



## Why don't you put the phone down

### Information and tips on media use in childhood

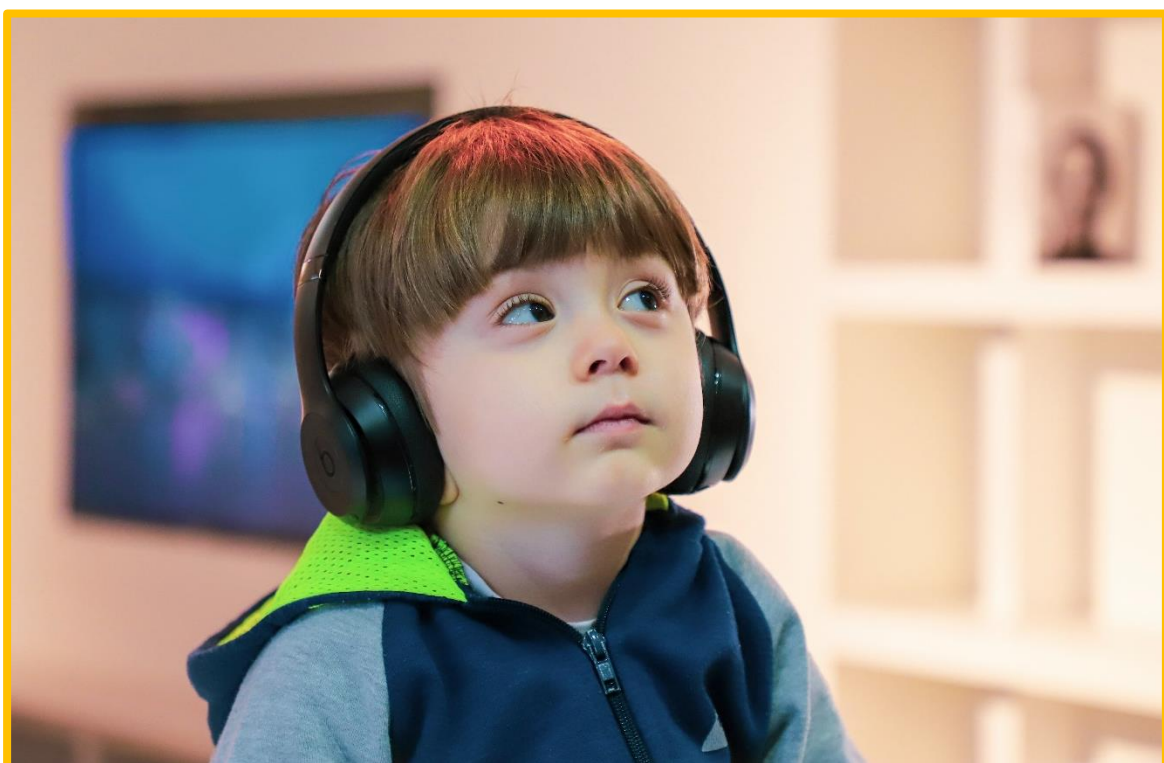
Dear parents, guardians and families,

Children are confronted with a wide variety of (digital) media these days, giving them access to a wealth of information and entertainment. But excessive or inappropriate media use can also have negative effects on children's development.

Therefore, it is important to inform about age-appropriate handling. Not only the age, developmental stage and usage time are important factors, but the quality of the content in particular is essential. Children should thus learn to use (digital) media sensibly in their everyday activities, but also learn about risks so that they can protect themselves from them.

In this Parents' Post you will find information and tips on how to accompany your children on their way to responsible media use.

Your team of the Kinderschutzbund Bayern



## Recommended daily media usage time for children

Depending on their age and developmental stage, children have individual interests that are also reflected in their use of media.

As parents, it is important to consciously accompany your children's media consumption and ensure that it is appropriate for their age group and developmental stage. Because excessive or inappropriate use of media can have a negative impact on your children's sleep patterns, cognitive development and social skills.

Excessive media use can lead to sleep problems because it can inhibit the release of melatonin, a hormone that is important for healthy and deep sleep. Children who spend too much time using digital media therefore often have trouble falling asleep and do not feel rested.



Cognitive development can also be impaired by excessive media use. If children spend too much time in front of screens, they may not have enough time to practice physical activities or use their creativity and imagination to come up with new play ideas that promote their cognitive development. Excessive media use can also affect children's attention and concentration. If children spend too much time watching media content that changes quickly or is highly stimulating, they may have difficulties concentrating on tasks at school or in everyday life.

Finally, overusing media can negatively impact children's social skills. Children who consume media excessively may not have enough time for social interactions with other children and adults. This can lead to children having difficulty acquiring social skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills. In addition, certain types of media content, especially violent or aggressive content, can have negative effects on the development of empathy and compassion.



All in all, you as guardians should consciously accompany your children's media use and together settle rules about when and how often (digital) media are used. Through appropriate media use, your children can benefit from the advantages of the media world without impairing the children's development.

## Overview of the recommended daily usage time

age	Picture books / books	Audio media (Music cds, audio stories)	Screen media (Television, video, computers, game consoles, tablets, smartphones)
0 - 3 years	regularly look at picture books and read them aloud (from about 6 months)	30 minutes maximum	best not at all
3 - 6 years	regularly look at picture books and read them aloud	45 minutes maximum	together no more than 30 minutes
6 - 10 years	read aloud / read regularly	60 minutes maximum	together no more than 45-60 minutes

<https://www.kindergesundheit-info.de/themen/medien/alltagstipps/mediennutzung/hoechstdauer/>

## 3 tips on how to use media successfully in everyday family life

### 1. Agree on fixed screen time and clear rules

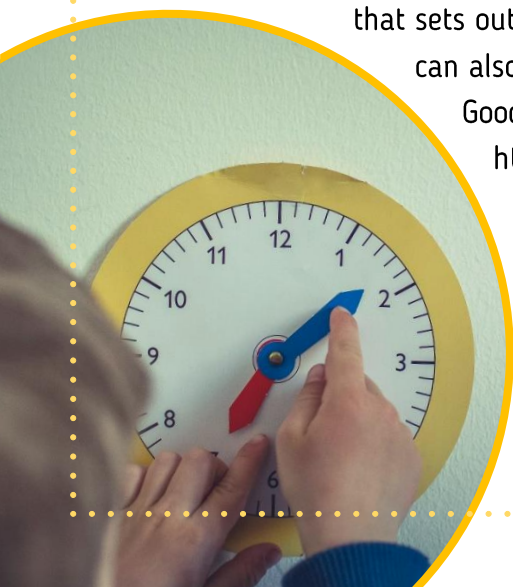
It helps children to know the times when they are allowed to use (digital) media. This creates security and gives them orientation. It makes sense to work with tools such as an egg timer or hourglass so that children can develop a sense of time. It makes it clear when the media usage time ends, and this helps to avoid discussions and tantrums.

From primary school age on, you and your children can also agree on a media usage contract that sets out clear rules for dealing with media. In addition to the time of use, this can also include rules on how to behave online or how to handle the devices.

Good ideas and suggestions for rules can be found at:

<https://www.mediennutzungsvertrag.de/>.

It also makes sense to activate filter programs and parental control settings for your children's user accounts. This will protect your children from inappropriate content. The settings must be checked and adjusted regularly.



## 2. Accompany your children in the use of media

Children do not yet have any experience or knowledge about the use of media and cannot yet assess the corresponding challenges and risks. It is therefore particularly important that they are supported and accompanied by their caregivers. Take an interest in what your child likes to watch or play, and don't use media to "quiet or turn off" your child. In doing so, you can also understand whether the content is appropriate for your children.

To process what they have experienced and seen, children reenact situations or talk about them.

Take the time to talk to your children and consciously ask them why they particularly like a program, for example. Media heroes in particular are often role models for children. However, these are often associated with stereotypes. It is the task of adults to classify children's media experiences, to break down media clichés and to convey a diverse view of the world. This can happen, for example, by creating their own heroes. Good suggestions for implementation can be found at:

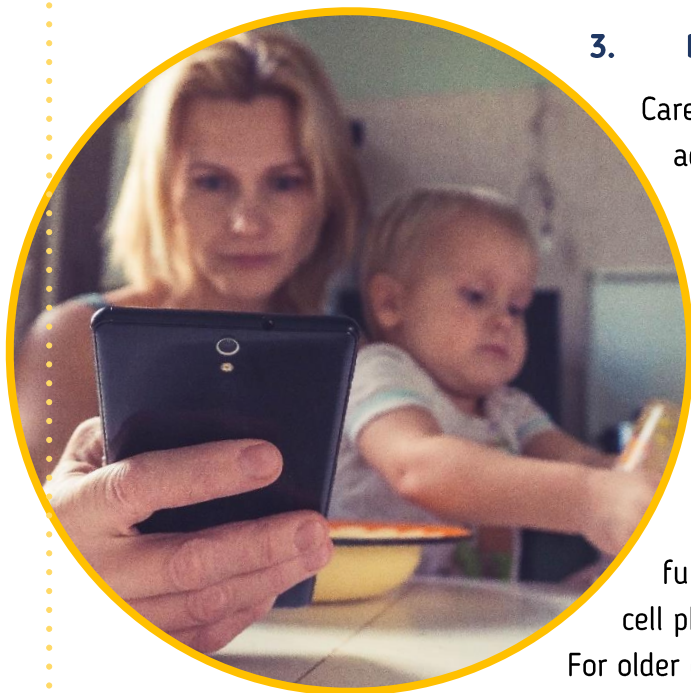
[https://www.medienfuehrerschein.bayern/Angebot/198\\_Angebote\\_fuer\\_Daheim.htm](https://www.medienfuehrerschein.bayern/Angebot/198_Angebote_fuer_Daheim.htm).



## 3. Be aware of your function as a role model

Caregivers are important role models for children. In addition, children usually have their first media experiences in the family environment. It is therefore important how and to what extent you consume media yourself. You can reflect on your own media use with these questions, for example: How much time do you spend online? What do you do when you're bored? How often do you unconsciously reach for your cell phone and check, for example, whether you have received new messages? Do you give your children your full attention during joint activities without looking at your cell phone in between?

For older children in particular, it makes sense to establish "family rules" for dealing with media, which can also be recorded in a media use contract. In this way, children not only experience an appropriate way of dealing with (digital) media in their immediate environment, but the sense of community is also strengthened by the generally applicable rules.



## What skills does your favorite hero have?

Heroes from television, books or audio stories are very popular with children. They offer a wide range of characters that embody children's wishes, dreams and fantasies.

With the help of a hero poster, you can get to know your child's favorite hero and learn what special characteristics and traits are so fascinating to your child.



### Here we go:

- Ask your child to name his or her favorite hero, which can be a character from a TV show, for example.
- Prepare craft or painting utensils, such as crayons, pictures, photos, newspaper clippings, or text, and encourage your child to create a poster of their favorite hero.
- Your child can stick or draw the hero with the typical characteristics and features on the poster and hang the hero poster in the room afterwards.
- Talk together about the typical characteristics of the hero, e.g. by asking the following questions: What do you like most about your favorite hero? What can your hero do better than all the others? Which features of your hero would you also like to have - for example, would you like to feel as strong or brave, would you also like to be able to do magic or fly?

For you to join in: Maybe you have a favorite hero from your childhood that you would like to create and introduce to your child. Try it out!



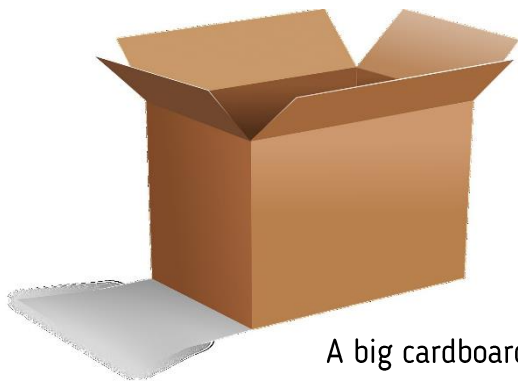
[https://www.medienfuehrerschein.bayern/Angebot/Angebote\\_fuer\\_Daheim/Grundschule\\_3\\_und\\_4\\_Jahrgangsstufe/22/246\\_Materialien.htm](https://www.medienfuehrerschein.bayern/Angebot/Angebote_fuer_Daheim/Grundschule_3_und_4_Jahrgangsstufe/22/246_Materialien.htm)

## Be on TV for a day

Children often deal with their media experiences while playing. And the television is usually one of the first digital media that children consume.

Let your child take on the role of their favorite TV characters by building a TV together. While crafting as well as playing, children can not only process their experiences, but also give free rein to their creativity!

### You need:



A big cardboard



A pair of scissors



Everything for the design of the TV  
(for example: paints, brushes, plastic lids of milk, etc.)

### Ans this is how it works:

1. Cut out a square from the bottom of the cardboard box.
2. Then you can paint the cardboard as you like and craft an on/off switch and a remote control. There are no limits to your creativity here!
3. Now think about what you want to show on your television.
4. Invite viewers and off you go with the TV show!

Have fun!

## Helpful pages on the Internet:

### Information on media consumption and use among children and teenagers

- [www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de)
- [www.schau-hin.info](http://www.schau-hin.info)
- [www.kindergesundheit-info.de/themen/medien](http://www.kindergesundheit-info.de/themen/medien)
- [www.ins-netz-gehen.info](http://www.ins-netz-gehen.info)
- [www.familienland.bayern.de/themen/kinder-medien](http://www.familienland.bayern.de/themen/kinder-medien)
- [www.flimmo.de](http://www.flimmo.de)

### Offers for children and teenagers:

- [www.seitenstark.de](http://www.seitenstark.de)
- [www.handysektor.de](http://www.handysektor.de)
- [www.blinde-kuh.de](http://www.blinde-kuh.de)
- [www.fragfinn.de](http://www.fragfinn.de)
- [www.kindersache.de](http://www.kindersache.de)
- [www.hanisauland.de](http://www.hanisauland.de)

### Counseling services and hotlines:

- [www.fragzebra.de](http://www.fragzebra.de)
- [www.juuuport.de](http://www.juuuport.de)
- [www.bke-beratung.de](http://www.bke-beratung.de)
- [www.jugendschutz.net/verstoss-melden](http://www.jugendschutz.net/verstoss-melden)
- [www.internet-beschwerdestelle.de](http://www.internet-beschwerdestelle.de)

## Help Box

**Parent Phone „Nummer gegen Kummer“: 0800 111 0 550**

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

**TelefonSeelsorge®: 0800 1110111 oder 0800 111 0 222**

daily, 24h

**Online consulting via chat and e-mail: [online.telefonseelsorge.de](https://online.telefonseelsorge.de)**

Dieser Elternbrief entstand im Rahmen des Projektes  
„Interkulturelle Elternbildung“



Gefördert durch:

Bayerisches Staatsministerium des  
Innern, für Sport und Integration



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