



Child and Media

10 tips for parents in the digital age



THE MANNERHEIM LEAGUE
FOR CHILD WELFARE

Publisher

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To parents

Various media content and tools for accessing it are now part of the environment children grow up in. Parents and educators may be unsure how to guide a child towards balanced, safe and responsible use of digital media. It is not necessary for adults to know everything about the internet, games or new apps, but it is important to be present, show an interest in how the child uses media and be willing to understand it.

Children have individual personalities and needs. Being aware of what one's child does online and the nature of the media environments the child uses helps the parent guide and regulate the child's use of media in a way that is beneficial for the child's wellbeing. Some children want this support in the form of discussion or reminders, others want action, more concrete measures or more tangible presence of an adult.

Talking regularly with your child about the use of media, agreeing

on rules for these activities and supporting the child's digital skills can contribute to increased security and wellbeing. It is also helpful for adults to gain an understanding of which aspects of media use are important from the child's perspective. It is important to initiate and maintain dialogue and to be a trusted adult whom the child can turn to in all matters concerning happy and worrying experiences in media.

This brochure for parents of primary school children focuses on digital media and technology, including various online environments, social media, online games and smart devices. The brochure also contains quotes by children collected from classes and surveys conducted by the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

**Which aspect of media use
will you discuss with your
child today?**

1

Use media together

Primary school children should learn how to use media together with an adult. Spending time together by, for example, playing games or watching programmes contributes to the wellbeing of the child. This also allows you to see and hear what kind of media content your child is exposed to and what kind of feelings it evokes in the child.

Parents should make sure that the content viewed by their children and the devices they are using are appropriate to their age and level of maturity.

Ask about what interests or worries your child in media or on the internet, and listen open-mindedly. Open dialogue makes it easier for the child to talk about bad experiences. Children of primary school age often like to show their favourite content to adults and spend time with them online. These moments should be cherished.

"The most fun things in media are watching videos, gaming, movies and reading. And friends, and calling mum."

The adult's attitude determines what a child is prepared to talk about regarding his or her use of media. You can also ask your child for help and let him or her teach you. It is important for the child to receive positive feedback for smart

choices and actions. Interest in the media world of the child creates a firm basis for trust and continuous dialogue.

Good relations with family and friends reduce the risk of a young person going down the wrong path, including in the digital world.

Discuss with your child: Media use

- What is your child's favourite activity on the internet or on the devices in general?
- What is your child allowed to do with the devices, and what is prohibited? For what kind of activities is it necessary to ask a parent for permission?
- What kind of games does the child play?
- Which applications or communities are important to the child? What happens in them, and who participates?
- Is the child worried about or afraid of something in media? What could be done about it?
- In what kind of situations and for what purposes does the child like to use media the most?
- From what kind of sources does the child search for information?
- What kind of people does your child follow or admire on the internet or in gaming communities? Why? In what matters can a parent be of help or support?

2

Make informed choices regarding media

Parents of primary school children should participate in deciding which applications and games are downloaded for the child to use. Choose age-appropriate applications without advertisement or commercial content. You should also be aware that some applications allow strangers to contact your child.

Since algorithms can make applications addictive, their use should be regulated. For example, platforms with short video clips utilise powerful algorithms in order to keep the viewer on the platform as long as possible. It can be difficult to close the application if the algorithm is constantly displaying new content. Some platforms do, however, offer the option of turning off autoplay.

Platforms that utilise algorithms can provide a child with a biased

worldview by constantly offering content with a similar message, and this can lead to erroneous views. The child's media literacy should be strengthened by discussing how platforms and algorithms work and how they affect the user's views.

Parents should stay regularly updated on which programmes and applications the child is using. Children should be encouraged to be open about how they use digital media. New features are from time to time added to the applications, and parents should be aware of them.

"Parents should regularly ask about the child's use of the internet and how the child is affected by it, and this should become a routine. The child would not have to be afraid of talking with the parents about what has happened on the device."



The child's own device

Technological development is fast, and digital platforms are constantly changing. It is important that the devices available to the child and the environments and content they make possible are appropriate and safe with regard to the child's age and level of maturity.

It would be beneficial to postpone the introduction of the child's first smartphone until the child has completed the first few years of primary school. The child's first device need not be a smartphone, but can instead be a smartwatch or a traditional feature phone with buttons. Moreover, when a smartphone is eventually introduced, mobile data that allows the child to access the internet anywhere and anytime does not necessarily have to be included early on.

Parents of children in the same class or hobby group can gather to discuss their views on introducing mobile devices for their children and agree upon how the children can contact each other online in a way that suits their age. Shared solutions can be discussed already before the children start school.

The child can find much else to do and many other kinds of entertainment on the phone than what the device was

originally intended for. By the time the child gets a personal device that is carried around during the day, he or she should have practised together with a parent how to use the internet and how to stay safe online.

It is important to remind the child that he or she should talk with an adult when encountering something harmful online, such as frightening content, bullying or attempts by unknown people to establish contact.

Since it is important for the child to pay attention to his or her surroundings while travelling, the phone should be stored in the backpack or a pocket when on the way to and from school and in all situations involving traffic. Privacy settings can increase security. If payments are required on the phone or in games, the parent's credit card information should be password-protected.

Be aware that even if your child does not have a personal device, he or she may well be exposed to online content on devices owned by friends.

Adhere to age limits concerning social media and other contexts.

Talk about age limits also with your child's friends and their parents. Make an agreement that everyone is to follow age limits.

Discuss with your child: Using the device properly

- For what purposes and in what kind of situations is it appropriate to use digital devices?
- When should the phone be put away? (bedtime, meals, at the request of a teacher or other adult etc.)
- Should use of the device be regulated? (screen time, downloading apps etc.)
- How do you handle your passwords and device PIN codes? (Do not share them with others.)
- Before you download a new app or create a profile, remember to ask a parent for permission. (downloads requiring a password known only to the parent)
- What kind of information about yourself or those around should you not share with others? (e.g. personal and contact information)
- Which settings can be used to increase security?

Age limits for audiovisual programmes

Adherence to age ratings for films, television programmes and digital games is intended to increase safe use of media among children. Age limits are based on the Act on Audiovisual Programmes. Age limits are binding and must be adhered to. Moreover, an age rating should not be understood as a recommended age for using the programme, but as a warning that it may contain material that is detrimental to the child's development.

More information:

→ kavi.fi/en/agelimits

Television programmes and films



Digital games



What should a parent know about app stores?

It can be challenging to know which games and applications among the many available in app stores are suitable for children. Consequently, primary school children should not make the choice to download without consulting an adult.

Parents should be aware that the applications available on services such as App Store and Google Play have usually not been reviewed by external experts. It is also important to note that the age limits of the applications are determined by the publishers themselves, and the content may depart from what is usually considered appropriate for children.

Although an application may at first glance, based on pictures and themes, seem suitable for children, it may well include elements that prove to be problematic in this regard.

Applications may contain advertisement aimed at adults, in-app purchases and collection of user data.

Decisions should be made only after hearing the child's perspective, and all decisions should be explained to the child. This helps the child learn how to make informed choices about digital content independently in the future.



What should be taken into consideration before downloading a new application for your child?

- If an application is specifically meant for children, this is usually stated clearly in the description. Based on the age rating alone, one cannot always trust that the application is suitable for children.
- If an application is free, how do the developers get their profits? Applications that are free may contain, for example, large amounts of advertisement or offers to purchase additional features.
- What kind of user data does the application collect, and for what purposes?
- Can strangers use the application to contact the child? Can the child use the application to publish content online?
- Does the application have parental controls or safety settings?
- Before a primary school child is allowed to use an application, a parent should try using it to get a first-hand impression.

3

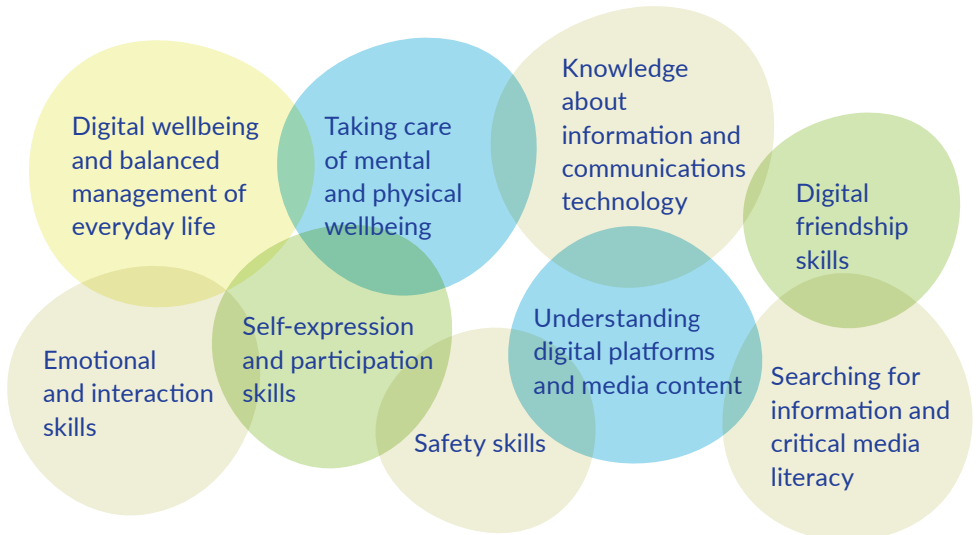
Practise media skills

Navigating today's media landscape requires versatile media skills. Important skills include the ability to use media in a secure way, analyse the content critically and search for high-quality information. Interaction skills and the ability to develop social contacts in a secure manner are also beneficial. Children should be given the opportunity to practise analysing media content and produce content of their own that is creative as well as responsible.

Discuss with your child: Media skills

- What kind of media skills does your child believe he or she possesses? What do you think as his or her parent?
- In what kind of matters does your child think he or she needs support? What do you think?
- What would your child like you to know about how he or she uses the internet or plays digital games?
- What could you learn from your child?
- Where can your child find high-quality information about topics of interest?
- Where can your child find children of similar age and interests?

In what ways can digital media skills be seen in the life of your family?





Access to information one can trust

Children have a right to access media and gain information through them. Being able to recognise and analyse various content and how it is used to influence others is important on the internet. It is also beneficial to learn how to interpret advertisement.

The age, level of maturity and media skills of the child determine how safe it is for the child to use media. These factors also affect the child's ability to find reliable information. Although a primary school child's thinking is constantly developing, an adult's help is still needed to understand various messages in media. The child has not necessarily gained sufficient media literacy to analyse media content critically.

Content does not appear on the internet or in media from nowhere. It always has a creator and a purpose. Ask your child to show you things that he or she has seen or done on the devices. Ask to be introduced to

the kind of people and topics that the child follows online. You can contribute to your child's media literacy by talking about the content that he or she encounters.

Discuss with your child: Media content

- Who or what organisation has produced the content, and for what purpose?
- What methods are used to catch your attention and keep you interested?
- Which points of view, opinions and values are distributed through the content?
- How might different people interpret the content?
- Which point of view on the subject is not brought up?
- What kind of content does your child like or would like to create using media tools such as cameras, computers or mobile devices?

Source: The Finnish Society on Media Education



Encourage positive interaction

Friendship skills are needed not only in face-to-face interaction, but also in digital settings. Age limits on social media should be taken into consideration. At the beginning of primary school, it is sufficient for the child to interact online with family members, relatives and close friends. Children this age should not yet begin to use platforms that allow interaction with a broader community of users.

Discuss how the internet and gaming environments may affect relationships and interaction between friends. If an older child uses messaging apps or communicates with friends while playing games, talk about how unwritten rules and norms prevalent in different groups affect the activities and interaction.

Talk about the nature of messaging on various channels, in message threads and within groups. In what sort of tone are group members and those outside of the group talked

about? Is someone excluded? What is the conversation like while playing? How does the messaging make you feel?

Teach your child to see things from the perspective of other people. Encourage respect for his or her own boundaries and those of others. Positive encounters and treating others fairly is as important online as it is face-to-face. Also remind your child that he or she is much more valuable than any number of likes or followers on the internet he or she might ever have.

Your child may spend a lot of time online not only due to interesting content, but also due to the presence of important friends. One can also find entirely new friends on the internet or through games. Talk about whom your child likes to spend time with online. Ask whether the interaction online causes the child to feel pressure about having to participate or be present. Support your child's friendship bonds and offer opportunities to spend time with peers face-to-face, for example in your home.

4

Support digital wellbeing and balance in daily life

Children of primary school age still need plenty of adult support in order to take care of their own wellbeing. Sufficient rest, high-quality sleep, regular exercise, scheduled meals, meaningful hobbies, family, friends and face-to-face interactions are important components of wellbeing. Parents should talk with their children about how the use of smart devices and digital media affects the various components of wellbeing.

The parent plays an important role in supporting moderation and variety in the daily life of the child. The child has not yet developed sufficient ability to regulate his or her media use and find balance in matters of daily life that are important for wellbeing. Applications, games and social media are usually constructed for the purpose of attracting our attention and taking as much as possible of our

time. An adult can help the child learn over time how to regulate his or her media use.

Screen time has become a household word in many modern families with children. Screen time means the total amount of time spent using digital devices such as smartphones, television, video game consoles, computers or tablets. Becoming aware of one's screen time and regulating it if necessary is important with regard to time management and a healthy lifestyle. Screen time should not interfere with sufficient face-to-face interaction, exercise and sleep.

In addition to the total amount of time spent on digital devices, it is also important to consider specifically what that time contains. The type of content has great impact on the wellbeing, learning and development of the child.



For healthy growth, children of all ages need face-to-face interaction, exercise, play and sufficient sleep. Digital devices tend to catch the attention of children and adults alike, challenging their ability to focus and diverting time from face-to-face interaction. Without the child noticing, the devices thereby reduce the amount of moments important for the child's development of emotional and interaction skills. The significance of face-to-face interaction does not diminish as the child grows older.

In order to get the necessary 9–11 hours of sleep and 1–2 hours of vigorous exercise, a child of primary school age needs an adult to regulate the use of digital media.

Exercise and physical activity are important for both mental and physical wellbeing. The developing brain needs breaks from the kind of digital stimuli that devices and applications tend to offer in ample measure.

Discuss wellbeing and what is required to achieve it so as to help your child find balance between schoolwork, sleep, exercise, hobbies, social contacts and screen time. Create good practices for use of digital media that the entire family can commit to. Rules and reminders concerning the use of digital media can be displayed at home.

If your child seems to be spending too much time on digital media, discuss the matter at a suitable time. If the conversation does not bear

Ensure at least the following:

- sufficient sleep and media-free time before going to sleep
- storing the phone out of reach during the night
- taking care of schoolwork and housework
- device-free focus time for homework
- face-to-face interaction
- outdoor time and exercise
- family agreements concerning the use of smart devices
- shared moments with media and without
- taking breaks from screens
- ergonomic posture and changing position while playing games or using devices
- regular dialogue about media use and what is happening on the devices

fruit immediately, try again later. Introducing new habits and routines takes time and patience.

A child who is still developing his or her ability to manage time and self-regulate should be encouraged to find meaningful and varied activities that do not involve digital devices. This can be facilitated by offering alternative hobbies.

More information about reasonable screen time (in Finnish):

→ mll.fi/ruutuaika

Recognise signs of excessive use of digital media

- Signs of excessive gaming or internet use include an inability to take breaks from digital media and a constant preoccupation with gaming and the internet.
- Does having to put away the game or phone cause disproportionate quarrelling or negative feelings? It is important to talk about the problem and solve it together. It is the duty of a parent to maintain a calm presence and help the child handle difficult feelings and disappointments.
- There is reason to be alarmed if the child's gaming or internet use begins to affect schoolwork, family ties or face-to-face interaction with friends negatively or if the

child begins to neglect sleep or his or her wellbeing. If this happens, the child's use of media should be regulated and rules for media use should be specified. Moreover, it is important to offer meaningful alternative activities, the presence of an adult and quality time together.

- Irritability, fatigue, inability to focus, difficulties sleeping and pain in the neck and shoulders may be signs of excessive media use. Help your child regulate his or her media use and create circumstances where he or she can easily focus on the task at hand. Remind your child that although it is easy to be available to others by carrying a smart device, it is not necessary to be constantly online.

Discuss with your child: Digital wellbeing

- How is your child affected by his or her media use? How are other people around the child affected?
- How does media use make your child feel? (relaxed, excited, tired, restless...)
- What happens in the body and mind when one plays games, reads or uses the internet? What happens afterwards?
- What kind of emotions and thoughts arise when exploring different kinds of media content?
- What things keep bothering your child or linger on in the mind?
- In what situations does your child use media for the purpose of entertainment, hobbies, spending time with friends or relaxation, respectively?
- Does your child occasionally feel that time spent on media is "idling" or that he or she is using the digital world to escape from things that bother him or her, such as loneliness and boredom?
- Does your child feel obliged to be constantly available to friends online and reply to messages immediately?

5

Agree on rules for using media

The family needs shared rules for media, smart devices and gaming so as to facilitate everyday life and ensure that there is space in it for a variety of activities that strengthen the development and wellbeing of the child. Agreements are often easier to follow if adults and children have formulated them together. It is important that the adults set an example and commit to following the rules.

"I invented a common rule that says that one should not always look at the phone at home."

If discussing the rules turns into an argument, it is better to agree to discuss the matter further in a little while when the situation is calmer. Regulating the use of digital media as a form of punishment may exacerbate the argument. One should be prepared that introducing new rules and creating routines may require time and patience. If necessary, media use can be regulated through device settings, screen time tools and application blockers. Such measures are not, however, a substitute for shared activities, dialogue and agreed-upon rules.





Discuss with your child: **Family rules regarding media**

- What habits for media use and shared rules concerning it does your family have? Who must follow the rules and which family members have participated in formulating them? Do all family members understand the purpose of the rules?
- In the child's opinion, what kind of rules for media use would work well?
- What kind of rules do the child and parents believe that would contribute to the wellbeing of the entire family and facilitate everyday life?
- How much time is one allowed to spend daily on digital media in your family?
- Which activities are non-negotiable and must be carried out (sleeping, schoolwork etc.)? Which activities are negotiable?
- In what kind of situations and where is it appropriate to use media, and when is it inappropriate? (meals, evening routines, bedtime, visits etc.)
- How can quarrels concerning the use of media be resolved or anticipated?
- How would the child, when finding it difficult to limit the time he or she uses on media, want an adult to act?
- Does the family have media-free time for the entire family at the same time?
- How do the adults of the family commit to following the rules and setting an example?

6

Support online safety

What does safe use of media mean?

As children progress through primary school, they may begin to use digital devices more independently. Although children learn media skills in school, it is also important that parents ensure that they know how to use their devices in a safe way and handle challenging situations that might arise.

Safety on the internet and digital devices means that the privacy of oneself and those in the vicinity is maintained and that location data and personal information is not disseminated. Security also means that internet users with bad intentions cannot establish contact with the child and that the child is not exposed to frightening, dangerous or adults-only content on the internet. These safety skills are useful if the child encounters dangerous or disturbing content or messages online.

For children of primary school age, one of the most important online safety skill is to be able to recognise what kind of content is not suitable for oneself, when to be suspicious of attempts by others to establish contact, and to turn to a parent or a trusted adult if necessary. The child should be reminded of these matters

regularly. It is also important to make sure that the child is able to recognise dangerous situations.

In particularly serious situations that involve grooming, harassment and bullying of a child of primary school age, the guardian should turn to a professional or the authorities, such as the police. Grooming means trying to persuade a child to enter situations where he or she can be subjected to sexual abuse.

Challenging situations include:

- attempts by strangers to establish contact
- sexual approaches and grooming
- bullying on devices and the internet
- fraud and phishing
- recognising AI-generated content and discerning between fact, fiction and opinion
- unsound or dangerous content and trends

Not all applications and platforms are safe or appropriate for all users. For this reason, age limits on social media should be adhered to. Parents of children of primary school age should ensure the safety of their children on the internet and be aware of risks and adverse effects associated with the digital world.



Cyberbullying, sexual harassment, lack of privacy and repeated exposure to unsound lifestyles and body images may lead to decreased safety, an altered concept of human being, and increased mental ill-being and anxiety. Digital technology may also expose the user to harmful content, and algorithms that suggest content based on previous scrolling may bring up inappropriate or disturbing content repeatedly.

If something about your child's media use worries you, bring it up.

Express what makes you concerned and why. Since maintaining trust is important, it is not advisable to read the child's messages without permission unless there is reason to believe that the child's health and wellbeing are in serious jeopardy.

In some cases a child may hesitate to talk about negative online experiences due to shame or fear of the device being taken away as punishment. However, the child is not always the one who has caused the negative experiences to occur.

7

Take cyberbullying seriously

Cyberbullying may consist of offensive, threatening or humiliating messages, baseless rumours, exclusion from groups, sharing pictures taken without consent, or distribution of content and personal information without permission.

Parents should ask regularly whether the child or a friend of the child has been subjected to bullying or other forms of inappropriate treatment over the phone, in games or on the internet. Remind your child of the principle that content that offends or demeans others should not be published or shared on the internet or within groups.

"If I could change one thing about media, I would abolish cyberbullying."

Bullying online is often associated with bullying in school or hobby groups. A child may also be the perpetrator, either purposely or inadvertently. If this happens, the child should be instructed to act differently in the future.

Encourage your child to talk about any negative experiences online. If the child tells you about offensive treatment, harassment or cyberbullying, take it seriously. Be a supportive parent who is prepared to find out the relevant facts: What has happened, where did it happen and who was involved?

Download the offensive content and messages and store them as evidence. It is advisable to report offensive content to the administrator. Those who bully or harass the child should be blocked or removed from the child's contacts.

Take into account what the bullied child believes would help in the current situation. Bullying should be sorted out together with involved parties such as the school or hobby group, other children and guardians. In particularly serious cases, if the bullying involves violence or humiliation, the police should be informed. It is important to thank the child for talking about what has happened instead of facing the situation alone.

Information on cyberbullying for parents (in Finnish):

→ mll.fi/nettikiusaaminen

Discuss with your child: Cyberbullying

- What kind of things and actions do, in your child's view, constitute cyberbullying? What is your view as a parent?
- Has your child seen or encountered cyberbullying? In what kind of environments?
- Does your child know what to do when bullied online? Or when seeing a friend being bullied?
- In your child's opinion, how could cyberbullying best be prevented?

8

Protect the child from sexual content and unsafe encounters

Not all online content is suitable for children. The age limit for certain materials such as pornography is 18 years.

If your child has encountered sexual, pornographic or otherwise confusing content, be prepared to investigate what kind of content it was and in what kind of situation and on what channel it surfaced. Although the situation may feel shocking to the adult, it is important for the adult to stay calm and focus on comforting the child.

Inappropriate content may appear on various platforms. Parents should, on a regular basis, be acquainted with the platforms their children are using and stay updated concerning what kind of content they are exposed to on their devices. The youngest children may not be able to express verbally what they have seen online. As a parent, you are able to predict what kind of situations your child might encounter, and you can let the child know beforehand that not all content on the internet is for children and that it is wise to avoid content that is not age-appropriate.

"There are pictures that I would not like to see."

Encourage your child to let you know if he or she sees content with nude people, someone being hurt or something dangerous being done to a human or animal. Give your child positive feedback for telling you about these things and encourage him or her to let you know in the future as well.

Ask your child if he or she would like to discuss what has happened. Say that the child can bring up the issue again later if he or she dreams about it or is otherwise bothered by it. Doing housework and having fun together helps the child think about other things instead. Remind your child that he or she does not have to view disturbing or frightening content if someone shows it to others at school. It is wise to say no to content that one does not want to view. If you hear that something like this has happened among the children it is helpful to contact their teacher and other parents.

How to act if a child has encountered pornography (information in Finnish):

→ mll.fi/lapsetjaporno



Help your child recognise dangerous attempts to establish contact

Let your child know beforehand that not all content and attempts by others to establish contact are safe. It is important for the child to know how to act if someone who might be dangerous approaches him or her with ulterior or criminal motives.

Encourage your child to talk to you about any contact, message or content on the internet that has made him or her feel uncomfortable.

Remind your child that no one should be persuaded to do something that he or she does not want to do. Strengthen your child's self-confidence and ability to say no if the attempts

to establish contact or the content shared feel bad, weird or unsafe. Harassment must not be tolerated, and it is important to talk about it with a parent. Content or messages encouraging drug use should also be reported to a parent, and the child should not reply to them.

A general rule should be not to share location data or personal information about oneself or others with strangers. It is important to agree that the child is not allowed to share the phone number or other contact information with strangers. If something like this still happens, the child should not have further contact with the stranger but instead talk with a parent.

Grooming, in the sense of persuading a child to engage in sexual relations, is a serious crime, including on the internet.

Strangers or otherwise untrustworthy groups and individuals may ask children for nude pictures or other intimate content. They may threaten the child or try to gain his or her trust through flattery and other means.

The child should be aware that one should never share pictures or videos of oneself nude or in revealing clothes, even if someone tries to get access to such material through flattery, begging or intimidation. One should become suspicious if an unknown contact asks for the conversation to be encrypted.

In this kind of situations it is important to talk with a trusted adult and contact the police. The adult who has approached the adolescent for the purpose of grooming may well have approached others as well.

More information about sexual abuse against children: → nettivihje.fi

Privacy leads to security

Discuss the difference between public and private content on digital platforms. Explore the security settings of the applications and find out what kind of information about the child will be visible to others. If the child has profiles or channels on social media, it is advisable to keep them private initially. Age limits on social media should be adhered to.

Discuss information security and how platforms are meant to be used.

Many platforms offer minors and their parents instructions for safe use.

Manage passwords, PIN codes and privacy settings carefully. Teach the child to create secure passwords and talk about the importance of not sharing them with others.

Discuss with your child: Let's safeguard privacy

- What kind of content and information should be kept private on the internet?
- What kind of things, information and pictures of oneself or others can one share online, and what should not be shared?
- Why is it important to ask an adult for permission before publishing content?
- How can one increase online safety and privacy for oneself, friends and other people?

Discuss with the child: Strangers online

- How can one know whom to trust online?
- Has an unknown person contacted the child? What happened? How did the child act in this situation?
- How can the child know that an attempt by a stranger to establish contact is suspicious?
- What is the best way to handle contacts with strangers online?

Children begin to develop media habits early on, already before they are given devices of their own. A parent should be aware that his or her own media habits are observed by the child as a model of behaviour. Think about and ask your child about his or her impression of your use of smartphones or other devices. In what situations and how much do I spend time on the internet, playing games or using devices? How does this affect my presence? What impact has my media use on the everyday life of the family and the interaction within it?

"I wish my parents would listen instead of just scrolling on their phones."

Pay attention to your own habits and routines. How do you interact with people on the internet, face-to-face and in various situations where mobile devices are present?

From the child's perspective, a parent's use of media may seem obscure and the interaction between the child and the parent unpredictable if the child does not know what the parent is doing on the digital device. For this reason, it is advisable to talk about one's own use of media with the child.

By setting an example you can show your child how to use the internet in a way that takes other people into account and how to publish content responsibly. Consider carefully what kind of content concerning your daily life and your loved ones you publish online. If you want to publish a picture of or information concerning your child on, for example, your social media channels, ask for permission first. By respecting the wishes and opinions of your child you teach him or her to ask for permission and publish content in a responsible manner.

Discuss with the child: **How you as a parent use media**

- How does your child view your use of media and that of other family members?
- In what ways do you use media in a similar way? In what ways do you use media differently?
- What kind of media, games and internet content do you enjoy? How about your child?
- What kind of information, pictures and videos featuring the child does he or she not want to be published?
- Does your child have any wishes or requests concerning your use of media?

Shared moments help the child grow and strengthen the bond between parent and child. Play games with your child, explore his or her favourite content and discuss matters that are interesting, raise thoughts or evoke feelings. Media skills can be learned by exploring media together. Shared media moments offer opportunities to have a dialogue with the child regarding rules for using media and matters relating to digital wellbeing.

Family group chats can be used to handle practical matters, but also to lighten up the day for other family members. The group chat can be used in daily life to let the child know that he or she is important and on the parent's mind.

Face-to-face encounters and shared moments are important. The presence of the family, mutual trust and dialogue support the digital

wellbeing and safety of the child. Be interested in what your child does and experiences on the internet and in media. It is of utmost importance for the growth and development of a child to get sufficient attention and presence from a parent or other close adult.

"It would be good if adults were interested also in the media experiences of children."

Talk with your child: **Everyday life together**

- What would your child like to do together with you?
- What kind of things would your child like to do together with you using media?
- What is important to your child in everyday life?



More information

Advice regarding media education for children of various ages and information about media use can be found on Vanhempainnetti, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare's website for parents and on the Finnish Safer Internet Centre's website.

mll.fi/en/about-mll/media-education

mll.fi/sinisen-valon-sukupolvi

saferinternet.fi

The youth site Nuortennetti from the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare offers information and activities for young people. nuortennetti.fi

Invite a media education trainer from the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare to give a parental evening, workshop or a lesson to a class: mll.fi/tilaakouluttaja

Subscribe to the Ruutujen lumo media education newsletter: mll.fi/ruutujenlumo

If you are unsure about anything regarding your child's use of media you may contact the toll-free Vanhempainpuhelin hotline, chat or online message service hosted by the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. **Vanhempainpuhelin, tel. 0800 922 77**, is available Mon 10–13 and 17–20, Tues 10–13 and 17–20, Wed 10–13, Thurs 14–20 and Fri 10–13. The chat and message service can be found on mll.fi/vanhempainpuhelin

A hotline for children and adolescents, **Lasten ja nuorten puhelin, tel. 116 111**, is available Mon–Fri 14–20 and Sat–Sun 17–20. The chat is open daily 17–20. The message service can be used around the clock. nuortennetti.fi/lasten-ja-nuorten-puhelin



Did you know?

The EU Digital Services Act safeguards the privacy and safety of minors in various ways. Click or scan the QR code to learn more.



How can adults guide children towards safe media use that supports their wellbeing?

Talking about media, agreeing on how to use them and using them together are ways to improve the safety of the child, increase digital wellbeing and create balance in everyday life. The supervision and presence of an adult is needed for the child to learn the skills necessary for utilising the devices, games and internet properly.

This guide for parents and educators of primary school children discusses phenomena present in digital media and provides advice on how to talk about media use in everyday life.

mll.fi/media-education



THE MANNERHEIM LEAGUE
FOR CHILD WELFARE

