



## Recommendations for parents on screen media use

Children grow up with screen media, they use them for their entertainment, to play and to communicate. In addition to the opportunities offered by media use, we pediatricians also see the downsides of this development: playing with real things, talking, reading, artistic activities, outdoor exercise, sleeping and school are often neglected. Boredom and rest, which are important for fostering creativity, are often neglected. In addition, technical savvy does not mean media literacy. Children usually don't know how to handle their own data and that of others, cyberbullying or the flood of information online.



We pediatricians are concerned about this development. That is why we recommend that parents, grandparents and other caregivers monitor the media use of the children entrusted to their care. The recommendations of numerous professional societies are summarized on the next page. They are based both on experience from our daily work and on scientific data.

It is particularly important for us to limit the consumption of screen media (PC, tablet, game consoles, TV, smart phone, etc.) to limited periods of time and to show children what joy it is to experience the real world and real togetherness with friends with all their senses. Anchored in reality, children and young people can later deal with media in a more self-determined way.

We're not talking about a ban, but about a healthy approach to digital media. To achieve this, parents must accompany their children into the media world in an age-appropriate way, be informed about the content and extent of their children's media use, talk to them about it and also control it - right from the start.

The following recommendations will help. Not all recommendations apply equally to all ages. A wide range of research has shown the effects of children's use of screen media at different ages. Nevertheless, a general recommendation is always arbitrary and controversial among international experts. The rule is: the smaller the children, the larger the screen-free space in their lives should be. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Alexander Rosen

### **Be mindful of the way you use screen media yourself**

- Be aware that you are a role model for your child and that he or she will imitate you
- Use technical devices in a goal-oriented way and not out of boredom
- Eat without screen media and use screen media without eating
- Enable healthy sleep: Screen-free bedtime rituals and screen-free bedrooms are important

### **Do not use screen media as educational aids**

- Do not use screen media to reward, punish, or calm.

### **Prioritize reality and active learning**

- Allow yourself and your children to have real experiences with other people and all their senses
- Talk to your child and listen carefully
- Allow your child to be creative by giving them less pre-set tasks
- Avoid screen media for children under three years of age
- Provide more activity time than screen time during free time

### **Accompany first film experiences**

- Accompany your child's film experiences: In the beginning, interrupt when children ask questions and talk to them about what they have seen
- Choose calm, age-appropriate TV shows without violence
- Don't leave the remote control to your children
- Use the commercial break for a pause; turn off the sound.

### **Use screen media within age-appropriate limits.**

- Establish clear rules and limit screen media time before turning it on.
- Adhere to age restrictions for computer games, movies and social media.
- Discuss clear rules for smartphone use with your child
- Ensure that your child adheres to the school's cell phone rules

### **Sex education and the Internet**

- Provide sexual education for your child before he or she gets it from the internet
- Talk to your child about privacy, social media, violence, pornography, gambling; start before giving them their own internet access
- Also have your child show and explain to you what interests them on the internet

### **Without an electric cord**

- Allow yourself and your child to be unavailable from time to time
- Encourage your child to remain independent of the smartphone
- Support communication without electronic devices

### **IMPORTANT**

- If your child is neglecting real life: seek professional help
- Contact us, we are happy to help