

Opportunities / benefits of digital media

- Fun and variety
- Knowledge and learning opportunities
- Creativity
- Technical understanding
- Communication and exchange
- Skills and the ability to respond

Risks of digital media

- Overload and anxiety
- Overstimulation
- Neglect of other pastimes
- Lack of exercise
- Dependence

Guidance

Do you have any questions about your child's media usage? Are you unsure if your child spends too much time in front of a screen? Do you find it difficult to enforce rules? These specialist agencies will help you:

- Parental guidance from Pro Juventute:
elternberatung.projuventute.ch
058 261 61 61 (24 hrs)
- Parents' emergency hotline:
0848 35 45 55 (24 hrs)
- Further counselling services:
lotse.zh.ch

This flyer is available in many other languages.

Recommended websites

All media

- Advice for parents (all ages):
jugendundmedien.ch > Medienkompetenz fördern > Eltern & Familie
- Advice for parents: schau-hin.info

Films and TV programmes

- TV programme tips for parents: flimmo.tv
- Age limits for films: filmrating.ch > Kinofilme
- Age limits for videos: filmrating.ch > Bildtonträger

Apps and games

- Information on children's apps:
datenbank-apps-für-kinder.de
- Age limits for games: pegi.info

Internet

- Overview of children's websites:
enfk.de > Kinderwebsites
- More recommended sites:
internet-abc.de, seitenstark.de
- Information on technical protection:
jugendundmedien.ch > Themen > Sicherheit & Datenschutz

Available to order

This leaflet and information for parents with older children can be ordered on:
suchtprevention-zh.ch

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TV, tablet and mobile phone

Digital media: Avoiding dependence

Tips for parents of children up to 10 years old

TV, tablets and mobile phones are fun and exciting for children, inviting them to communicate and learn. However, they can also overwhelm children and lead to dependence.

You are their role model

Children learn how to deal with media mostly in the family environment, so ask yourself: How do I use the TV, my tablet and mobile phone on an average day?

Whenever possible, take a break from using media when you are together with your child. This is particularly important with babies and toddlers.

Give your child guidance

Small children can already use TV sets, tablets and mobile phones on their own, but should not do so. Much content found on TV and online can be too much for children or can scare them. Digital media do not belong in a child's bedroom.

How much screen time is recommended?

0–3 years: no digital media

3–5 years: up to 30 minutes daily

6–9 years: up to 45 minutes daily

10 years: up to 1 hour daily

Important: Recommended times apply to leisure time. More screen time on one day can be exchanged for less time on another. Additional screen time can be added for homework.

Tip: Once in a while, use no digital media for a day – both you and your child.

Look for content on TV and online that is age-appropriate for your child and access this together.

Under 3 years old No digital media

Children need direct contact with people, real objects and nature to learn and develop well. Outdoor exercise is also important.

As a general rule and if possible, children under 3 years of age should not use digital media at all. They especially shouldn't be watching films. It is fine to look at some photos together or to speak with relatives online, but don't let yourself be distracted by your mobile phone when you are with your child. S/he needs your full attention, care and interaction to develop healthily.

3–7 years old First experiences with digital media

From 3 years of age, you can watch a short film together with your child, play a game or use an app. Make sure that the content is appropriate for the age and maturity of your child. Don't have the TV on in the background and don't use digital media as a babysitter. Observe how your child reacts and respond accordingly.

Ask your child what material s/he finds good or less good to watch. Tell him/her what you liked and what you didn't, and explain why. This will help your child develop his/her own opinions. Being together with other children and exercising outside in nature are of central importance to their healthy development at this age too.

7–10 years old Introducing the internet

«What do camels have in their humps? Can penguins fly?» Once s/he starts attending school, your child's questions will help you to make initial, shared discoveries online. Suitable websites are found in the links section.

Keep on asking if your child has seen something which s/he hasn't understood or doesn't like. Tell your child that you will always help, even if s/he has encountered something unpleasant online, whatever it might be.

It is important that children are not only consumers of digital media, but that they are also allowed to use them creatively (for example by taking and adapting photos).

From what age are children ready to use the internet on their own? Experts recommend surfing independently from the age of 12. Younger children therefore need no devices of their own.

Limit time spent on digital media

As a parent, agree on clear screen times with your child and make sure the rules are being followed. Limiting usage helps prevent the development of a dependency.

Forbidding your child from accessing digital media only makes sense if agreed screen time rules have not been followed. Don't reward or punish your child by increasing or reducing screen time for any other reason.

What parents can do

- No digital media for children aged 0–3 years.
- Don't pay more attention to the media than to your child.
- Respect the age limits and familiarise yourself with the content.
- Explore digital media together with your child. Speak with him/her about what s/he has seen.
- Limit screen time and make sure the rules are being followed.
- No TV or computer in a child's bedroom.
- Children under 12 years of age shouldn't own mobile phones or computers.
- Every now and then switch all digital media off. This will enable the family to experience things together without use of media.
- If you feel uncertain about anything, sharing with other parents can help. You can find support and advice from a counselling service.