

Media literacy for children

Digital media have become an integral part of our lives. Children grow up with digital media and need their parents' care and support to become media literate. Here, we have assembled a few tips and tricks for parents and children to help them when dealing with digital media.

Explore the media world together: Media and family life

Children need time to slowly develop an understanding for media and their contents. Small children under the age of two even perceive flickering screens mainly as a source of irritation and cannot suitably comprehend their content. Therefore, it is important for you to explain the media world step by step and always accompany your child. The key to long-term learning is to talk about media and their contents as well as creativity in handling media.

Ideas for sensible media integration in the everyday family routine

0-2 years	Read picture books to your child and/or explain what the illustrations show. Support your child during the first steps of speaking and encourage pointing at the pictures. This promotes the linguistic development .
3-5 years	Encourage your child to actively listen when you read a story or when you listen to a short audio book together. This trains the ability to concentrate . At this stage, you can also slowly begin to enjoy screen media together. For this, you can start with digital picture books or short, age-appropriate TV shows.
6-7 years	Once your child starts school, the areas of interest will branch out into various age-appropriate children's and educational programmes . Watch them together and talk about what you learnt. You can also try out educational games and learning apps together. Encourage your child to use media creatively, for example use a camera to take pictures.
8-10 years	Now, you can organize family nights with longer films for children. Talk about what everyone enjoyed the most. This is how your child learns to develop a sense of what quality means when reviewing media. You can also explore computers and the internet by trying out games for children and find answers to open questions on children's search engines .
11-13 years	Media can offer interesting topics for discussion. You can go and watch a film or play video games together. This way you will find something to do that everyone enjoys. Social media and smartphones also gain in importance during this age. Accompany your child during the first steps on social media.

Make sure your child always has **enough to do away from digital media**. Encourage your child to do physical exercise by offering a stimulating environment and appropriate hobbies.

Recommendations for children's media

Children can access a large and varied range of child-oriented media. We will show you how to recognize **media content suitable for children** and make specific recommendations.

Audio media

Kid-friendly audio media are characterized as follows:

- ✓ age-appropriate topics and language
- ✓ reliable source
- ✓ ad-free content
- ✓ no unsettling or scary background sounds or clips

Recommendations:

Fun Kids Online radio station for kids www.funkidslive.com	But Why? Educational podcast www.vpr.org/podcast/but-why-a-podcast-for-curious-kids	KidNuz News podcasts kidnuz.com
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Screen media

Find age-appropriate shows for your child on TV channels for children. Outside of these pre-filtered channels, you should assess for yourself which content you consider suitable for your child. The following guide helps you decide which online media are age-appropriate:

- ✓ focus on quality content
- ✓ games and animations do not overwhelm
- ✓ educational content presented in a playful manner
- ✓ child protection laws observed
- ✓ no in-app purchases available
- ✓ additional parental control settings with extended set-up options (e.g. time limits)

Recommendations:

Apps/Websites: Khan Academy Educational website www.khanacademy.org Scratch Jr Coding app for kids Recommended age: 6+ years	YouTube Channels: SciShow Kids Recommended age: 5 to 10 years www.youtube.com/c/scishowkids/ Crash Course Recommended age: 10+ years www.youtube.com/c/crashcourse/	Child-oriented search engines: www.kiddle.co www.kidssearch.com
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Rules and guidelines for your child's media use

Rules and routines help you to keep an eye on the media consumption of your child. Find daily media use time limits recommended for your child here:

Age	Recommended screen time
18 months or younger	no screen time recommended
18 months to 2 years	limited screen time with high-quality content (only with parental guidance)
2 to 5 years	no more than 1 hour per day (with parental guidance)
5 years or older	consistent limits on daily screen time

To get an overview of how long your child has used various media, you can set up a **media timetable** or make your own **media vouchers**.

You can also use the 3-6-9-12 rule as a guideline:

- ✓ under 3 years of age: no screen media
- ✓ under 6 years of age: no own gaming console
- ✓ under 9 years of age: no own mobile phone or smartphone
- ✓ under 12 years of age: no unsupervised computer use

Navigating the internet safely: Internet safety for the whole family

On the internet and in social networks, you should always watch out for your own **safety and proper use of private information and payment details**. A safe website can be recognized by the following characteristics:

- ✓ The abbreviation *https* is present.
- ✓ The website includes a legal notice/imprint.

Also, when you are active in social networks, you need to pay attention and protect your personal data and make sure that unauthorized people cannot see them. This is important to do:

- ✓ Set up a private profile.
- ✓ Regularly check your privacy settings.
- ✓ Remove the tick in the consent check box for advertising.

An important aspect of internet safety is a **strong password**. To ensure greater security, your password should:

- ✓ not show an obvious pattern
- ✓ be unpredictable
- ✓ contain symbols and numbers
- ✓ be at least 12 characters long

Respectful behaviour online for children and adults

Netiquette entails rules for good behaviour on the internet. Generally, the same rules of respectful manners apply online as they do in everyday life:

- ✓ Think first, then write.
- ✓ Read your draft once more before sending.
- ✓ Remain friendly, even when critical comments are made.
- ✓ Do not click on links sent to you.
- ✓ Get support if someone is insulted.

Within social networks, there are many possible ways of interaction. Therefore, additional netiquette rules apply:

- ✓ Consider very carefully which pictures you would like to publish. Could they be embarrassing to you or someone else?
- ✓ Never post addresses, phone numbers or locations.
- ✓ If you see inappropriate or insulting posts, approach support or the moderator.
- ✓ Only accept people to your friend list, who you really know.

For further information, ideas and recommendations see our guide "[Media literacy for children](#)".