

YOUNG CHILDREN and SCREEN TIME

– a good start



Digital devices at home provide the entire family with many new media experiences and the opportunity for creative development and learning. How can adults help children get off to a good start? What choices should you make at the very beginning? This pamphlet provides some tips and checklists to help you get started.



What is most important?

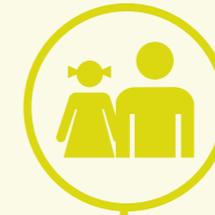
- Experience the media with the child
- Think through what rules you want to set for media and technology use at home
- Learn more about services, content, technology and age regulation and classification
- Teach the children good internet habits early on – you are the most important role model!

Experience the media with the child

A good start with shared experiences and guidance from parents and other adults can help children enjoy many good experiences. When you participate in the activities, it will be natural for the child to talk to you, if he/she experiences something uncomfortable, or fun.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND TERMS

Internet, money, time and *people's feelings* and actions can be difficult concepts for children to understand. Be as specific as possible and use things from the children's daily life to help them understand what they are seeing and questioning.



TIPS:

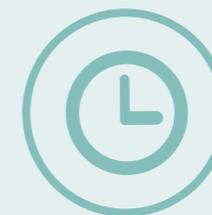
- Spend time with the child: watch television and films together, play games, play and have fun and show them all the opportunities. Show interest in what the child wants to talk about/ show you
- Find out what is interesting and fascinating, and what causes the child to lose interest
- Spend time talking about what you experience together – what is good and not good, and why. Also talk about how not everything on the internet is true
- Be as specific as possible when you talk to the child: internet, time, money and people's feelings and actions are all difficult concepts for young children
- When you think it is time for the child to explore on their own, continue talking to the child and let him/her show you things
- Also talk about potential uncomfortable experiences, and about what he/she should do if something happens
 - It is easy to accidentally click on other content and have experiences that are not intended
 - Children can be upset by children and animals that are suffering, bullying, poverty, fighting, violence and pornography
 - That things which some people find funny on the internet, may make others sad and depressed
 - What is the topic of what they are seeing/ experiencing and how do people talk to each other? Are there elements of bad language and conflicts or bullying?
 - Be clear that they should tell you or another adult if something happens: By talking to the children about potentially uncomfortable things, you are showing the child that you are there for him/her
- If you suspect the child has become scared or upset: ask and try to find out what happened

What rules do you want to set for media and technology use at home?

Clear and carefully considered rules, along with age-appropriate content, make it easier for children to learn and have positive media experiences – and provide a nice start to a good digital life. Here are some tips for what to consider.

EASY ACCESS TO GOOD EXPERIENCES

- Pick out sites, services, videos, etc. that you think are a good fit. Make a folder and show the child how he or she can find their folder.
- Try services before you let the children use them, and sit with them the first few times they use them.



TIPS:

- Where in the home do you want the children to have media experiences? Are some areas more easily supervised than others?
- When and how long do you want the child to use the devices? Is there a difference between time spent watching television and using a tablet or smartphone?
 - Young children can have difficulty understanding the concept of time. Be as specific as possible when you explain when and how long the child can use the devices.
 - Should the family have designated screen times?
 - Or designate set screen-free time?
 - How do you as an adult spend time on media and digital devices?
- Which services can they use and which services can they not use?
 - Select some services, films, apps and sites they can use and make a folder that is easy to find
 - Do you want the child to download games and services themselves? How much money can they spend? Talk about the difference between free games and paid games and which services are OK to download and what is not OK.
- Do the children have the same standard rules and options elsewhere?
 - Many children use the digital devices together with older siblings – can they help you get the younger children off to a good start?
 - Talk to other adults and exchange experiences with good services and good content, the types of restrictions and options provided
 - Suggest that the topic be discussed at a parent's meeting in day care.

Learn more about services, content, technology and age regulations

Many digital devices, services and content providers give adults the option to adapt the services to their children's use. By learning more about both technology and services, you can choose what types of content, experiences and options are suitable for your child. Try out these options before the child gets access, and then you can take part in the experience along with the child.

PASSWORDS

- A password is like your house key – it unlocks services, the opportunity to spend money, to download new games and services and to share and be social
- Passwords should be easy to remember, but difficult to guess and could for example be a song or a sentence
- Teach the children not to share passwords with anyone
- Your password can unlock many options – do you want your child to have these options?



TIPS:

- What options do the devices/services the child will be using have?
 - Will your child have his/her own device, use yours or the family's device?
 - Is there an option to adapt the device/service to the child's needs?
 - Check if your device allows you to lock parts of the screen – so the child can stick to one activity
 - Does the service have the option of activating safe search, or are there children's versions of the services?
 - Please note that filters and safe searches do not restrict access to all types of harmful content
 - Test services/sites you think are OK for the children – what is suitable for your child?
 - Check if age limits are listed in the app store or in the terms and conditions.
- Do you want the child to be able to:
 - Use the internet/Wi-fi?
 - Spend money on the device and in services?
 - Use your password to download new games?
 - Be social and share information, photos and videos with others?
- What kinds of experiences can the child have in the service? What content will the child have access to?
 - What kind of content does the service/game/app have?
 - What types of positive or negative experiences could the child have?
 - Can the child easily access other content using links or suggestions?
 - Is there a lot of advertising? Does it target children or adults?
 - Does the service allow sharing? What kind of communication and what kinds of users use the service? What options are there for sharing photos/video, and is the service moderated?

Purchases in programs/apps

In many games, you can progress faster in the game if you spend money; this could be virtual money, stars, gold bars or other things you earn by playing, or real money. Particularly in games and services that are downloaded for free, users 'pay' by watching ads, videos, being encouraged to buy new games or to provide personal information.

Children may have a hard time understanding the difference between virtual and real money in games – money in itself is abstract. Many games are so intuitive that children can play and buy things without the help of an adult. They could therefore be spending real money without realising it themselves or their parents/adults being aware.

Most tablets and smartphones have the option to restrict purchases in apps and buying new services. Here are some tips to check out:

- In the app stores, games and services are often labelled if it is possible to spend money. (For example: tillater kjøp i program/Allows in-app purchase)
- If real money can be used in a service, there is a price list in the app stores. Take a look at this before deciding what type of access the child will have to spend money in the service
- Check the settings on the device:
 - Can you set restrictions on purchases in apps?
 - Do you want to allow purchases in a limited timeframe? What timeframe does the device have?
 - Can you set restrictions on store purchases?
- Do you want your child to have full access to buying services and making purchases in apps or not?
- What type of password do you want to use and do you want the child to know the password?
 - Do you want the child to ask you before downloading new things or not?



Teach the children good internet use early on!

Both children and adults enjoy sharing photos and videos online to share moments with their family and friends. Taking photos and recording video with phones and tablets is also fun for the youngsters. There have been cases of children having published photos online or forwarded them without realising it themselves or the adults knowing about it.

ASK BEFORE YOU SHARE!

- The Personal Data Act sets a framework for what can be shared with others; for example, you must always ask before publishing photos or videos of other people.
- When you always ask permission before publishing photos of others – whether they are children or adults – the children learn that they must also ask first before sharing



All online content, including photos and video, can be downloaded and shared by others as soon as the content ends up online. It is important to practice good habits from the beginning. Here are some tips to consider:

- **Should the child be able to share, for example photos, with family? Should the child have access to shared photos of family and friends?**
- **Should the child be able to share information, photos and video with others?**
- **Do the services allow the child to use sharing in anonymous or non-anonymous/open forums?**
- **What information is the child asked to provide when he or she registers for a game?**
- **Does the child have access to your social services and contacts either directly or through apps/services?**
- **Is there an email address linked to the device, so they can send things from the device?**
- **Will the tablet or smartphone be connected to the internet through Wi-fi/3G/4G?**

There are many options for sharing photos with just a few people of your own choosing, both on social media or through photo albums on the devices. Talk about how photos that are shared in closed groups are only intended for those you have selected, and should not be shared with others.

There are designated photo sharing services and social networks for children. It might be wise to obtain an overview of these services and to learn how they work. Most social networks have an age classification of 13, and are often not adapted to or suitable for younger children.

You are the most important role model!

Adults are the most important role models for children. Children pay attention to how adults talk to each other, how they talk about others, how they use digital devices, when and how much time they spend online and what they share online, and they tend to mimic this behaviour. This is why you are the most important role model – talk to your children about your decisions and help them make their own decisions in their daily lives.

THINK ABOUT:

- **Who you are online and on social media**
 - What information, photos and videos have you shared – what does your digital footprint look like?
 - How do you present yourself?
- **Where and when do you use the digital devices?**
 - Do you have different or the same rules for adults and children at home?
 - For children, it can be difficult to understand that the adults need to use the digital devices even though the children are not allowed. Clear, straightforward explanations can help create fewer disagreements at home.
- **How do you talk about and to others at home?**
- **How do you talk about and to others online and on phones?**
- **Do you ask before you share photos and information about others?**





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