little children.

Use age-appropriate media

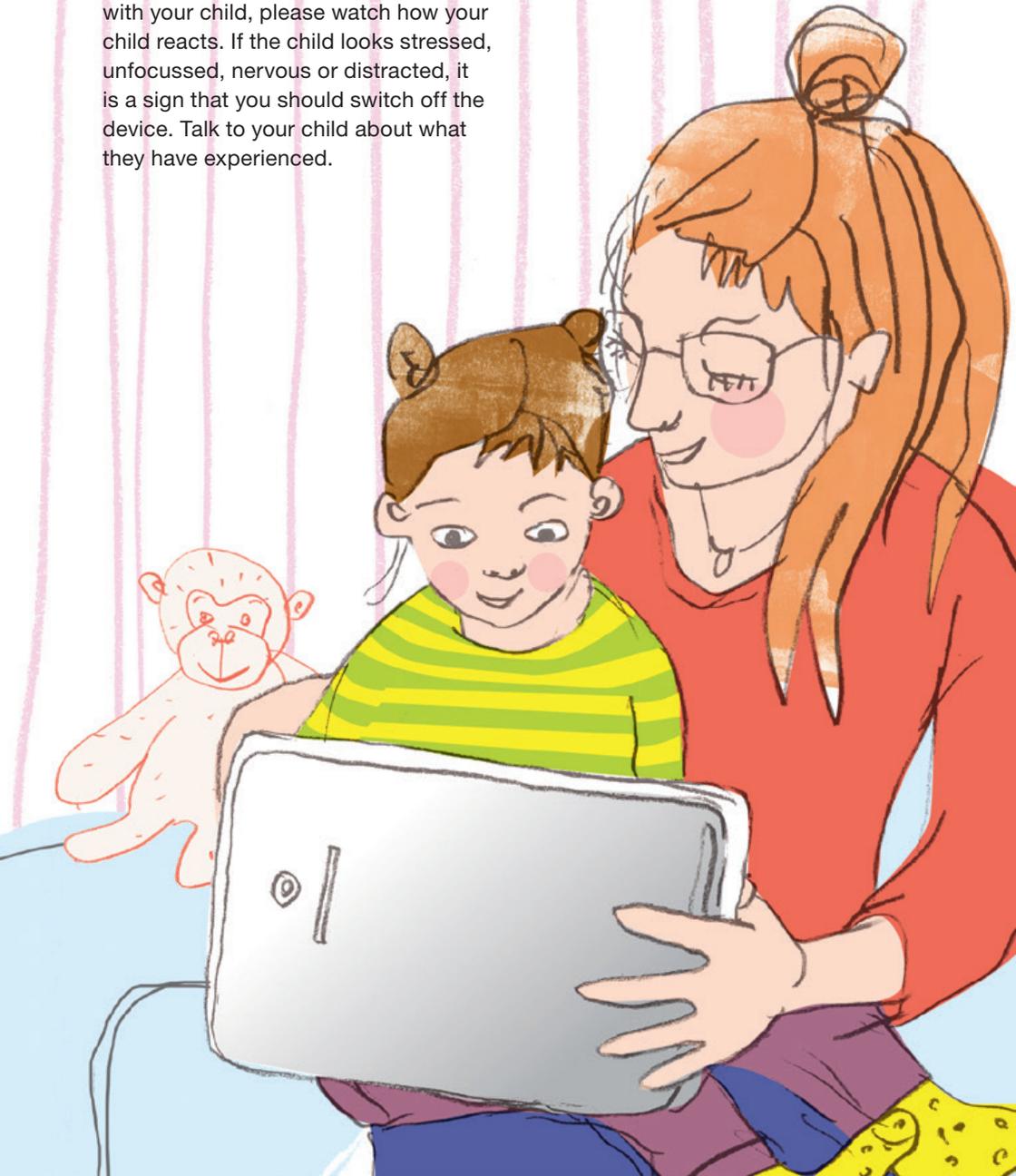
Picture books, audio books or music suitable to the child's age are the most suitable ways for children to experience different digital media for the first time. Little children love to be read aloud to, to look at books together, or to listen to stories and music together.

Skyping with relatives or looking at family pictures on your mobile phone are one way to introduce little children to digital devices. If you occasionally play a game or video on a screen for your child, please check the age rating first and consider it carefully.



Keep your child company

Don't leave your child alone in front of the screen. If you use digital media with your child, please watch how your child reacts. If the child looks stressed, unfocused, nervous or distracted, it is a sign that you should switch off the device. Talk to your child about what they have experienced.





Your child needs exercise

Let your child have lots of exercise from the very start. There are options at every age – reaching for a finger or a toy, kicking when laid on a mat or rug, rolling over, trying to walk for the first time, rolling in the grass, skipping, climbing on a rock. A wide range of learning experiences is important at every age. Babies should have the chance to move freely several times per day, toddlers for several hours per day and some of this time should be in the fresh air.

Use digital media very rarely

In the first year of life, children can't understand even the simplest videos because the pictures change much too quickly. Little children can't understand the difference between videos and real life. Digital media do not benefit the development of babies and little children. On the contrary – studies show that watching television during the first year of life is bad for the development of children's speech and language. Children do not sleep as well and watching television disrupts the interaction between parent and child. Digital media should be the exception where children under four are concerned. If they are used occasionally, it should be for no more than half an hour at a time.

Practice what you preach

Babies and little children learn a lot from how people in the family use the television, tablets and smart-phones. Because children learn a lot from imitation, it is important that you yourself restrict your use of digital media. Where little ones are concerned, the less you use your smart-phone in your child's presence, the better. Give your child your attention, not the media!



Advice centres in canton Zurich

Kinder- und Jugendhilfezentrum kjz – Advice centres for families with children aged 0 to 18: kjz.zh.ch

Parent emergency telephone line: 0848 35 45 55 (24 hours)

Pro Juventute parental advice: elternberatung.projuventute.ch, 058 261 61 61 (24 hours)

In cooperation with:



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Bildungsdirektion
Amt für Jugend und Berufsberatung

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Die Stellen für **Suchtprävention**
im **Kanton Zürich**

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Sektion
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