

# THERE ARE MANY THINGS PARENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND...

**WHAT SHOULD I KNOW  
WHEN MY CHILD GOES  
ONLINE?**

Guide for parents of children aged 7 to 12

# 11 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH YOUR CHILD'S ONLINE ACTIVITIES

- 1 Take an interest in your child's online activities.
- 2 Children essentially use media for the same purposes as adults do: to search for information, read the news, be entertained, play games, relax and get in touch with their friends.
- 3 Acknowledge that children access their social circles through digital and social media.
- 4 Consider introducing limits to the amount of time spend online and setting up media-free zones.
- 5 Refrain from approaching this solely in terms of screen time. Quality and play are not quantifiable.
- 6 Be a good role model yourself in terms of, for instance, setting limits on the amount of time you spend and by being attentive to your child.
- 7 Teach your child good online habits by speaking politely, blocking unpleasant people and by not sharing private information.
- 8 Help your child resolve conflicts in the same way you would in the physical world.
- 9 Search for information about the social media and games for which your child wants to set up a profile.
- 10 Help your child set up the privacy settings on social media and games.
- 11 Make rules for the purchase of apps and games and for in-app and in-game purchases.

# HOW TO BECOME A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD ONLINE



- Do you have media-free zones in your home and do you comply with them yourself?
- Do you send messages, talk on the phone, read social media updates, answer e-mails, etc., during 'family time'? Do you explain to your child what you are doing on your smartphone?
- Do you upload videos and photos of your children to social media without asking for their permission?

## Talk with your child about

- How to speak politely to everyone, online and offline alike.
- How to block and report unpleasant individuals.
- How to tell adults about individuals who are asking strange questions or being very aggressive.
- How to avoid sharing personal information, such as phone number, address and CPR no. publicly.
- Being aware of the risk of being misinterpreted when writing to one another online.
- Taking time to cool down before writing a comment or message when you are angry.
- Asking permission before filming or taking photos of others and before sharing online. Respect the wishes of anyone who says no.

# TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMES

It is completely normal to be concerned about the amount of time your children spend on games and social media. A lot has been said and written about how media affect children. It is important to remember that games and social media are often a way for children to socialise and 'get together' with their friends. Neither well-being nor unhappiness can be measured in terms of screen time. If you are concerned about the amount of time your child spends on games and social media, then act on this. Confide in your child about your concerns. You can also confer with other parents or perhaps seek advice at your child's after-school activities, the library or their school.



## **Deliberations about time played & screen time**

- Is there a healthy balance between your child's online activities, offline social life, exercise, diet and sleep?
- Accept your child's fascination with games and social media. Acknowledge that it's fun, even if you don't fully understand it.
- Ask questions about the social media and games your child uses to better understand their online activities.
- Engage in dialogue and make agreements with your child. Demand that they comply.
- Prioritize screen quality over screen time.
- It may be a good idea to require that all games and social media must stop well in advance of bedtime.
- Is gaming a social activity for your child, or do they play alone?

# AGE LIMITS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMES

In Denmark, most social media have an official age limit of 13 years. This applies to YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and others. Some social media also target children aged 8 and up, such as MovieStarPlanet and Momio.

Video games are labelled with recommended age ratings (3, 7, 12, 16 or 18 years) issued by the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) and a number of age-appropriate content descriptors indicating whether a game contains violence, obscenities, gambling, etc. The age-rating system provide guidance for parents about the game's contents, both images and sounds. PEGI is not a ban that prohibits under-age children from playing a specific game. Consult your child, as they usually know a lot about different types of games and content. It is also possible to watch gameplay videos on YouTube to get a sense of a game.



# APPS AND GAMES: FREE OR PURCHASED

## Talk with your child about

- The specific apps and games your child downloads: whether they are free or cost money and whether it is possible to make in-app or in-game purchases.
- The consequences of clicking on 'offers' in apps and games and the fact that this can cost a lot of money.
- Setting a maximum amount of money that your child may spend on apps and games (possibly a weekly or monthly amount).

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- Most game consoles and online stores such as 'App Store' can be set up to block in-game and in-app purchases or only allow purchases to be transacted by entering a password.
- Purchases made in relation to apps and games use the payment card associated with your game console or online store. If you share the password for your game console or online store, it is equivalent to sharing the password for your payment card.
- Quality content costs money. In many cases, you get a more transparent product if you pay for it from the outset. Sometimes, free games and apps use obscure business models that can end up costing a lot of money.

# INFLUENCERS AND HIDDEN ADVERTISING

Your child encounters online ads during games, on social media and as website banners. It can be quite difficult for a child to determine whether a blogger on YouTube is advertising a product or merely being enthusiastic. 'Influencer marketing' is when an influencer endorse a product for a fee or receive it free of charge.

## Talk with your child about

- What is advertising, both obvious and hidden? You can also talk about what makes a good or bad advertisement.
- The specific influencers/youtubers/streamers your child follows and what these people are blogging about.
- Making sure they never take part in competitions or download an app without your permission.
- Being critical about a youtuber's recommendations.



According to the Danish Marketing Practices Act, hidden advertising is prohibited, and commercial endorsements of a product must be clearly labelled e.g. 'advertisement', 'sponsored by' or 'paid partnership'.

# CONFLICTS AND BULLYING



- Conflicts will always arise among groups of children, both online and offline.
- Help resolve these conflicts, possibly in cooperation with other parents.
- If your child receives threats or repeated bullying messages, it is a good idea to get evidence of this by taking screenshots of text messages, photos, videos, etc., before contacting the school or social authorities (SSP), or reporting content on social media.



## Why is online bullying particularly devastating?

- Online bullying can take place 24 hours a day. It is not limited to the schoolyard or after-school activities.
- It is not always possible to see who the sender is.
- It is difficult to know whether the sender is merely joking.
- People sometimes use harsher language than if they were standing face to face with someone. It feels easier to bully someone if you can't see how the bullied person reacts.
- It only takes a split second to spread humiliating messages, videos and photos by text message or social media.

# DIGITAL FOOTPRINT AND PRIVACY



- Teach your child that passwords are personal.
- Although setting up a profile is free, you usually 'pay' with the personal information you submit. It can be difficult to understand what you accept and which data are being collected.
- Be aware of what you allow apps and games to access, such as contacts, photos, microphone and location. Under 'Settings', it is possible to turn off access to specific content or functions.
- Help set up the privacy settings on social media and games.
- Once photos, videos, updates, information, etc., have been shared online, it is impossible to completely remove them with certainty.
- Teach your child to take a critical approach to sharing personal information and photos online.



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