glad

*Guidance and Learning
App for Adult Digital Education*

GLAD toolkit 3 for parents:
My children and I in a technological world

GLAD (2019-1-PL01-KA204-065555) is a European project to reflect & discover stories of parents in Europe to suggest and share practices to better usage digital tools and make our children grow strong and safe. Visit: *https://www.digitalparent.eu/*

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third toolkit for parents of GLAD related to the healthy use of technologies at home. You will learn more about the role of technologies on children lives, how to promote its healthy use and prevent it misuse and negative impact on family environments thanks to suitable parental mediation techniques. What would I learn on this toolkit?

This toolkit is one of the three complementary toolkits that compose *the GLAD manual for parents,* a learning material focused on digital mediation and education of those parents interested on having a better performance when dealing with the relation between their children and technologies at home. If you want to go further on your training, explore also *the first toolkit* of the project about understanding yourself and personal competences, and *the second toolkit* about interpersonal relations and conflict management with children.

MY CHILDREN AND I IN A TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

WATCH VIDEO

Technologies (ICTs) have changed the way of interaction between parents and children, as well as between children and their peers. Differently to our childhood when ICTs existence was rare or just on concrete spaces, technology's role is nowadays omnipresent and part of our children's life, conditioning the relations that they have with others.

Children are nowadays surrounded by technologies in such a level that the way they interact with the world will be sooner or later conditioned by them (some research even suggests that many pre-schoolers become familiar with digital devices before they are exposed to books). The results of the Eurostat agency showed that 98% of children in Europe have internet access at home, 72% use technologies in school and that teenage students spend every day around 2 hours online after classes. This time online increases with the years as young people are particularly active online and being connected to their online communities is important for their adolescents' and coming relationships.

One fact that most people agree upon is the importance of kids' social skills to life success. Along with this belief, the public opinion spread concern that technology has a detrimental effect on kids' social skills.

It is evident that children need social skills to live successfully, but they are not incompatible with the development of the digital ones that are needed for many tasks and processes in current modern societies. Studies also show that the negative impact of technologies in children has sometimes been overestimated when it is assumed that they reduce children's social skills or other competences. We must not forget that social relations are complex, and they can be developed in many ways. ICTs can reduce face to face relations but also promote many other ways of interacting: social networks can facilitate first contact with others, online groups put people with the same interest together and reinforce their knowledge and creativity on concrete issues, the online space remove geographical barriers and put us in contact with other cultures and contexts, etc.

Some social media could reduce children's ability to interact with others on a speaking level, but rather than undermining social relationships, screen-based technologies may be regarded as providing a new platform by which children seek autonomy from parents, create their own spaces and rules, interact with peers and build or develop their identities. They support children to explore and discover about themselves while experiencing different profiles and alternatives that will contribute to building their future personality (offline and online). This life digitalisation can bring to our children many new opportunities of learning, being connected and enjoying, that can shape successful and healthy life experiences. Far from many misconceptions, well managed technologies could bring countless benefits to our children and new scenarios where we could interact with them and generate rich family moments.

However, the process could also bring to us, parents, new challenges and situations that we should learn to handle when children use technologies and to avoid associated risks that they could also generate. This does not only mean to get familiar with the devices and technologies that children use, but also be aware about the threats that they can suppose in terms of privacy, addictions, unpleasant relations, others oppression or even abuse.

According to this, family and especially parents play an essential role in children's digital education and learning. Parents need to move between the prevention scope to avoid risks and the reaction field when the misuse of ICTs happens or impacts on their children. At the same time, they need to learn how to also take advantage of these technologies to monitor children's behaviour online, promote their education, be in contact with them or even plan their family duties. To achieve all these goals, a suitable parental mediation should be implemented in each family and evolve together with the relation between children-parents throughout their lives. How? This toolkit will help you to manage it.

**You can read more about these topics here:**

- *Relation technology and children lives impact*

- *Young children and digital technology: a qualitative exploratory study across seven countries*

3.1 DEFINING PARENTAL MEDIATION

We can define parental mediation as the set of strategies, attempts and guidelines that parents adopt to regulate and teach their children the correct use of ICTs and electronic devices, while accomplishing healthy family interactions thanks to them. Its aim is to fight against "technoference", that is the group of negative effects imposed on human relationships due to the intrusive use of technology, that in this case, could came from children lack of digital education or even from parents ICTs misuse (ex. parents might be spending too much time on their phones, so they end up not listening to their children).

As you can imagine, to perform an appropriate parental mediation is not a piece of cake. There are many types of strategies of mediation that are directly related to the parenting styles already explained in *the first and second toolkit for parents of GLAD.* The most important thing is that parents are able to choose the strategy that fits better with the way they aim to educate their children, children development stages and generate their own criteria about ICTs technologies use, so they can properly train their children in a coherent and balanced way.
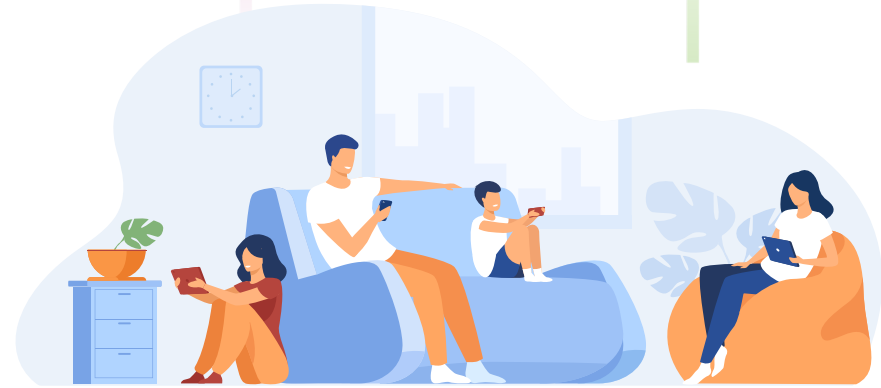
Helping children and teens learn to manage ICTs and their online interactions or social networking is paramount to their healthy development. Parents must lead the way by setting a good example of what healthy computer usage looks like, acting as mentors not just monitors for their children, being also models of this ICTs use that children can perceive and take as an example. Mentoring children allows parents to create an environment where kids will feel comfortable talking about their digital activities. As they grow to adulthood, children will have the internal resources to both manage their own use of technology and determine how technology can help to improve their lives. According to this, mentoring means teaching our kids to think on their own, letting them make the right decisions while guiding them in the process, teaching them to practice good habits, and leading by example. It's about communicating what is right and wrong to them and exerting some control only when necessary. Apply too much control and you will defeat the purpose of teaching your children how to survive and thrive on their own.

Besides all of this, before starting to explore ICTs use or digital education of our children, there are different main issues that you should consider first:

⦿ Children nowadays are digital natives, so be opened to learn from them too. Showing mutual respect about their knowledge can create better relations and allow us to know deeper our children's interests.

⦿ Parents must not deny both the pleasures and creativity in children's engagement in ICTs, as well as the possibility that children have already developed strategies to assess and regulate their

own behaviour. Considering this, parents must also try to actively recognize potentials in children's use of ICTs and take advantage of them.

⦿ Parents' positive beliefs towards technology are associated with favourable attitudes, co-using approach, communication, or suggestions to enhance their children's appropriate use of the technologies. On the other side, those parents who experienced problems with ICTs use, tend to be associated with negative views on media effects and therefore, non-suitable mediation approaches. Considering this, be ready to explore and learn about new devices or acquiring digital competencies, do not be afraid of failing or ask others for support as it is never late to learn new stuff.

⦿ Kids love playing games with their parents. Instead of promoting no-screen time, encourage your child to spend "positive"/active and mindful screen time with you.

GO TO EXERCISE MINDFUL SCREEM TIME >

⦿ It is necessary to set a balanced and sustainable relationship with technology. Children can benefit from ICTs but never at the expense of other issues that they could need during their growing up stages such as physical activity, studies, family time, etc.

⦿ Choosing a more enabling mediation will offer children much more positive online opportunities, but also expose them to more risks. On the other hand, a restrictive approach would reduce risks,

but also the benefits that ICTs could bring to our children. Besides trying to find a middle point, consider that those children who enjoy a more enabling mediation are more proactive to talk with their parents about online issues or ask them for advice, while those children who follow a strict restrictive approach are less motivated to ask for parental input.

Considering all of this, parents should develop a learning process for their children that implies delivering educational content by using the most suitable means and adequate materials existing (such as this toolkit), but also the proper skills to create and deliver it (ex. learning about new equipment, exploring new ways of doing things, reading about intellectual property rights and liabilities, understanding privacy online and ICTs misuse, etc.).

There is no single recipe for success, but you will know it when you see it and incorporate its ingredients little by little to your parenting style while building it. Balance for your family will look different than it will for your neighbour because every family is unique and parenting styles and values vary. According to this, there is not a unique answer to this issue, but many questions to have into account and be solved according to each family needs, characteristics and members capacities:

What is a normal amount of screen time for my children? How can I recognize appropriate content or games for them? How can I support my children when they are engaged in the media? How can I monitor and control my children's ICTs use? How do I guarantee my children privacy and safety online? At what age should my children use each device? How can I deal with the risks that ICTs could bring to my children?, etc.

The next pages of this toolkit will help you to answer all these questions that will arise during your parental mediation. They will also provide you tips, resources and guidelines to apply to the relationship with your children and sum to all the inter and intrapersonal skills also explained in the *first and second toolkits for parents of GLAD.*

GO TO EXERCISE WHAT'S THE PLAN? >

It is a long way to go, so do not feel overloaded, take your time and calmly make your choices when completing all its steps, just do as you have always done: make your best towards your children's wellbeing.

You can read more about these topics here:

- *Parents, Sometimes You're The Problem When It Comes To Tech Use*

- *Problems that parents experience in their parental mediation and the need for parenting support*

3.2 DIGITAL DEVICES AND SOFTWARE

Before jumping into digital mediation, let's see what we mean with ICTs. Digital devices and technologies are many nowadays and can easily be found in or out of our houses. They include any type or piece of technology that involves the interaction of a physical and visible component (hardware or device) or a digital one (software and online tools). Some examples of the main hardware and software that we can find in our houses could be:

Hardware / devices	Software / online tools
Computers (desktop and laptops)	Social networks
Tablets	Mobile apps
E-readers	Video and image editors
Smartphones	Text editors
Game consoles	Messages and communication tools
Smart televisions	Online and video games
Digital watches	Internet sites
Video and digital cameras	Movies and videos
GPS	Podcast and audio files

In order to arrange a suitable parental mediation and design your strategies, made yourself the next questions:

◉ How much of the previous hardware and software do I know, or should I be informed about first?
◉ How many of these ICTs do I have at home and my children have access to?
◉ Where are these devices or technologies located at home? Who can access them?
◉ Who are using them at home and with which purpose?
◉ Are they totally necessary for our home tasks, academic/ professional or family issues? Could be replaced by other effective alternatives?
◉ Is there any plan to manage their control, coordinate their use or monitor their consumption? etc.

These questions can be easier to answer if we think about the hardware and devices that we have at home as they are visible. However, we can find some difficulties in identifying software used by our children as they are not so easy to notice. This always brings the same question to parents: which are the popular software for my children that I should be aware of?

"POPULAR" SOFTWARE

"Popular" is such a cool word that it can become old fashioned immediately. To identify "popular" software for our children (or why they use some and not others) is an everyday changing task as some apps or games appear in waves that make it almost impossible to follow or understand all of them. According to this, parents must work on establishing a suitable communication and relation with their children in order to explore in a cooperative way those ICTs that they use more. This will make it possible that parents can focus on concrete software to explore them deeper, and to allow children to introduce to their parents these technologies in an active way, while making parents aware about their personal interests.

Among hundreds of online spaces and software existing, some examples to be highlighted due to their nowadays use could be:

a) Social networks: they put people in contact, allow them to share information or audio-visual content and promote personal relationships with features to make comments, exchange messages, share reactions, etc. Some examples could be Instagram, Snapchat, Tik-Tok, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

b) Online, computer games and video consoles: created to allow people to enjoy their free time (alone, in a team or even with other players online). Their content may vary a lot and they should be revised before its purchase thanks to labels as we will see on this toolkit (ex. car simulators, role plays, fight games, strategy, etc.). Some games and consoles will allow children to play online with others, so the relations that they set must be monitored too, as well as those game features that could demand a cost or children should pay for. Remember that there are also family-friendly active video games for different platforms that could allow you to play with your children and enjoy together too (ex. for consoles such as Wii, Playstation, Xbox, Nintendo Switch, etc.).
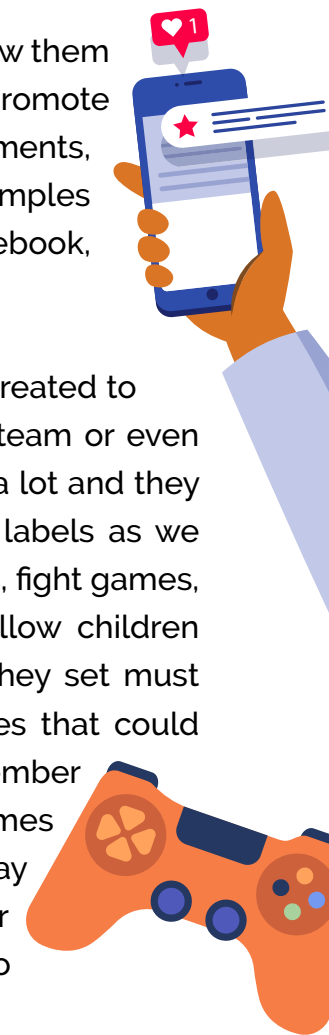
c) Mobile apps: they are software to be used on mobile devices. Some are direct phone access to the previously mentioned social networks. Others are games to play off and online. Some are just created with concrete and very diverse aims (ex. tune an instrument, find maps, edit photo/videos, mail boxes, etc.), while others are especially designed to act as messaging channels to put in contact people and allow them to exchange texts, images, videos, etc. (ex. WhatsApp, Telegram, Messenger, etc.). Consider that many of these apps can also help you as they will allow you to monitor your children screen time and ICTs use as we will see on the next chapter of this toolkit.

d) Tutorials and online courses: the internet can offer many resources to learn about different issues, so take advantage of them to train yourself or your children too! (ex. Coursera, Edx, Udacity, etc.). One of the most used spaces is Youtube and its tutorials, short videos made by people to share their knowledge and guidelines about different issues. This site also includes many accounts of users to follow (the so-called Youtubers or Influencers) that children can have access to and that parents should explore to see if they match with the values that they want for their children to acquire.

e) Information sites: created to share information, data and knowledge about any issue. Do you remember the old paper encyclopaedias you used to consult? This is the evolution into the digital world regularly updated by users all over the world (ex. Quora, Wikipedia, Reddit, etc.). Traditional newspapers and media also have their space online and can be read on the digital world.

f) Creativity software and working tools: designed to allow to develop different skills and outputs related to video, audio, image, etc. (ex. Osmo (merges real-world objects with digital ones on the iPad for a more tactile learning experience), Scratch (teaches children logical thinking through creating stories, animations and games), Toontastic (to boost creativity for future movie makers or writers), etc.).
Some are essential for children to work on school homework to write, make calculations or create presentations (ex. Microsoft Office with software such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc. or Apache OpenOffice alternatives).
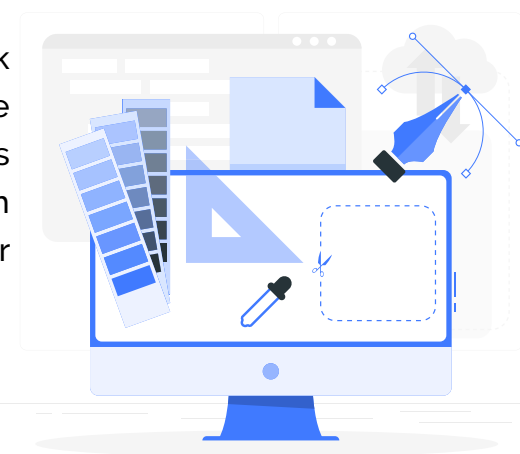
Here you will find some questions that will guide you to identify those "popular" software among your children and that you would need to answer together with them and/or with the support of other sources of information:

> *-Which devices/software do they use?*
> *-When and how much?*
> *-Why do they use them?*
> *-With whom?*
> *-Why do they like them?, etc.*

GO TO EXERCISE DEFINING "POPULAR" >

Be ready to revise these questions with them regularly to be aware about your children's evolution and adapt to it your parental mediation if needed.

Besides all these elements to consider, do not be afraid of exploring technologies in a self-didactic way. Create an account, play a game, register on a site, etc. So you can be aware of how each software works and, why not? Also enjoy and have fun at the same time alone or even with your family.

You can read more about these topics here:

  ⊙ *Apps guides for parents*

3.3 PARENTAL MEDIATION AND TECHNOLOGIES USE PER AGE

ICTs can empower children of any age along their lives with new ways of learning in an interactive way, moments to have fun while sharing the time with others and spaces to share their ideas and creativity. They also prepare them towards an everyday more digitalised society and labour market that they will belong to in the future. Digital literacy is a skill increasingly in demand and technology can offer incredible creative and academic opportunities.

As we will see in this chapter there are different official fonts that will help us to identify the suitability of a software depending on the age of our children. Despite this, considering that the recommendations of how and when to use devices are many, the most important thing is that parents build and agree their own criteria to be applied at home. We would need to ask ourselves questions such as: are our children accessing appropriate content according to their age? Are the devices they use making them more passive or are they thought and exercise provoking? Are they protected from being contacted by strangers or others that could put them in dangerous situations? etc.

To answer all these questions, we must also consider that children evolve along their lives as well as their relationship with technologies. There is no magic formula and we would need to adapt ourselves to our children growing up and evolution, that is constant and non-stoppable. This chapter will propose to you some guidelines that even if they could be applicable to your children, they would need to be revised regularly all over again and adapted during the different ages and stages that your children will go through on their pathway to adulthood.

How to do that? Remember that observation is crucial as what works with one child, may not work with another. Try to identify those tricks and strategies that could allow your family to enjoy technology while trusting the capacity of all its members on using technologies, being aware about their risks and avoiding them. Notice that observation is not only about good practices to implement, but it is also about identifying those children's behaviours that can put us on the track that the relationship that they have with technologies is not well balanced. Some of these behaviours could be:

GO TO EXERCISE WHAT'S THE PLAN? >

⦿ They say they are bored or have nothing to do when they do not have a device.

⦿ They get angry when the use or a device is limited or screen times are set.

⦿ A new device at home or ICTs start to reduce children's school results or even sleeping and open-air times.

It becomes more difficult to communicate with your children as priority is given to the device and not to you when you try to establish a conversation, etc.

Before exploring different tips or what we could do with children according to their age, start from you as we have seen in previous parts of this toolkit. According to this:

Set free screen time moments are FOR EVERYONE. Do not forget about you.

If you need to make decisions about technologies, plan them as it would be a family issue or housework that everyone should agree and be aware of. Children need to learn their self-regulation as this will help them to identify too when they are abusing from the screen time.

Share the screen time with your children. This will not only reinforce your relationship, it will

GO TO EXERCISE MINDFUL SCREEM TIME >

also allow you to analyse the content your children have access to. Moreover, your comments or common interaction between your child and the device or digital action will increase the child's possibility of learning from it. Watch a movie together, play a car race video game or challenge one to each other through a mobile app. Tailor made your interaction according to your children's interests.

Be a model as children tend to copy. Use technologies in the way that you want your children to do it too.

a) Time control apps are also useful for parents.

b) Showing children when you stop the use of a device and saying it loud will promote that they are unplugged too.

c) If you work out of home, give priority when you are back to pay attention to the family first. You will have time later to check your messages or emails. If you work at home, try to use specific times and special spaces to do it, so children can notice when you are working and therefore, you need to use more devices to complete your responsibilities.

d) Try to not use devices when you do other things (ex. while being in a meal, see your phone while you watch a movie, etc.).

e) Think about when you "really need" to reach on devices: is that call or email really so urgent or can I answer later

Each age brings new challenges as well as ways to tackle them as children develop new skills, cognitive competences and new ways of interacting with their environment. Here we propose some general tips and guidelines considering children's ages that are just set as a reference, as they may differ from each child or be applicable at different age stages at the same time. Check all of them despite the age of your children, as you could notice that there could be parts of this process that you skipped or just implemented in a different order but that needs to be revised anyway.

0-2 years old

The first years of life is the moment on which children develop more and faster their emotional, linguistic, motor and affective skills. On this stage, it is recommended that they interact as much as possible with the real world using all their senses. According to this, devices are not essential in this lifetime even though we could feel the temptation of offering them to our children to distract them: to stroke a dog is not the same experience as seeing it on a screen even if it moves and barks. It is a period in which brain connections are established very fast, so even if technology does not harm your child, real life experiences will potentiate more and better their cognitive development. Some tips:

O Try to use technologies only when necessary and to allow children to develop other skills (ex. doing a video chat with their grandparents who live far away and on which children can listen and develop their language skills through questions).

O Avoid using devices as a distraction or a babysitter while you are busy. If children have access to them, be there with them and use them together (ex. watching a video to sing or dance together).

O Try to avoid "miraculous" apps or videos promising to empower your children's brain development as they can even be counterproductive. Some apps used to teach children how to identify basic forms, numbers, colours, etc. could help, but you can

also use other non-digital elements and materials to work this with your children.

O Never leave your devices in a reachable place for your children (ex. put them in a high place or a drawer). If they are in the same space, be sure that they are locked so children cannot use them accidentally. When children are older, you can also start to set rules around them when you use them together.

GO TO EXERCISE BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL AND BUILD YOUR RULES >

Remember that your children will live in today's technological society, so they will sooner or later have access to the digital world. There is no hurry on immersing them in it if it is not totally needed as the alternatives they could experience in their earlier years could benefit them much more.

2-5 years old

Children start to be more independent, moving around and potentiate their curiosity. It is the moment when the access to digital devices start to become irresistible for them and new strategies must be considered:

◉ Create boundaries. In these years the social competences and first interpersonal behaviours are learnt. Use technology to let them know about sharing time, play together, understand balanced times between several people to play or how to take turns, etc. Children will really appreciate your attention to them even if it is with the excuse of exploring together an ebook, video or computer game.

◉ Analyse software first. Identify that the technology is appropriate in terms of content for your child. The next chapter of this toolkit will help you with this as there are many official labels and other sources of information that will allow you to understand products from the box and not be mistaken when choosing or buying them. Despite all this help, always try to explore the content by yourself in order to see if it is the appropriate one or check reviews of other users on the internet or media.

◉ Fix and agree with concrete criteria in terms of time and space to use devices FOR ALL THE FAMILY. Find free screen time periods for everyone and make them coincide with concrete moments that could be related with a more balanced health and family moments (ex. during meals, just before going to bed, when you are outside in nature or doing sports, etc.). Take care also of the space according to what you consider better or what you decide with the other members of your family (ex. not to have TVs in the bedrooms or kitchen, leaving the room to answer a call, setting computers in a room to work, etc.).

Have in mind that in the next ages after this period children will be more independent and will start to use devices alone. According to this, the period from 3 to 5 is essential for them to develop self-regulation skills that could allow them afterwards to consume technology in a more autonomous way and reduce risk.

6-12 years old

At this age technologies are not only a free time tool, but also an academic resource that they could require for doing their works or complete their school tasks (ICTs where actually the mean that many schools chose during the COVID-19 pandemic period, what really challenged those parents and children that did not previously have a balanced use of them). Even if children are more independent here, they will still need to give them direction on the use of technologies and devices (from a digital, physical and content point of view). Some new issues to consider on this stage:

○ Technology is not only a nightmare but also a help for you! There are many apps and software for content control that will allow you to rest from time to time and be sure that your children have access to adequate information when they use devices alone. You will find many of these examples in the next chapter of this toolkit.

○ Security first, privacy second. Besides accessing concrete content, it is the time to start to talk with your children about privacy. They need to be aware about the importance of non-sharing personal information. If you have doubts about how a device, social network or app is in this sense, create an account and explore how it works or how your children use it. At any moment, remind your children that they always have doubts or concerns about another user or behaviours online, they can talk with you. It is also interesting that

you are the one starting this conversation from time to time to see what is going on or when you detect that your child is upset or worried (ex. when he/she suddenly stops using a device). What happens online should stay in the digital world and not interfere with real life issues, but it is also important to be sure that our children have a "healthy digital life too" even if we are not experts and just offer them the floor to expose their problems and talk with us to receive advice.

○ Make your children be aware that the virtual world and digital one is different. They should learn that non-digital life is where they really live, but also start to understand that online behaviours could have an impact on it.

○ Taking care of devices. Children need to know how to treat them properly (ex. do not drink/eat close to the computer, use it only in that room, close it carefully, protect it with a cover or case when you do not use it, etc.). You can buy some "children-proof" devices especially for them or lend them old ones to prevent potential accidents or hits (so you can keep safe those that you really need at home or for your work). In this period, you will also need to answer the million-dollar question: Can they have a phone? Just because other friends have it is not the reason to buy one for our children. The moment of when to give children a phone depends on each parent values and can even come on next years, so here you can

find some questions to guide you on setting your own criteria:

a) Are your children careful with other devices at home and their belongings in general?

b) Have they already shown the capacity to use technologies in a suitable way? (in terms of content, place and time consumed).

c) Are they already following house rules about the use of technologies?

d) Are they responsible and mature about the content they can access?

e) Are they aware about their privacy and the importance of non-sharing information or personal pictures?

f) Do they really need the device to be in contact with their peers or I (as parent) to be in contact with them or to track their location for safety reasons?

If you consider that the answers to these questions justify the purchase of a phone but you still have concerns, remember that you can find many phones on the market especially for children and which design and configuration will be more suitable for them and your relief.

○ Take advantage of technology. If children need to use technology from time to time, try to show them educational or creative apps that could promote their other skills while using devices. Some video and computer games are also especially tough for this or to be played with the other members of the family, so try to encourage

their use by your children. Other games not controller-based also engage players in physical movements that make it possible to feel the space and elicit movement, allowing family members to interact too while doing some exercise.

This period could also be the one on which children could start to feel oppressed or abused by others (ex. peers, school mates, strangers online, etc). Bad practices such as bullying and grooming start to appear here even though children can suffer them much longer or after on time with really negative consequences.

Read more about this and how to tackle them in the next chapter of this toolkit.

13-18 years old

This age stage does not only consider the measures to be taken in all the previous ones, but brings technology into a period in which our children start to demand more freedom, independence and are building their personality and external image. Moreover, the relations outside the family and interaction with other social groups multiplies, so it is the moment on which the technologies appropriate use becomes more crucial and on which we will see the fruitful results of the good practices and lessons about devices used given to our children in previous periods. Some added guidelines here could be:

○ If you have not set rules before on the use of devices at home, do it now as you are still on time. At

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certain ages maybe you are not able to monitor a restrictive control as in the early years as children will aim to be independent on the use of devices, so be ready to offer them a mentoring approach and maybe a revision or conversation from time to time about how they use their devices or their "digital lives". Children will be on this stage more aware (if you train them in advance) about the risks they can face online, so you can even agree with them new amendments to the house rules that you already had and think about concrete issues such as: Send you a message or lost call always that they leave or arrive to a friend or relative house, calling back if they see more than one last call from you as it could be an important issue, never share inappropriate content photos or videos, do not text while they are walking/biking/skating, etc. Find out more information about digital manners on the last section of this toolkit (Netiquette).

○ These years are a period for children's freedom to expand. It is the moment on which you would also need to show respect for them and their privacy. It is about being still aware (you and them) about the need to monitor their digital activity, not about becoming "secret spies". Some examples of measures taken by some parents are:

a) Keep with them conversations from time to time about what they do online. Talk deeper with them about concrete issues if you have clues that something is not going properly. You can also show your interest in creative publications or stuff that they do online and discuss with them while you see what they do (always from an assertive approach). If you are on a common social network, you can also track your children's publications.
b) Educate your children on being smart online: children also create an online personality as well as a reputation, so it is important that they check their own "digital footprint" and be sure that their data is safe. Some issues you can invite them to check and tell them are:
• Use strong passwords (with letters, symbols, numbers,

not using birth dates, etc.).

• Not sharing personal data (ex. name, where do they live or study, etc,). Invite them to search for themselves online to check what others can see.

• When creating online users, use when possible a name not related to your personal data, gender or age (ex. Reddog99, Flyingdragon, Superperson_313, etc.);

• Do not use your picture on profiles but an "avatar" (the image of another being such as an animal, a video game or cartoon character, etc.).

• Check your privacy restrictions, who can see what you publish and who follow you or read your publications, etc

c) In case you really need it or in extreme situations, ask your children for their login details but be sure that they understand why this is important and open the door to allow them that they are provided voluntarily. Another trick that some parents do could be to invite children to write their passwords in a safe place in case you could need them due to an urgency, but that they can see that are not exposed if there has not been a real need and showing that you trust them (ex. a ceramic money box or a paper box sealed with some melted wax). Remind them that passwords sharing with you could be part of your responsibilities and parenting tasks, but also aware them about not to share them with others and protect their privacy (even if they are really close friends and boy/girlfriends: if they have such a good relation, they will understand, trust them and respect their privacy). Make them notice that their privacy settings must protect them from sharing their content to strangers so they cannot be contacted by them.

d) Do not listen to children's conversations when they are on the phone or revise their texts unless you have evidence that something is wrong or they ask you to do it if they have doubts.

⦿ Promote their critical thinking. Children need to train and practice to understand what is really important and think twice about the things that happen. This means to explore with them how marketing messages are created to manipulate them, what are the fake news and how to contrast information, reminding them not to forward gossips or issues that are not true or can damage other people, reinforce their self-esteem and recognise their capacities by reminding them that the number of followers or likes to do not define their value, etc. It is important that they know that whatever happens on the online world can follow us and have an impact on our non-digital lives, so they need to behave as they would do in a face to face or physical relationship or situation. Remind them to think twice about the impact of a publication before they post it and invite them to try to interact only with positive aims and content

they feel comfortable and can trust.

⊙ Take advantage of technology too. Out of being restrictive or controlling, ICTs can bring new creative spaces and empower our children not only with digital skills, but with other inter and intrapersonal ones if they are well managed. If your children show real interest in them, give them the floor to learn deeper on issues that could even offer them future professional opportunities (ex. installing them a software for programming or creating their own game, practising with music composers or movie makers, etc.). You can also ask here the support of other professionals an enrol your children in local academies with other peers and trained teachers to learn about robotics, video/photo edition, programming, etc. after the school or during the summer holidays when they could have more free time and not so many responsibilities.

⊙ Do not only think about the time screen quantity, but also on its quality. It is not the same to watch a 1-hour movie for children or a computer game with puzzles than 1 hour of random or uncertain content videos on Youtube. Try also that they use interactive and thought provoking apps and avoid those that could be passive.

In these years children will interact much more alone with others, so they can suffer from bad episodes related to practices such as sexting or phishing on which others could use their information to blackmail or extort them. You will read more about these issues in the next chapter of this toolkit.

As you will see in the next chapter, the digital space brings many risks (as well as allies to tackle them). According to this, the more we delay the exposure of our children to them in a sensible way and always considering that technologies could also bring benefits for everyone, the better for them. It is not about being ready to react as technologies will always run faster than we prepare ourselves, it is about practicing prevention and training our children with the tools and skills

to foresee risks or report them to us when they are perceived. To achieve this, try to practice and improve the parental and mediation skills promoted by this toolkit. Remember that a suitable communication and healthy relation with your children will always help you to exchange information, reinforce boundaries, be aware about what is going on, foresee potential risks and intervene when it could be needed while involving your children too in the

In a nutshell: the 10-step circle

If you have skipped several of the recommendations previously done while your children were growing up, you have children of various ages or need to reconsider your criteria on the use of ICTs at home, here you can see a graphic resuming the main principles to take care of at any time about parental involvement and that are recommended to revise from time to time:
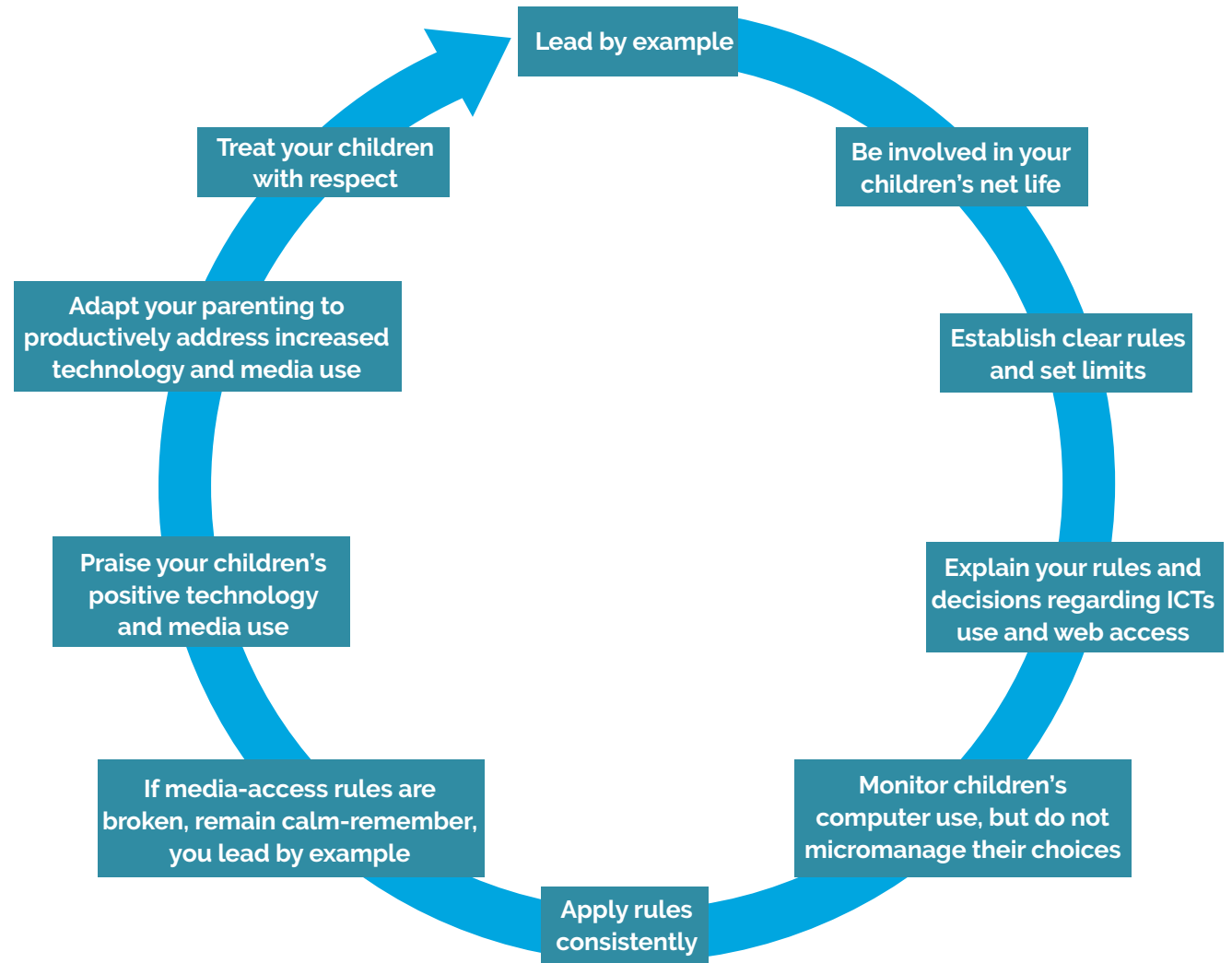
> *Ten interrelated principles of parent involvement applied to technology and media use" Source:*
>
> *(Patrikakou, 2016).*

Lead by example

Be involved in your children's net life

Establish clear rules and set limits

Explain your rules and decisions regarding ICTs use and web access

Monitor children's computer use, but do not micromanage their choices

Apply rules consistently

If media-access rules are broken, remain calm-remember, you lead by example

Praise your children's positive technology and media use

Adapt your parenting to productively address increased technology and media use

Treat your children with respect

1 **"Lead by example"**: be the example that you want your children to follow and replicate. Be sure that devices are not stealing you the time you should invest in your family. Try to not use technology as an emotional pacifier.

2 **"Be involved in your children's net life"**: be aware about their online life and hobbies. Co-view, co-play and co-engage to get to know more about their interests while setting stronger relations with them. The co-use also allows children to better learn and absorb the content they share with parents while helping parents to discover and explore how to deal with the software that children use. Make your children aware that you will be part of their online lives too, this will encourage them to talk about their online experiences with you. Ask for the support of professionals too in case you need help on defining your parental mediation style and take advantage of parental control software to help you.

GO TO EXERCISE DEFINING "POPULAR"

3 **"Establish clear rules and set limits": i**n terms of screen time, periods of use, content access, spaces of use or charging devices, etc. ICTs must be seen not as an essential right, but as a privilege that children can enjoy if they use them properly. Try to involve them as active creators of these rules with a voice on the issue.

4 **"Explain your rules and decisions regarding ICTs use and web access"**: be clear on why it is important to fulfil them and highlight the benefits and positive consequences that this could bring to your children's lives, health or the family. Make your children aware too of the risks that online spaces and technologies can bring and how these rules are made to protect them. They also need to understand what is expected from them when using each device or technology.

5 **"Monitor children's computer use, but do not micromanage their choices"**: promote children's self-regulation and critical thinking to use ICTs while being inside the boundaries that you set. If they make elections on ICTs used inside these boundaries, let them free too.

6 "**Apply rules consistently"**: do not modify them and try to keep them in similar situations and scenarios. Do not make breaks on them or exceptions even though you would need to be flexible to apply them on concrete moments.

7 **"If media-access rules are broken, remain calm—remember, you lead by example.** Apply consequences, also making it a teachable moment": your target is to teach them for potential moments on which

you could not be there in their future lives, so show them the relation between acts and consequences in a coherent and appropriate way. Practice mindfulness, relaxation techniques and stress reduction manners to deal with these moments if they trigger you.

8 **"Praise your children's positive technology and media use":** remind them that positive consequences also exist, so recognise when children do it properly by encouraging them, highlighting what they did well and saying out loud what you liked from their behaviour.

9 **"Adapt your parenting to productively address increased technology and media use":** ICTs can bring many benefits if they are properly used. Be open minded and take advantage of them to generate family shared moments that could reinforce your relationships while allowing all of you to learn something or have just fun!

> GO TO EXERCISE MINDFUL SCREEM TIME >

10 **"Treat your children with respect":** so, they will show you respect too. Teach them to be smart online as well as in real life with their privacy, relations with others, sharing personal information, identifying fake news, etc. Recognise also what children can provide or teach you and be open to learn from them too as digital natives.

Besides these recommendations, keep in mind that even though children often seem to understand technology better than adults do, they need guidance on how to use technology in a responsible and positive way. Be ready to guide them but also to show them that technologies are not all, so set free-ICTs times and spaces at home, promote physical and open-air activities, encourage them to join other face-to-face activities with their peers, etc. Try to always find a suitable balance for them and you.

You can read more about these topics here:

- *How parents normalized teen password sharing*

- *Videos good digital parenting*

- *Digital parenting resources*

- *Digital Health and Wellness for 21st Century Families*

- *Parenting and Technology: How to Raise Kids in the Digital Era*

- *9 Important Strategies for Raising Children in a World of Technology*

- *How To Set Meaningful Technology Rules For Your Family That Work*

- *Brilliant Idea Alert! An "Ethics Manual" for Your Teen's Electronics*

- *Screen free week organizers kit*

- *25 screen-free activities to wean kids off their screens*

3.4 PARENTAL CONTROL AND MONITORING RESOURCES

There is not a concrete screen time or recommended hours to use technologies per day or age. It is a non-answer debate maintained among experts and families that we would need to self-solve towards a healthy and balanced life for our children. Moreover, issues such as content enter on the stage and need to be controlled too. In any case, you would need to set fixed limits and try to promote spaces on which you are sure that technologies are not used so other issues can come into action (ex. not using devices during meals or when being outside). Parental control resources will help you with this as they include features or characteristics related to screen time management, content filters, geo-location, apps lock, activity monitoring, or age use recommendations that will facilitate you to prevent and monitor what your children do with ICTs. This will allow you to be calmer when children use devices and allow them more independence.

Age recommendations labels

Age labels are a useful support for parents to consider the suitability of a game or digital software for their children according to their age and content. This rating system will allow you to be aware about the product content without the need of testing or buying it first, so it is important that you get use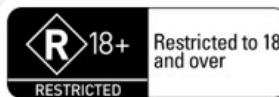d to revising this when selecting what your children will use. Nowadays there are different systems of legal limitations labels that dominate the digital market according to each continent or country, but the most important one in Europe is the Pan European Game information (PEGI). It includes different types of labels related to age (for which children is it recommended

to) and another group related to content description (ex. violence, sex, in-game purchase, etc.). It is important that you as a parent understand these labels, but also that you explain them to your children so they can also be aware about which content they should consume and which one they do not. You can find its explanation here: *https://pegi.info/what-do-the-labels-mean*

There are other badges providers such as the International Age Rating Coalition (*https://www.globalratings.com/*) or the ESRB in the USA (*https://www.esrb.org/*) but they are not so common in Europe. Here you can find their equivalences with the European system in case you need to compare them (Table in English).

Besides these labels there are also online sites on which you can check the suitability of the software you aim to buy (ex. video game, app, movie, etc.) such as Common Sense Media (*https://www. commonsensemedia.org/*). You can also use online forums or sites to see other people's opinions about games. Some sites where you can buy these products also include reviews of other people who bought them before and rating systems that will allow you to know more about each product.

Source: https://www.kaspersky.com/blog/gaming-age-ratings/11647/

Software for parental control

Technologies also bring solutions and alternatives for parents towards a suitable use of devices by children. Parental control software will allow you to add to your children devices (ex. mobile phones, smart tv, computers, tablets, etc.) extra features so they can use them safely. These features include options such as limit or control screen times, track or restrict the content that your children access to, locate where your children are, limit the downloading of apps, reports and statistics of the devices use, etc. They are a good complement for the rules that you could have at home for the use of devices and a very efficient tool when children start to use technologies in an autonomous way. The most popular software and the alternatives that they offer are:

	Time	Content	Apps	Location	Reports	Calls
Screentime ©	x	x	x	x	x	
Locategy ©			x	x	x	
Microsoft Family ©	x	x	x	x	x	
Family time ©	x	x	x	x		
Secure kids ©	x	x	x	x		x
Mac © restrictions	x	x			x	x
Family link ©	x	x	x	x		

Other free parental control apps and software are *FamiSafe ©, Qustodio Free ©*, *Windows Live Family Safety ©*, *Norton Online Family ©*, *Family Shield from OpenDNS ©*, *Kidlogger ©* or *Spyrix Free Keylogger.*

Besides this you can also find on internet safe places and apps already thought for children that could avoid risks as they have concrete features and content especially designed for minors such as Kiddle (safe visual search engine for kids: *https://www.kiddle.co/*) or Kidoz (Apps and content for children: *https://kidoz.net/parents-corner/*).

Finally, notice that devices (ex. smart TVs) or some online platforms (ex. Youtube) also offers you different settings options for parental control. However, some content is infiltrated and not well detected by these settings due to their creators' tricks, so it is always recommended that you try to supervise, when possible, what your children consume online and train them of their self-control as seen on the previous sections of this toolkit.

Other "analogues solutions" for technologies use

As mentioned in previous chapters and the *other toolkits for parents of GLAD*, setting boundaries and trusting on children's self-regulation is also important for a balanced use of technologies. Here you will find some examples and templates that can inspire you to create your own rules or devices

GO TO EXERCISE BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL AND BUILD YOUR RULES >

that use contracts with your children. Despite their design, try to agree as much as possible about their content with your children even though you can start with some fixed limits that you explain properly to your children (the more they participate, the better to motivate and encourage them to respect these limitations). Be also sure that these resources are in a visible place that everyone can see to remind them of their importance. Some examples could be:

- *Family tech agreements.*
- *Device online safety cards templates.*
- *Family smartphone pledge.*
- *Customizable Device Contract.*

Despite all these resources and preventive approaches that we can have into our parental mediation with our children, there would still be risks and threats that could reach them. According to this, the next chapter will tell you more about them and how they can be identified or tackled.

You can read more about these topics here:

- *The Biggest Parenting Mistake In Modern History: the parental control concept*

3.5 RISK AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF TECHNOLOGIES

Despite the preventive approach that we should arrange with our children and the benefits that ICTs can bring to them, technologies also have a dark side that we should be aware of too. Children are becoming more and more connected so, what is the real impact of technologies on them, and can it affect their own development?

The impact of technology on children depends on the type of device or software they have access to and what it is used for. Parents associations, governments and health systems have shown their concern about the abuse of ICTs and screen time on children and teenagers. However, as we have seen along this toolkit and *the other toolkits for parents of GLAD*, too restrictive approaches could be even worse in terms of achieving a healthy relationship between children-parents-technology. Educators and experts are also concerned about the "washing" that some resources or software have suffered without existing real evidence about their positive impact on children (ex. many educational DVDs have not confirmed their "educative" added value, while it is not confirmed that geo-tracking games promote physical fitness and well-being).

Many are the enemies that could come with ICTs (sedentarism, addiction, blackmailing, oppression, sexual abuse, etc.), but it must be reminded again that internet, devices, online videos or social media are not the "bad guys", just the way there are used by their creators and consumers. According to this, parents must not limit ICTs to obtain a digital health and emotional well-being relation on children, just arrange its use in a suitable way and avoid addictive or dependent relations that could emerge from them. The aim is to promote useful online activities (ex. to do homeworks, research, listen to music, etc.) while finding other ones in the "offline" world to balance both environments and children's health.

The strategy should not be to ban ICTs use, but to promote children's self-awareness and show them how technology could contribute too to their well-being if the negative consequences that it brings are under control. A total restriction on this use would be almost impossible in today's society and would be a step backward for our children in relation to the requirements of their environment. Traditional screen time rules focused only on limits are not a realistic proposition in a society where digital media are becoming more and more prominent. Rather than seeing themselves as policing children's media use, parents need to think critically about how they can support positive uses and minimize negative consequences.

> **The more walls we build, the more we are just creating little hackers who are just trying to get around the fence,**
> *Devorah Heitner, founder of the website Raising Digital Natives.*

So which could be the negative consequences of a wrong and neglected use of technologies in our children if we do not have a precautionary approach or react properly when we notice a misuse?

● Difficulties on emotions management or lack of emotional connection in real life.

● More exposure to be hurt or bullied on open spaces on which anonymity reigns as well as the difficulty to limit where this oppression takes place or comes from due to the omnipresence of technology.

● Reduction of physical activities or even obesity promotion if ICTs monopolise children's free time and facilitate laziness.

● Decrease face-to-face interpersonal and depersonalise human interaction skills.

● Create a skewed user self-image thanks to edited photos or behaviours that could increase a person's online presence or just feel accepted but that are not matching reality.

● Generate a customised online world and reality of perfect online references that children tend to aspire to and compare themselves to, but that are distorting reality and generating unreachable expectations that could mine children's self-esteem and make difficult their self-acceptance and recognition.

● Create addiction and cause distractions that could steal the time that children need to be with their peers, family or other activities.

All these negative consequences could be avoided if we are aware about how to understand and identify them as the next chapter will show. This will allow us as parents to enjoy a more appropriate and safe use of ICTs by our children while taking advantage of the multiple and rich benefits that technologies can bring to our family members and environments.

Defining the misuse of technologies: what are we talking about?

In order to detect on time and foreseen properly all the potential risks of technology misuses, this chapter will help you to understand them while offering external resources and materials to tackle them or intervene when needed. Have in mind that it is not only important that you get to know them, but also that your children are aware of them and you communicate to them what they are facing depending on their age, maturity or capacities. How to detect an excessive use of technologies or that something is not going properly? Check if:

🔵 Screen time is not allowing children to have the time they used to spend in other activities that are essential for their appropriate development or health (ex. do homework, meet friends, be with the family, play an instrument, sports, etc.).

🔵 Children show on their behaviour and mood symptoms related to a dependent relation with technologies: uncontrollable desire of being connected, withdrawal syndrome, denial of the problem, loss interest in usual activities, decrease of motivation, anxiety, etc.

🔵 Children show negative feelings or reactions during or after the use of devices. If after online interactions they feel sad, upset or unhappy, try to support them or find what is going on as your children could be suffering but not able to externalise it.

🔵 You recognise an impact on the use of technologies on children's bodies and social health: visual deterioration, obesity, depression, aggressive conducts, decrease socialization, development issues, etc. or even sleep alterations (ex. due to devices radiation wavelength or blue light, which could influence natural sleep and wake cycles).

Before blaming technologies and in case you notice any of the previous facts, be always sure that they are not related to other issues of your children's lives (ex. school problems). Practice always communicating and investigate further to find the real root of the problem and be able to tackle it in a suitable way.

The risks that our children could experience can appear on many different fields depending on their nature and origin, being related to various issues as we have previously seen on this toolkit:

RISKS FOR CHILDREN IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT				
Risk Categories	Content Risks	Conduct Risks	Contact Risks	Consumer Risks
Cross-cutting Risks*	Privacy Risks (Interpersonal, Institutional & Commercial)			
	Advanced Technology Risks (e.g. AI, IoT, Predictive Analytics, Biometrics)			
	Risks on Health & Wellbeing			
Risks Manifestation	Hateful Content	Hateful Behaviour	Hateful Encounters	Marketing Risks
	Harmful Content	Harmful Bena	Harmful Encounters	Commercial Profiling Risks
	Illegal Content	Illegal Behaviour	Illegal Encounters	Financial Risks
	Desinformation	User-generated Problematic Behaviour	Other Problematic Encounters	Security Risks

Source: OECD and Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University.

Let's see deeper the main practices that could generate the previous risks and explore materials that could allow us to tackle each of these problems:

⊙ **Screen time abuse:** it makes reference to an excessive use of technology by children. Children may use computers during class time, cell phones to keep in contact with friends, a tablet to do schoolwork in the evening, and then watch an hour of television with their families to unwind. This can add up to many hours over the course of the day, especially as school moved online during the last years. Taking care of this thanks to observation or using parental control software is essential to have a healthy and balanced relationship with ICTs. Be the model for your children on ICTs consumption, fix specific times and spaces for technologies at home, create rules (ex. no screens at least 1 hours before going to bed or setting free technologies moments) and promote your children's self-regulation. You can use the templates and apps mentioned on the parental control chapter of this toolkit too. See also:

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a) *Kids and screen time: signs your children might be addictive.*
b) *The Troubling Effects of Parents' Screen Use on Children.*
c) *How and When to Limit Kids' Tech Use.*
d) *How a Digital Detox Could Improve Your Child's Behaviour Problems.*
e) *Teenage screen time: tips for balance.*

Cyber Addiction or internet addiction: it makes reference to the uncontrolled use of the internet in any sense (excess of online games or gambling, compulsively online shopping, social networks dependency, cybersex addiction, etc). It is related with an excessive use of technologies as well as with other disorders empowered by the use of ICTs. Some experts also include in this category the dependency with some devices such as nomophobia (irrational fear of being out of mobile contact or with no phone). See also:

a) *Could You Be Addicted to the Internet?*
b) *Internet addiction in teens, know the warning signs.*
c) *Tips for parents to deal with Internet Addiction.*
d) *Internet gambling among teens and college students.*

Identity and privacy exposure: Many children need to be reminded that a platform's privacy settings do not make things actually "private" and that images, thoughts, and behaviours that children share online will instantly and indefinitely become a part of their digital footprint. In the last few years, social media has proven to be a significant source of concern among privacy advocates. Parents have become increasingly worried about their children's safety online and how to protect their personal data, pictures, videos, etc. in order to not be misused or to generate an over exposure of children online. Keep lines of communication open and let them know that you are there if they have questions or concerns.

As always, be a model and consider your criteria and behaviours when you put photos of yourself or your children online (ex. who appears on them? Are minor faces covered? Why/why not? Is there any person tagged in the picture without being asked in advance?, etc.). See also:

a) *Protecting children's privacy online.*
b) *Parents' guide to privacy settings.*
c) *Children's data and privacy online, growing up in a digital age.*

Cyberbullying: it is a kind of bullying and harassment that is done through digital devices and online. It can take place on websites, forums, by text messages or on social networks. Cyberbullying includes the sharing of pictures and information of other people with a harmful and offensive aim in order to attack or exclude someone. It can even sometimes derive into criminal behaviours or against the physical wellbeing of the victims attacked. The more children are exposed online, the easier it would be for cyberbullies to reach them. See also:

a) *What is cyberbullying and why is it so harmful?.*
b) *Guide about cyberbullying for parents.*
c) *Bullying and cyberbullying tips and videos.*
d) *Cyberbullying for kids.*

Sexting: it mixed the words "sex" and "texting". It makes reference to the practice of sending erotic and sexual content using messaging apps, emails or social networks. It normally takes place between two people, but it can result in a problem when the information exchanged is shared outside and put in risk the privacy of those involved. See also:

a) *A parent's guide to sexting.*
b) *Parents guide to dealing with Sexting.*
c) *Sexting advice for teens.*

Grooming: it is the practice of some adults to use technologies and anonymity to gain the confidence of minors and involve them in a sexual activity. Children must be warned about the importance of privacy and the dangers of predators and sexting. Teens need to know that once content is shared with others, they will not be able to delete or remove it completely, and this includes texting or inappropriate pictures. They may also not know about or do not choose to use privacy settings, so they need to be warned that sex offenders often use social networking, chat rooms, e-mail, and online gaming to contact and exploit children. See also:

a) *Preventing grooming, advice for parents.*
b) *Online grooming guide for parents.*
c) *What parents need to know about grooming.*
d) *Online grooming, site for teens.*

Phishing: it makes reference to the fraudulent techniques that scammers use in order to pass themselves off as a company, person or service provider we trust in to manipulate our information, steal it or take advantage of it (ex. credit card numbers to make purchases, emails passwords to steal our identities, etc.). Phishing emails can also come with viruses that enter into our devices and can steal information, so have also an antivirus installed in your devices. See also:

a) *Phishing – Advice for Parents.*
b) *How to keep your child safe from phishing.*
c) *Teach your kids how to avoid online scams.*
d) *What you need to know about phishing.*
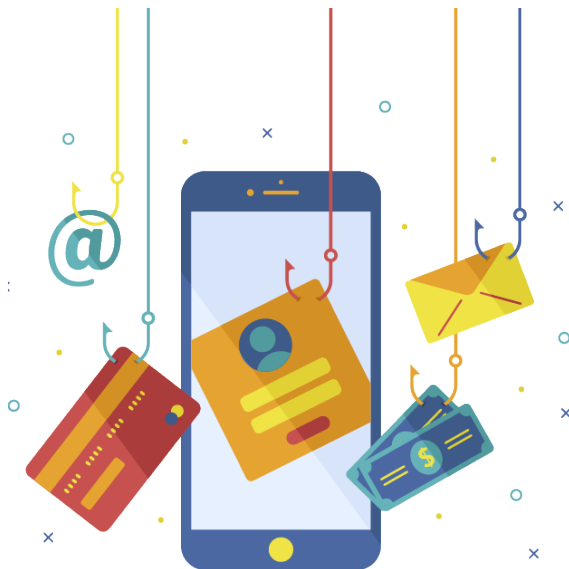
Social networking abuse: social networks can be one of those issues that could generate addiction when talking about technology misuse. This addiction can come from a constant need of being aware about others' content, about being recognized through our publications (looking for "likes" or followers) or a compulsive checking. Social networking can also have an impact on children's and teenagers' personality development and identity creation, as they are tempted to be compared with others in a very subjective way as users tend to use filters, chosen pictures or edited videos that could not show an accurate vision of reality. Their over-consumption can also generate physical symptoms such as anxiety or even promote depression and loneliness.

Social networks are also one of the channels used by bullies or groomers to act. See also:

a) *Disadvantages of Social Networking: Surprising Insights from Teens.*
b) *Social media benefits and risks: children and teenagers.*
c) *Good and Bad Effects of Social Media on Teens and Kids.*
d) *Social media benefits.*
e) *7 benefits kids can get from social networking.*
f) *Be social, stay safe: 5 golden rules.*

Besides all these risks, always remember the positive side of technologies, as the benefits they could bring to us and our families are much more, so never feel discouraged due to your lack of control over them. Just train yourself to teach your children their appropriate use and learn together with them when possible. Practice your online good manners or "Netiquette".

You can read more about these topics here:

- *6 myths about screen time*

- *5 common screen time myths debunked*

- *3 fears about screen time for kids and why they're not true | Sara DeWitt*

Netiquette

You are invited to a formal party in the embassy of your country. What do you do? Ask about the protocol to follow and the etiquette or dress convention to enter. The same should happen in the online world. We understand as "netiquette" those rules that everyone should fulfil to have good manners online and show respect and courtesy to others. The use of netiquette will not only allow you to enjoy a better experience online, but also help to avoid many of the risks previously mentioned as well as to reduce their impact when others try to promote them.

Netiquette must be respected by adults and properly transferred to children progressively. The target would be that children learn how to apply it little by little, so they can also be smart online when they are not supervised. Some main guidelines to be considered could be: see table.

Netiquette prevents miscommunications, contributes to establishing healthy relations online, reduces risks and allows parents and children to better enjoy ICTs benefits. According to this, keep your manners online too so everyone can enjoy the more suitable way: "With great power comes great responsibility".

Netiquette for children and parents
Think before you post. Everyone will read it, will you be understood well?
Do not publish things that you do not want are publicly shared.
Be sure you are not sharing fake or private information about others.
Do not attack or leave nasty comments on others' publications. Think how you would feel if you would be the receptor.
No swearing or signalling impolitely.
Be respectful and kind to others.
Avoid shouting or writing in capital letters.
No record or take screenshots without permission.
Be suspicious and cautious with those people or potential contacts that you do not know.
Ignore bullies and report when you are bullied (to an adult or law officer).

You can read more about these topics here:

- *Netiquette: Paw Paw Middle School rules for netiquette*

- *Netiquette: How to teach your child digital manners*

3.6 CONCLUSION

Technologies and devices are here to stay. They are part of our children's lives and have evolved to be a key actor for their personal and academic development. According to this, an appropriate digital parental mediation must be arranged at home considering the peculiarities and values of each family and its members. The aim is not to limit or control children's use of technologies, but provide them the knowledge, awareness and tools to use them properly. This will generate on children an active critical thinking and manners that could be also replicable in their adulthood in other fields of their lives. Acting as models, parents should show the way ICTs use and how devices or software must be managed in a smart way. Its misused or lack of direction on their use can bring many risks for our children, so it is important to provide them a preventive education on how to handle them that could avoid negative effects on them, while being parents also aware about how to intervene when negative consequences appear from an inappropriate use of technologies. Digital environments and technological advances could be allies for our children's education, so take advantage of them, do not be afraid of learning or experience and **"may their force be with you!"**

ACTIVITY

SUBTOPIC: 3.1 (Defining parental mediation)

TITLE: Mindful screen time.

As we explored in this toolkit, children enjoy spending time with their parents in front of the screen. Instead of promoting a no-screen time approach with your family, try investing in a "mindful" screen time with your children.

Try out some of these activities:

1 **Play GLAD app game:** it is an interesting game especially created by GLAD to facilitate a healthy family time together when using technologies. It contains challenges which resolution will allow to learn more about the content of this toolkit and that are related to its chapters. An entertaining and challenging game to learn and play with children available in all the GLAD languages. Click here to go to it!

2 **Learn about the animal kingdom:** did you know that the internet is full of websites dedicated to virtual zoo tours? You can watch the sea life at the *Georgia Aquarium*, explore *wild animals in Kenya*, or see puppies training to become service dogs.

3 **Take a trip at a museum:** Museum visits boast important educational value for children. Take a virtual look at museums from around the world, like the Louvre or Boston Children's Museum.

4 **Create a song:** Chrome Music Lab is a website powered by Google, where children can make and share their own music.

5 **Play chess:** what better way to boost your brain and learn together with your child than playing chess? Try out this online chess game and learn about strategic thinking!

READ MORE

ACTIVITY

🔗 **SUBTOPIC:** 3.3 (Parental mediation and technologies use per age)

👤 **TITLE:** What's the plan?

Parent's mediation varies depending on children's age. Having read about Parental Mediation in the toolkit, get in contact with parents who have children in similar age to yours and exchange stories of success and disaster, good and bad practices, and even brainstorm together an appropriate strategy, always considering the individual characteristics of your children.

Besides contacting these parents, do not feel afraid and encourage yourself to:

◉ Contact or consult experts on issues you are not so good in or read their works.

◉ Join training courses or seminars, to have a coach with expertise on a topic always help.

◉ Read, watch videos, revise newspapers online, etc. Use your critical thinking to know what is better for you and your children.

◉ Talk to your children! Do not feel afraid and ask them how they feel and let them guide you too on the use of ICTs that are new for you

Remember: it takes effort, patience, and a great deal of empathy to come up with an effective plan, so explore as many alternatives as possible to combine them and get a useful approach for you.

READ MORE ➤

ACTIVITY

SUBTOPIC: 3.2 (Popular software)

TITLE: Defining "popular"

As you have read on the chapter 3.2 of this toolkit, "Popular" is a quite subjective word when it comes into ICTs and children. Moreover, the fast evolution of technologies and speed of the online exchange of information makes those things that put people on fire one day, become obsolete on the next one.

To identify which software your children like more will help you to prevent on time risks related to them as well as to adapt to them your parental mediation, and even, have fun and enjoy them together! To do this identification, collect the answers to the next question (you can use online sites or tutorials to understand a software too, but try to get as much feedback as possible by asking your children and spending time with them to see how they really use it and what for).

- ⊙ Which is the name of the software?
- ⊙ Which format or platform is it? Online site, app for mobile, social network, etc.
- ⊙ What is it used for? What can users do on it?
- ⊙ What can be shared by users thanks to this software? Which information from users' side is visible or available?
- ⊙ Why do your children like it so much? How do they use it and why?
- ⊙ Could you co-use this software together or can you interact with your children by creating an account? If so, do it!

Once you have completed this task and are more aware about your children's preferences, go back to the questions proposed in the toolkit and get ready to arrange a suitable parental mediation and design your strategies on the parental mediation related to that software:

- ⊙ How much of the previous software do I know, or should I be informed about first?
- ⊙ How many of these ICTs do I have at home and my children have access to?
- ⊙ Where are these devices or technologies located at home? Who can access them?

● Who are using them at home and with which purpose?

● Are they totally necessary for our home tasks, academic/professional or family issues? Could be replaced by other effective alternatives?

● Is there any plan to manage their control, coordinate their use or monitor their consumption? etc.

As said, popular software can change very fast for your children, so try to repeat the previous process from time to time.

READ MORE

ACTIVITY

📎 **SUBTOPIC:** 3.4 (Other "analogues solutions" for technologies use)

👤 **TITLE:** Be a good role model and build your rules!

Children tend to copy behaviors from their surrounding environment. It is, therefore, essential to be a good role model when it comes to ICTs use. Before you complain about your children being hooked on gadgets, take a moment to think of what your habits are and try to create a list of house rules in cooperation with your children for all of you.

Go to the chapter "Other "analogues solutions" for technologies use" and try to create a set of agreements. Remember:

🔘 Boundaries are created to promote children trusting and self-regulation, not to pursuit and apply punishments.

🔘 It is important that boundaries show a healthy use of technologies and balance with other non-digital activities/moments.

🔘 Try to agree as much as possible about their content with your children even though you can start with some fixed limits that you explain properly to your children (the more they participate, the better to motivate and encourage them to respect these limitations).

🔘 Be sure that these resources are in a visible place that everyone can see to remind them of their importance.

Variation: you can also create with your children or incorporate to your house rules the set of guidelines to take care for your children Netiquette online (visit the chapter 3.5 and its subchapter "Netiquette" to know more). So, you will also monitor and try to guide them on how to behave in both, the physical and digital world.

READ MORE ▸

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