

PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

for the adventure of family life



74_Media consumption

Advantages, dangers and what needs to be considered

Cell phones, computer devices and the Internet have become indispensable in everyday life. The wide range of possible uses, both in private and the workplace, have become an integral part of our normality. It is therefore particularly important to take a closer look at what needs to be considered when dealing with daily screen consumption, where it is beneficial and where it could possibly have a negative effect.

Accompanied consumption

"Whether cell phones and tablets cause harm and to what extent has not yet been conclusively clarified scientifically. Of course, there is evidence that overconsumption is harmful - but when exactly overconsumption is excessive depends on many factors. In any case, experts advise against letting children use the devices, no matter how tempting it may seem." (Schmidt, 2018, S.139)¹

It makes sense to accompany the media so that cognitive or emotional overload can be prevented. Content and facts can be explained promptly, so the child has the opportunity to process and classify new impressions more easily.

The Internet offers many avenues for learning, entertaining and networking. However, there are also numerous dangers lurking, so it is advisable to draw attention to them and, together with adolescents, create awareness of the following topics at an early stage:

How do I handle my data online? What private information am I giving publicly? How do I deal with my pictures? How do I deal with strangers? Which sources are trustworthy? Where should I be careful?

Digital should offer added value, not replace an unmet need

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten why certain media are consumed.

Do they serve as momentary pleasure, curiosity and discovery? Or are they possibly substitutes for something specific and satisfy needs that are not fulfilled in the real world? Here, too, parents can show interest in their children's online behaviour, be vigilant and keep open the channels of communication.

"We parents have the job of making the >>offline<< world so beautiful that children like to >>come back<< again. >>Digital should offer added value, but not be a substitute." (Schmidt, 2018, p.141)²

Clear framework conditions for maintaining quality of life

The Internet and various devices should not be available for free use at all times - clear regulations and agreements for common use rooms as well as common offline times in everyday family life help limit media consumption so that other areas of life are still experienced sufficiently. Here adults act in their role model function. As long as there is a healthy balance between screen use and experiences in real life, digitisation can be used beneficially at home so the quality of relationships and life are preserved.

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Recommended literature:

^{1/2} Nicola Schmidt, (2018), ethical. Das andere Kleinkinderbuch (The Other Toddler Book). Kösel-Verlag, Munich, in the Random House GmbH publishing group