

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

SCREENS AT HOME

MANAGE, EDUCATE AND GUIDE



/s cher
.digital/



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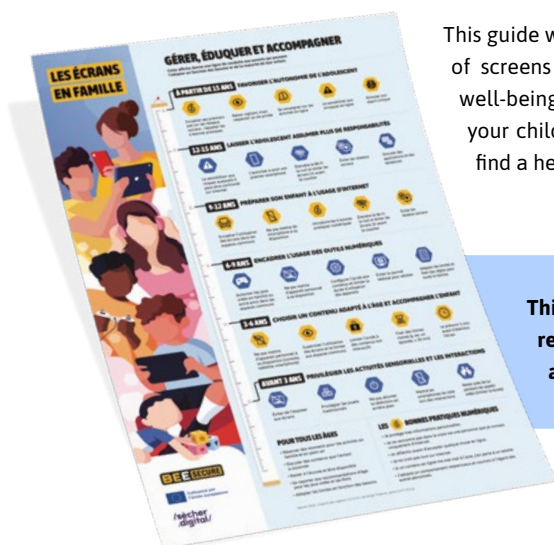
- Artificial intelligence tools were used to format and linguistically revise the text. The text was subsequently reviewed and approved by the BEE SECURE team.
- To make this publication easier to read, the masculine form has been used as a gender-neutral term to refer to the population as a whole.



INTRODUCTION

Children and young people are growing up today in a world where digital technology is an integral part of their daily lives. For parents, this reality can raise many questions:

- **Why should screens be avoided before the age of three?**
- **At what age should I give my child their first smartphone?**
- **How can I best prepare my child to use the Internet?**
- **Should I install parental controls on my child's devices?**
- **My child seems unable to detach from screens anymore. What can I do?**



This guide will help you better understand the impact of screens on children's development, health, and well-being. It also offers practical advice to support your child in everyday life and to help your family find a healthy balance that works for you.

This guide also includes a poster with recommendations tailored to different age groups.



1 0 TO 3 YEARS: SCREENS DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO A CHILD'S HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Children under the age of three mainly learn and develop through sensory activities and personal interaction with adults or other children. At this age, digital devices do not contribute to a child's healthy cognitive, motor, or social development. In his book "3-6-9-12: Apprivoiser les écrans et grandir"¹, Serge Tisseron draws on numerous studies to present the risks children face when exposed to screens. Here are a few examples:

Exposure to television from an early age can slow language development.

Television programmes are not suited to a baby's psychological and relational needs. What supports language development most is direct interaction between an adult and a baby. Words are accompanied by tone of voice, body language and eye contact that are adapted to both the situation and the baby. This richness of interaction does not exist when a baby is watching television.

In addition, screens capture not only the child's attention but also the attention of the rest of the family. They interrupt conversations, divert eye contact and reduce the quality of interactions between the child and the adult, even though these interactions are essential for language development.

¹ 3-6-9-12.org

A screen left on in the background can affect the healthy development of concentration and attention skills.

A baby playing in a room with, for example, a television series playing in the background will play for a shorter period of time. When exposed to sudden lights and sounds that they are not yet able to process, they may later experience greater difficulties with concentration. A child who has problems concentrating is also more likely to experience difficulties at school.

Background music or the radio do not present the same problem because, in addition to the absence of visual stimuli, they create a calm atmosphere without sudden auditory interruptions. They do not capture attention in the same way or with the same intensity.

Screens can have a negative impact on the development of empathy and negotiation skills.

When a child plays with traditional toys, such as soft toys or a doll's house, they use their hands to bring the characters to life. By manipulating objects, they can more easily imagine themselves in different roles, invent stories and switch from one character to another. When playing with other children, each child can take on a role and then switch roles with another child. These types of play help children develop empathy, understand other people's perspectives and learn how to negotiate.

When facing a screen, however, children tend to identify with the same character all the time. As a result, they explore fewer perspectives and have fewer opportunities to negotiate with other children.

Excessive screen use can encourage children to isolate themselves and adopt aggressive behaviour.

The first years of life are essential for learning how to recognise, understand and manage emotions, as well as learning to read other people's emotions through facial expressions and everyday interactions. These experiences help children respond appropriately in their relationships with others.

Without these learning experiences, children may find it more difficult to understand the reactions of other children. They may then respond inappropriately, for example by becoming aggressive because they feel threatened, or by withdrawing because they struggle to understand social interactions. As they become more vulnerable in their relationships, they may also be more exposed to teasing or aggression from others.



2 SCREENS AND HEALTH: SLEEP, EYESIGHT AND WELL-BEING

Screen use can affect sleep.

Using screens during the hour before bedtime can have a negative impact on sleep:



- The light emitted by screens can disrupt our sleep–wake cycle by signalling to the brain that it is still daytime, making it harder to fall asleep.
- The content viewed stimulates the brain and does not promote the calm state needed to fall asleep. If a smartphone is left switched on nearby during the night, it can also reduce sleep quality, especially if no settings have been adjusted (e.g. Do Not Disturb mode, notifications switched off, Wi-Fi turned off, etc.).

Help your child get the sleep they need. It is essential for recovery, healthy growth, learning and overall well-being. Sleep needs vary according to age:



3 to 5 years
11 to 13 hours



6 to 12 years
9 to 11 hours



12 years+
8½ to 9½ hours

SEE ALSO:

“Bibliothèque de supports” from the *Institut National du Sommeil et de la Vigilance* :
<https://institut-sommeil-vigilance.org/bibliotheque-de-supports>



Excessive screen use is harmful to children's eyes.

Screens place significant demands on near vision. Excessive exposure may encourage abnormal elongation of the eyeball, increasing the risk of developing high myopia. High myopia is a severe form of short-sightedness that can lead to more serious eye problems over time. This risk is particularly high in children because their eyes are still developing.

(Dr Gregory Laruelle, ophthalmologist at Saint-Luc Bouge Clinic)

Excessive screen use can also increase other health risks:



Eye strain and irritation



Weight gain



Physical pain



A negative impact on mental well-being



Reduced physical fitness

(European Union)

Establish healthy screen use habits from an early age. The earlier your child adopts these habits, the more likely they are to maintain them throughout their life.²

² See 7. Recommendations for all ages p. 20, 8a. "We set the rules together – and everyone follows them!" p. 28

3

PARENTAL CONTROLS:

A SUPPORT, NOT A SOLUTION

Parental controls are a tool that helps you supervise your child's online activities and the content they can access. They can be used to:

- **block access to specific websites, apps or functions** (e.g. payments and purchases or the use of webcams);
- **filter different types of content**, such as inappropriate content, 'adult' content, certain social media pages and content promoting self-harm, eating disorders, violence, drugs, gambling or racism;
- **limit communications and manage the apps used** to communicate with others;
- **monitor device use**, including the websites your child visits, the apps they use and their screen time data (frequency and duration);
- **set time limits** for access to and use of specific devices.

(European Union)



How do you enable parental controls?

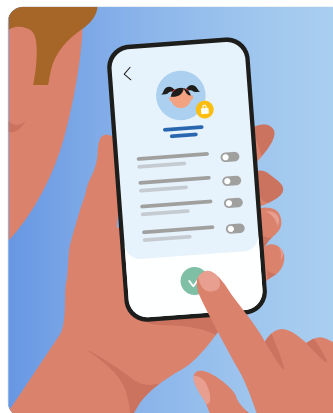
- Desktop computers, laptops and smartphones generally include free parental protection features built into their operating systems (*Windows, iOS or Android*).
- Streaming services and social media platforms (such as *Netflix, YouTube, Instagram or TikTok*) have their own protection and filtering options.
- Customisable monitoring and protection features are available through specialist programmes such as *Google Family Link* or *Microsoft Family Safety*, as well as web filtering software (e.g. *JusProg*).

In addition, other tools, often available as paid services, provide broader protection across multiple devices.

Practical example: Which settings should you use for streaming apps?

The available options vary depending on the streaming provider (*Netflix, Disney+, Prime Video, etc.*). As a minimum, make sure you:

- **Create child profiles:** Set up a separate profile for your child and select the appropriate age group. This will automatically hide much inappropriate content.
- **Pay attention to age ratings:** They provide useful guidance, but you should also make sure the content matches your child's level of maturity.
- **Set up a PIN:** Restrict access to adult content and account settings with a PIN so that children cannot simply switch profiles or change the settings.
- **Set screen time limits:** Within the app, on the device or via your router, you can set screen time limits and schedules (e.g. to avoid screen use before bedtime). This helps establish healthy routines and screen-free periods.
- **Check the privacy settings:** Limit personalised advertising, disable location services and review what data the service collects. Child profiles should be configured to minimise data collection wherever possible.



Which parental control app should you choose?

The App Store offers a wide range of apps, but not all of them are trustworthy. Because parental control apps require extensive access permissions, some may conceal malicious actors who could, in the worst case, gain full access to your phone. To help you choose:

1. Read the terms of use and privacy guarantees carefully.

Ask yourself:



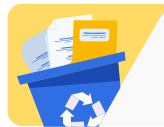
Who has access to your data?



What happens if the service is interrupted or discontinued?



How can the provider use your data?



Is the deletion of your data guaranteed once you remove it?



What guarantees are provided regarding data protection?

Additional questions.

- Is the app recommended by experts (e.g. an independent testing organisation)?
- Which protection features does my child need and which features does the app provide (screen time management, access controls, activity monitoring, etc.)?
- Which tools are compatible with my devices?
- Is the interface simple and intuitive?
- Is technical support available in my language?





PROTECTION FILTERS DO NOT PROVIDE COMPLETE SECURITY!

- They might not work across all browsers or platforms.
- They cannot prevent contact-related risks such as cyberbullying or grooming³.
- They cannot reliably detect problematic content such as disinformation or inappropriate advertising.

³ The practice whereby adults make contact with children with the aim of building an emotional connection, obtaining personal information or intimate photos, or arranging meetings in real life.

IMPORTANT

Be transparent about your use of parental control software and explain to your child why it is necessary.

Respect your child's privacy and avoid using technical monitoring features without their knowledge (e.g. browsing history, reading private messages or tracking their location). Doing so may permanently damage the relationship of trust with your child and encourage them to find ways to bypass parental controls.

If you are considering using these features for safety reasons, take the time to discuss them openly with your child beforehand.

Given the wide range of parental control apps available, many of which pursue commercial objectives, we have deliberately chosen not to recommend any specific tool. However, below you will find useful links providing additional information and practical step-by-step guides.

Medien kindersicher

The *Medien kindersicher* portal provides a step-by-step guide. Its assistant also allows you to create a personalised protection based on your child's age and the devices and services they use.

medien-kindersicher.de



Klicksafe

Klicksafe provides useful information about the following tools:

- *Salfeld*
- *Google Family*
- *iOS Bildschirmzeit*

klicksafe.de/jugendschutzprogramme



European Union

Explore how to set up parental controls:

better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/learning-corners/parents-and-caregivers/parental-controls



Internet matters

Parental controls guides:

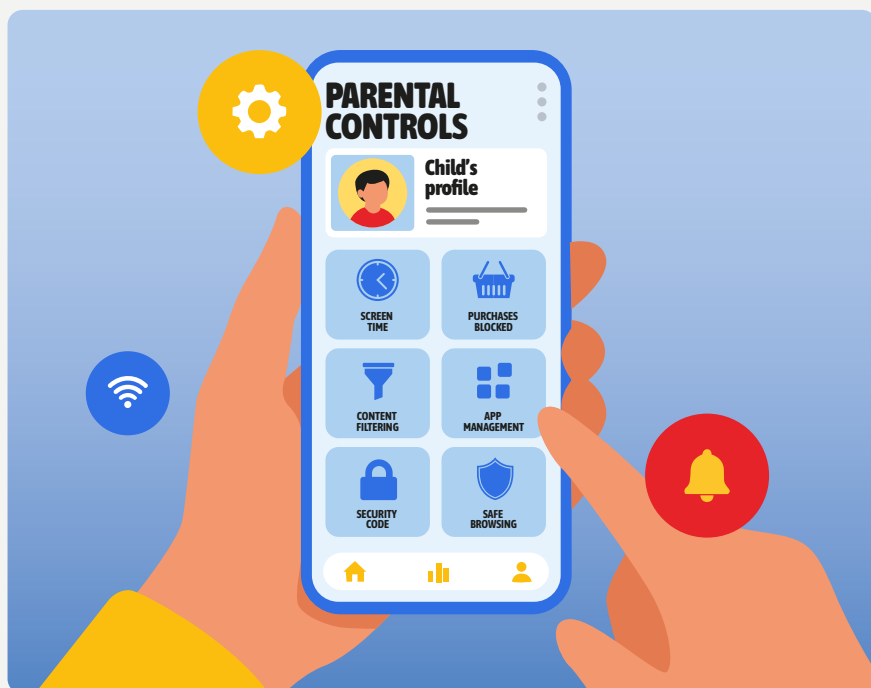
internetmatters.org/parental-controls



e-enfance

Parental controls: Enable, install
and configure parental controls.

e-enfance.org/informer/controle-parental



4

BEFORE PARENTAL CONTROLS: THE ESSENTIAL BASICS

**CREATE
A STRONG PASSWORD**

Length

Minimum 12

Options

✓ A-Z ✓ a-z ✓ 0-9 ✓ !@#%&^*

Generated password

TrjiC7#cMy%Q6uS^USBJ3Px

1

Use a different, secure password for each account (use a password manager).

2

Use a family email address that your child can use to sign up for new games or websites.

3

Keep devices and software up to date:

- Updates improve security
- After updating, check the app permissions on your devices (they may have changed).

4

Disable in-app purchases and block pop-up adverts.

5

Check what data apps can access and disable any unnecessary features (personal information, location data, audio or video recordings, voice recognition, etc.).

6

Adjust the settings to your child's age – the security needs of a 4-year-old child are not the same as those of a 16-year-old.

7

Introduce the 6 digital best practices:

- I protect my personal information.
- I don't meet up in real life with someone I only know from the internet.
- I think before agreeing to anything online.
- I don't believe everything I see on the internet.
- If online content makes me feel uncomfortable, I talk to an adult about it.
- I behave respectfully and courteously towards other people.



IMPORTANT

TALK TO YOUR CHILD:

Explain your approach to your child: parental controls are not a punishment. They are a way to protect them, not to restrict their freedom.

Take an interest in your child's online world: this can encourage open conversations and help you identify potentially inappropriate content that parental controls may not have filtered.



5 SCREEN USE AND ADDICTION: WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

This content was written by the Zenter fir exzessiivt Verhalen a Verhalenssucht (ZEV)

It is normal for children and teenagers to enjoy using screens, but it is important to pay attention to the effects they may have on their daily lives. However, a high amount of screen time alone is not enough to indicate an addiction. Games and social media platforms are often designed to encourage users to spend as much time as possible on them (e.g. frequent notifications, infinite scrolling, etc.).

It is therefore essential to distinguish between different types of use. Some people tend to use digital media excessively (regularly or during certain periods, exceeding the amount of time they intended to spend on it), while others develop problematic use, accompanied by symptoms such as stress, sleep problems or depression.

Problematic use of digital media (video games, social media, streaming services, pornographic websites, etc.) can take several forms. To date, only video game addiction has been officially recognised as a medical disorder (gaming disorder), but the mechanisms of addiction and their consequences may also apply to other forms of digital media use.

In general, digital media use is considered addictive when it begins to take up too much space in a person's life and disrupts their daily routine. In practice, the following signs may indicate this:



Difficulty stopping and repeatedly exceeding the intended amount of time spent using digital media (loss of control).



Giving priority to screens over school, friends, sleep or other activities.



Irritability or anger when the activity is interrupted.



Continuing despite negative consequences (conflicts, declining academic performance, fatigue).



Lying about the amount of time spent online or using digital media in secret.

A single sign is not enough; what matters is whether these behaviours are repeated and have an impact on daily life.

Like any addiction, whether related to a substance or a behaviour, problematic use of digital media can have negative effects on a person's mental and physical health. The most common consequences include:

- Health problems (e.g. sleep disorders, back pain or headaches caused by prolonged sitting, eye strain, exhaustion).
- Declining performance at school, during training, at university or at work.
- Social difficulties (conflicts, loneliness, social isolation).
- Weight loss or weight gain, often linked to irregular eating habits.
- Psychological consequences (e.g. depression or anxiety disorders).

If these signs persist and begin to affect family life, school or social life, it is recommended to seek advice from a professional.

SEE ALSO:

For more information, as well as practical advice and useful resources, visit: zev.lu

6

MANIPULATION BY APPS: HELPING YOUR CHILD TAKE BACK CONTROL

The content shown on screens is often designed to encourage users to spend as much time as possible using it. It is not only easy and enjoyable to use, but it also relies on techniques that exploit the way our brains work to capture our attention.

Notifications, pop-ups and algorithms show us content we are likely to enjoy, encouraging us to keep engaging with it. Infinite scrolling, rewards (such as “likes” or streaks) and autoplay are all features that encourage us to continue, sometimes without even realising it.

This is known as persuasive design.

On social media, “likes”, comments and messages provide a sense of pleasure. People have a natural need to feel recognised and to belong to a group, a need that is particularly strong in children and teenagers. Social media amplifies this by stimulating the brain’s reward system, particularly through dopamine.



DOPAMINE

“When we have a pleasant or rewarding experience, the brain releases dopamine, creating a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. This is why dopamine is often referred to as the ‘pleasure molecule’. It reinforces behaviours that encourage us to seek out positive experiences.”
(Institut du Cerveau, Paris)

According to *Emily Cherkin, MEd*, author of “The ScreenTime Solution”, understanding that digital tools are designed to capture your child’s attention can help you manage screen-related conflicts more effectively. It is not a battle between you and your child, but a shared challenge against these persuasive mechanisms.

Explain to your child that apps and games are designed to capture their full attention, making it difficult to stop. Work together as a team: **acknowledge that it is not easy and look for solutions together.**



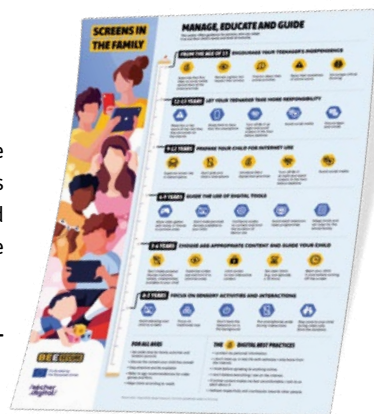
For example:

- Stay with your child when it is time to stop, by remaining calm or gently placing a hand on their shoulder.
- Help redirect their attention to something else.
- Suggest leaving the room so that you can think together about how they can continue making progress in their game later.
- Share the moments when you also find it difficult to put your phone down.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL AGES

It is not always easy to know which media are appropriate for your child's age or how much screen time is recommended. To provide some guidance, you will find below a set of age-based recommendations inspired by the work of Serge Tisseron.

You will also find a summary version of these recommendations on the poster included with this guide.



0-3 years Focus on sensory activities and interactions



Young children learn and develop mainly through sensory activities and personal interactions with adults and other children. At this age, digital devices do not support a child's cognitive, motor or social development⁴. Avoid screens and instead encourage activities that stimulate the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste).



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Avoid exposing your child to screens
- Focus on traditional toys
- Don't have the television on in the background
- Put smartphones aside during interactions
- Stay close to your child during video calls (limit the duration)



ALTERNATIVES:

Family activities help promote well-being and build self-confidence. Enjoy books and stories for young children, walks, creative activities, and exploring the world around you.

3-6 years

Choose age-appropriate content and guide your child



Introduce digital content into your child's activities gradually. This is the right time to establish good habits: choose the content (e.g. educational programmes and interactive games that are appropriate for your child's age) and decide in advance how much time they will spend in front of a screen. Talk to your child about what they are watching.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Don't make personal devices (consoles, tablets, smartphones) available to your child
- Supervise screen use and limit it to common areas
- Limit access to non-interactive content
- Set clear limits (e.g. one episode, $\pm$ 30 mins)
- Warn your child 5 mins before turning off the screen



ALTERNATIVES:

A wide range of audio stories can enrich your child's experience, support their language development and improve concentration. Continue to prioritise board games, reading stories together and outdoor activities.

IMPORTANT

Choose content that is appropriate for your child's age. You can use the age recommendations as a guide. These are usually displayed as an age rating in the corner of the screen, indicating the minimum recommended age. Always check for yourself whether the content is genuinely suitable for your child's level of maturity and sensitivity.

⁴ See 1. 0 to 3 years: screens do not contribute to a child's healthy development p.4



6-9 years

Guide the use of digital tools



Continue to supervise your child's screen use. Make sure they use screens in shared family spaces and access content or play video games that are appropriate for their age and level of maturity.

Play video games with your child. It is one of the best ways to discover their interests and turn a topic that might otherwise cause tension into an opportunity to spend time together and enjoy playing as a family.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Allow video games with family or friends in common areas
- Don't make personal devices available to your child
- Configure access to content and limit the duration of device use⁵
- Avoid adult television news programmes
- Adapt limits and set rules for the whole family⁶



ALTERNATIVES:

Find out about leisure activities organised in your local area. Sports, music and the arts help children develop their interests and creativity, while also giving them opportunities to spend time with children of their own age.

⁵ See 3. Parental controls: a support, not a solution p.8

⁶ See 8a. "We set the rules together – and everyone follows them!" p.28

9-12 years Prepare your child for internet use

9-12 years Prepare your child for internet use



Your child is becoming more independent and is better able to manage their immediate environment, but they are not yet mature enough to assess the risks of the internet on their own. Although the temptation may be great, avoid giving them a smartphone with internet access before the age of 12. A basic mobile phone without internet access should be enough for you to keep in touch with your child and for them to contact you while they are out and about.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Supervise screen use in shared spaces
- Don't give your child a smartphone
- Introduce the 6 digital best practices
- Turn off Wi-Fi at night and avoid screens in the hour before bedtime écrans
- Avoid social media

THE 6 DIGITAL BEST PRACTICES

- I protect my personal information.
- I don't meet up in real life with someone I only know from the internet.
- I think before agreeing to anything online.
- I don't believe everything I see on the internet.
- If online content makes me feel uncomfortable, I talk to an adult about it.
- I behave respectfully and courteously towards other people.





ALTERNATIVES:

Suggest leisure activities that are suited to their needs and interests. Sport, music, art or spending time with family can help them develop their creativity, strengthen their relationships with those around them and spend time with young people their own age.



AT WHAT AGE CAN CHILDREN USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN LUXEMBOURG?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provides that online services processing personal data – including almost all social media platforms and messaging services – may only be used with parental consent until the age of 16.

Many platforms set their own minimum age at 13. This simply means that the service is technically accessible from that age. In Luxembourg, however, the legal rule is as follows:

- **13–15 years:** use is only permitted with parental consent
- **From the age of 16:** young people can give their own consent



12-15 years

Let your teenager take more responsibility



Continue to set clear rules for the use of digital devices. Try to discuss and explore together the apps that interest your child.

From the age of 13, your teenager is more receptive to learning about the protection of their personal data, particularly the photos they share online. You can also build on the online safety information they receive at school by raising their awareness of the risks they may encounter on the internet.

SEE ALSO:

Guide « Risques sur Internet » : bee-secure.lu/risques-sur-internet

Guide « Tu es victime de cyberharcèlement ? » : bee-secure.lu/cyber-harcèlement-guide

Guide « Nu(e) sur le net ? » : bee-secure.lu/sexting-guide



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Make him or her aware of the risks they may encounter on the internet
- Allow them to have their first smartphone
- Turn off Wi-Fi at night and avoid screens in the hour before bedtime
- Avoid social media
- Discuss apps and trends



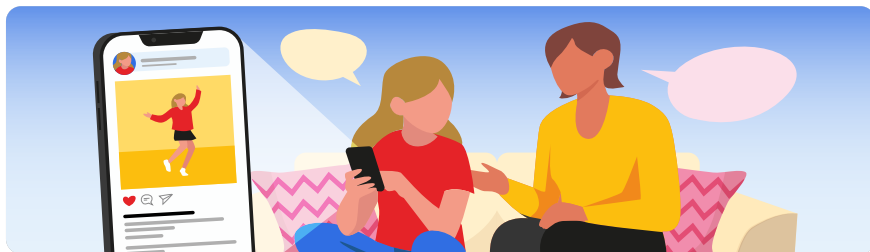
ALTERNATIVES:

Suggest other activities before bedtime (stretching, card game, reading a book or a comic, ...)

If your child would like to develop their creativity, some primary and secondary schools have a *makerspace* – a creative, multidisciplinary space where young people can work on their own projects. Ask your child's school whether it offers one.

The *makerspace* located at the *Forum Geesseknäppchen*⁷ in Luxembourg City (40 Boulevard Pierre Dupong) is open to young people aged 8 to 30, whether they are students or not.

⁷ base1.lu



From the age of 15 Encourage your teenager's independence



Your teenager is now able to use digital devices more independently. However, continue to stay vigilant, particularly when it comes to social media, sharing personal information online, and excessive screen time.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Supervise their first steps on social media: remind them of the 6 best practices
- Remain vigilant, but respect their privacy
- Find out about their online activities
- Raise their awareness of online scams: phishing and other scams⁸
- Encourage critical thinking



ALTERNATIVES:

Encourage your teenager to complete a work placement⁹ to explore a professional field or gain a better understanding of a career they are interested in before making decisions about their future.

They may also want to get involved in a meaningful community project. Voluntary service¹⁰ offers an opportunity to learn through practical experience while helping young people explore their future direction. It is a full-time commitment for a fixed period.

If your teenager has left school and is still unsure about their next steps, encourage them to take part in the workshops offered by the *Service national de la jeunesse (SNJ)*¹¹. A socio-educational team and subject-matter experts will help them prepare for and plan the next stage of their lives.

⁸ bee-secure.lu/risques-sur-internet | ⁹ hey.snj.lu/stages | ¹⁰ volontaires.lu | ¹¹ hey.snj.lu/ateliers

For all ages

- Set aside time for family activities and outdoor pursuits
- Discuss the content your child has viewed
- Stay attentive and be available
- Refer to age recommendations for video games and films
- Adapt limits according to needs



**8**

SCREENS IN EVERYDAY LIFE: TALK FIRST

Talking about screens at home is not always easy, but these conversations do not have to lead to conflict. This guide offers practical suggestions to help you establish clear boundaries and discuss different topics with confidence and peace of mind. By listening carefully and keeping communication open, you can better support your child, build trust and enjoy positive family experiences with screens.

a. “We set the rules together – and everyone follows them!”

Establish simple, consistent rules from early childhood to help your child grow up with clear and stable boundaries. Even if they do not yet fully understand the reasons behind them, they will recognise their consistency. Over time, routines, limits, respect and consequences become part of everyday family life. Children who grow up with clear boundaries are therefore more likely to respect rules during adolescence because they are already part of their daily routine.

Discuss the needs of each family member and agree together on rules for using digital media in everyday life. To be effective, these rules should be realistic and suited to your family's needs.

Below is a selection of ten rules proposed by *Internet Sans Crainte*¹², adapted for this publication.

You will find a detachable sheet with the 10 rules on page 49 to display at home, or you can create your own family media agreement together at faminum.com.



1

**We avoid screens
for one hour before
bedtime.**

In the evening, the body needs time to slow down and prepare for sleep. Using screens just before bedtime can keep the brain alert and make it harder to fall asleep.¹³

**Avoiding screens before bed helps everyone sleep better
and wake up feeling more refreshed.**



Tip: Establish a screen-free bedtime routine for the whole family with books, games, songs or time to talk together. Meditation and relaxation techniques can also help calm the body and mind.

¹² *Internet sans crainte* is the French Internet Safety Awareness Centre co-funded by the European Union.

¹³ See 2. Screens and health: sleep, eyesight and well-being, p.6

2

Our screen-free zones are the bedroom and the kitchen.

The bedroom is a place for rest and sleep, while the kitchen is often a space for spending time together and conversation.

Having screens in these places can interfere with sleep, focus and family relationships.

Creating screen-free zones helps the whole family enjoy quiet moments, focus more on one another and build habits that support well-being.



Tip: Turn on “Do Not Disturb” mode overnight and allow emergency calls from selected contacts. Switch off the Wi-Fi in the evening, leave phones outside bedrooms, set up a charging station in the hallway and use an alarm clock that does not require an internet connection. You will still receive emergency calls if needed.

3

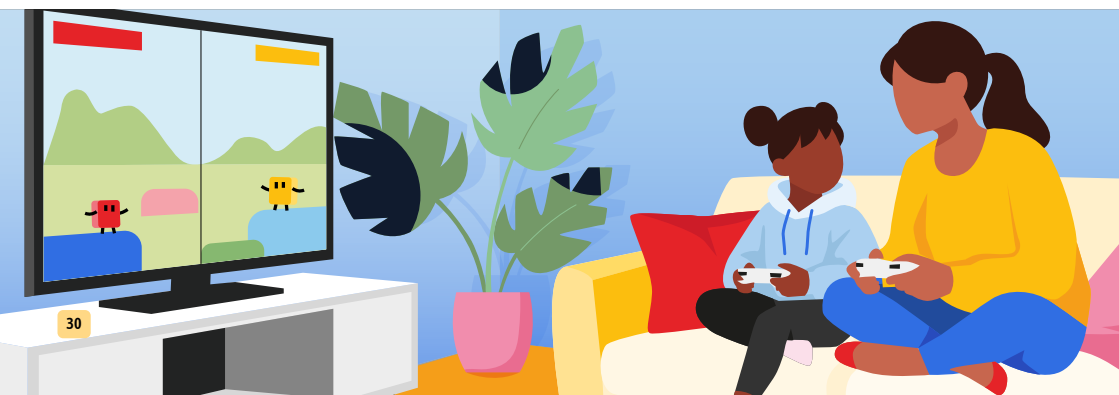
We choose video games together.

Not all video games are suitable for every age group. Some contain violence, disturbing messages or other content that may not be appropriate for younger children.

Choosing games together helps ensure they are suitable for your child’s age and reflect your family’s values.



Tip: Before allowing a new game, explore it together with your child, check the recommended age (PEGI¹⁴) and make sure the content matches their level of maturity. Setting a password for downloads encourages discussion while avoiding an automatic refusal.



4

Before stopping a video game, we allow time to save progress.

When a player says they cannot stop straight away, it is often because they have not yet reached a save point.

Forcing them to stop in the middle of a game may mean they lose everything they have achieved, which can be very frustrating.



Tip: Take an interest in the game and how it saves progress so that you can agree with your child on the right time to stop. If you have not agreed beforehand, simply ask: "When can you save your game?"

5

Screens come after homework.

Sometimes there are things to do before relaxing, such as homework or tidying a bedroom.

It is up to parents to decide which tasks should be completed before children can use screens.



Tip: Planning an enjoyable activity after a less enjoyable task can be a good source of motivation.

6

Screen use is allowed on weekends and on Wednesdays.

When you set specific days and times for watching films, series or playing video games, your child is more likely to remember the rule.

This helps avoid daily negotiations and encourages screen-free activities.



Tip: Display these times on a family timetable that everyone can see. Create it together and, for younger children, use magnets, stickers or colour coding.

7

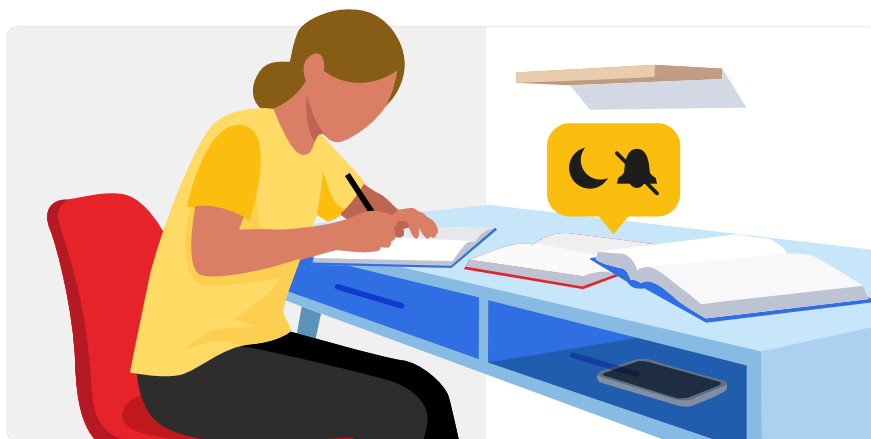
When we watch a film together, we choose one that is suitable for everyone.

Children react differently to content depending on their age and personality.

Something that seems harmless to one may frighten or upset another.



Tip: For family film nights, check the recommended age rating.



8

We switch off the television and deactivate notifications during homework.

Homework requires attention and concentration. A television left on, even if no one is watching it, or frequent notifications can be distracting and make studying more difficult.

Reducing distractions helps children concentrate better, work more efficiently and complete their tasks with greater ease.



Tip: Before your child starts their homework, create a calm environment by turning off the television, silencing notifications or leaving screens in another room.

9

We use only one screen at a time.

Many people check social media on their smartphone while also playing games or watching their favourite series.

When the brain is asked to do too many things at once, it becomes tired and finds it harder to stay focused on a single task.

It is more difficult to concentrate on an activity and to enjoy it when something else keeps distracting you.



Tip: Suggest activities one at a time so your child can enjoy them fully. Children copy adults, so lead by example!

10

Every day, we enjoy a screen-free family activity.

The best family memories are created through everyday moments spent together. This shared time is important for everyone's development, learning and well-being.

Putting screens aside allows everyone to be fully present with one another, enjoy these moments together and find a healthier balance between the online and offline worlds.



Tip: Create an "ideas box" filled with activity suggestions, such as baking a cake, painting, playing sport, reading or playing cards. Choosing an activity at random can motivate children. Doing this at the same time every day also helps turn it into a lasting habit.



b. “Which activities on the Internet do you enjoy most?”

This content was developed by *Webwise*¹⁵.

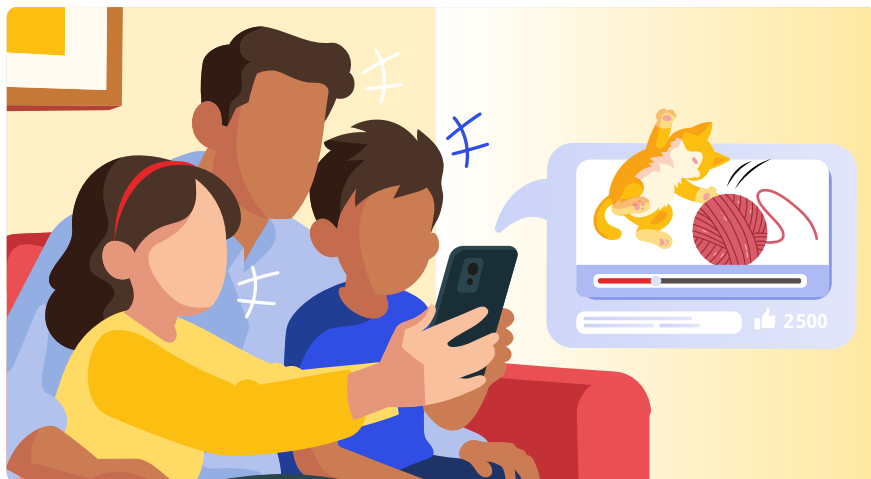
Nobody understands the online world of children and teenagers better than their fellow young people! Based on their own online experiences, these Talking Points have been created by Irish teenagers to help parents approach the conversation in a way that will encourage their child or teen to open up about their life online.

Before starting the discussion:

- 1 Be curious, not critical - how you approach the conversation is important!** – Keep an open mind, remember children and teenagers use the internet differently to adults and being judgemental of what they are doing may put your child off talking to you.

- 2 Remember the benefits.** Show that you also see the positives of being online. For example, sharing a funny video, or asking them to share something interesting that they have found online shows that you value your child's interests.

- 3 Don't overreact or scaremonger.** It's important to stay calm and listen to what your child has to say. This can help them feel comfortable to share their thoughts with you now, and in the future.





4 Share your stories! If parents talk to their children or teens about what they do themselves online it makes it an open space for teens to share what they do online too.

5 Discover the internet together! The internet plays an important role in children's lives and showing that you are interested in the online world can be a good way of breaking down barriers to conversations. For example, asking them to show you or teach you how to do something online such as on a social media app or finding information that you are interested in.

6 Keep it relevant. It's important to keep in mind that, as your child gets older, how they use the internet, what they use it for, and the challenges they face will change and evolve.

¹⁵ Webwise is the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre co-funded by the European Union.

Examples of questions to start a discussion:

1 Who is your favourite influencer on social media or what is your favourite online game?

Starting off with an easier question about what we like online will make your child or teenager feel comfortable and can be used as a springboard to a deeper conversation.

2 What did you think of the recent story about [a sports team/celebrity/influencer that your teenager is interested in]?

Talking about recent news events or trending topics online can be a natural way of easing into a conversation with your teenager and finding common ground.

3 Can you show me how your favourite app or game works?

Showing an interest in what your child or teenager likes to do online will encourage them to be more open with you and help you learn and have a better understanding of what they like.

4 What do you think my favourite apps or websites are?

Looking for common ground is a great way to begin a conversation with your teen. Finding similarities in how you both use the internet allows you to bridge any understanding gaps and to highlight the benefits and opportunities of using digital technologies.

5 How do you stay connected with your friends online?

The social aspect of being online is very important to young people. It allows them to stay connected with their friends, and to connect with communities with shared interests around the world. Understanding this social element can help you support your child in having a safe and positive online experience.

6 What app do you use the most, and if you didn't use the app how would it affect you?

Open up a conversation with your child about the apps, games or websites they like to use, and encourage them to consider what the positive and negative impacts would be if they didn't use it. Not only will this encourage your child to weigh up the pros and cons, but it will also help you to understand the benefit it may provide your child and whether they might need support.

7 Let's switch roles... what advice could you give me about being better online?

This can be a helpful bridge to beginning a discussion about online safety, responsible use of technology and using the internet in a positive way. Don't forget to lead by example and follow the rules too!

8 What rules do you think we should have in place about using the internet?

It is helpful for families to have rules around internet use and guidelines around expected behaviour online. Allowing your teen to have a say in developing rules can lead to a better understanding and acceptance of guidelines. It's always helpful to revisit rules.

c. "Let's think before we share."

Content shared on the Internet can spread quickly and can be difficult to remove. Encourage the following good practices:

- I check the privacy settings on social media and disable any features I do not need.
- I ask the person concerned for permission before posting a photo or video online.
- **For younger children:** they should not send photos without your permission.
- **For parents:** avoid sharing photos of your baby online as much as possible or make sure they cannot be identified. Something that may seem harmless today could later affect your child's reputation and privacy.
- I take the time to think before sharing intimate content. Sexting can be misused for malicious purposes (e.g. blackmail, damage to someone's reputation or cyberbullying).

SEE ALSO:

Guide "Nu(e) sur le net?": bee-secure.lu/sexting-guide
Fiche thématique "Droit à l'image": bee-secure.lu/droit-à-l'image



d. “Gaming? Yes, but with the right habits”

Help your child develop good gaming habits while setting clear, age-appropriate rules together.

1. Set clear rules

● **Ages 6 to 9**

Video games are allowed with family or friends in shared spaces.

● **For children under 13**

Disable or limit the online chat function, choose which games your child can play, favour local or offline game modes, and protect the settings with a PIN.

● **In-game purchases**

Decide whether these purchases are allowed and to what extent (e.g. using pocket money). Otherwise, block in-game purchases on the relevant device.

● **Downloading and buying games and apps online**

Before allowing a new game, take the time to explore it with your child. Setting up a password for downloads and purchases encourages discussion while avoiding an automatic refusal.

● **Build trust**

Ask your child questions such as “Who did you play with today?” or “Did anything strange or funny happen?”

● **Age ratings**

Check the PEGI rating¹⁶, but also make sure the game is suitable for your child’s level of maturity.

● **Limits**

Set time limits according to the game and how progress is saved. Do not allow video games during the hour before bedtime.



¹⁶ pegi.info

2. Encourage good practices

- I respect different points of view and opinions.
- I do not harass anyone.
- I do not share violent, humiliating or illegal content.
- I always use respectful and appropriate language and avoid insults and offensive comments.
- I do not share personal information with strangers.
- I follow the platform's community guidelines.
- If I witness or experience behaviour that goes against the community guidelines, I report it to the platform.
- If content makes me feel uncomfortable, I talk to an adult.

3. Explain to your child the risks of meeting people they have met online

Agree together that no face-to-face meeting should take place without your permission and, if you do allow it, that the meeting should take place in a public place with a trusted person nearby.



e. "Do you think it's true? Let's take the time to check."

This checklist will allow you to confirm the accuracy of information.

1 Who is hiding behind this information?

- **Who is the author?**
Unknown or not mentioned
→ Bad sign!
- **Who shared the information?**
Did this person check
the information?
- **Is the account or website authentic?**
Examine the legal notice,
the profile information and the
reason for publishing.
- **What is the intention hidden behind
the information?**
What is the goal being pursued?

2 Is the source trustworthy?
Are the figures or facts
quoted correctly?
Is the information reported
elsewhere?

3 How is the subject presented by other authors?
Cross-reference your reading and use fact-checkers¹⁷

4 How is the information presented?

- Do the different elements (title, text and images) align with the content? (Do a reverse image search!)¹⁸
- Does the text tend to generalise, is it biased or does it lack coherence?
→ That's a warning sign!
- Does the text contain facts or opinions?
- Is the text aiming for a strong emotional reaction?
→ Another warning sign!

5 Check yourselves!
To what extent are you trapped
in your filter bubble?
filterbubble.lu

SEE ALSO:

Fact Sheet “La désinformation”
bee-secure.lu/la-desinformation

¹⁷ Mimikama, Correctiv, Politifakt, FactCheck, Snores, DisinfoCheck by EDMO BELUX | ¹⁸ Upload the image file or enter the corresponding link on Google Images or TinEye.



f. “What challenge is popular at the moment?”

Viral challenges are very common on social media. They involve taking on a challenge, often something unusual, and then sharing a video of it. While some challenges are harmless, others can normalise or encourage dangerous behaviour.

How can you protect your child?

- Ask your child about the challenges that are currently popular.
- Talk to them about the many fake challenges that exist. Encourage them to question the content they see.
- Encourage them to ask themselves the following questions before taking part in a challenge:
 - Could this harm my health or cause me to get hurt?
 - Could this make me feel bad afterwards?
 - Could this put someone else at risk?
 - Am I hesitant about taking part in this challenge?

One “yes” is enough to decide not to take part in the challenge!

- Together, find ways for your child to enjoy a challenge without putting themselves at risk (sports challenges and fun, harmless challenges).

g. “Let’s learn to use artificial intelligence responsibly”

Introduce the rules suggested by *Klicksafe*¹⁹ to help your family use AI safely and responsibly, protecting both yourselves and others:

1 I share as little information as possible about myself or people I know.

2 I am aware that AI cannot replace real friendships and relationships.

3 I do not believe everything AI tells me and always check its answers critically.

4 I think for myself first before using AI and develop my own skills.

5 I use AI responsibly and do not use it to cheat.

6 I do not use AI to hurt or harm anyone.

7 I am aware that AI can be discriminatory: it does not treat everyone equally.

8 I keep in mind that people can use AI to deceive me and get money from me.

9 I try to find the answer myself first, as AI uses a lot of energy.

10 I do not compare myself with images enhanced by AI. I am good enough as I am.

SEE ALSO:

Guide “Talking to your child about artificial intelligence”
bee-secure.lu/talking-about-ai

¹⁹ *Klicksafe* is the German Internet Safety Awareness Centre co-funded by the European Union.

h. “You seem worried... What’s going on?”

Despite your vigilance, your child may come across content they do not understand or that upsets them. Taking their age into account, explain that some content is intended for adults only, and agree together on what they should do if something they see makes them feel uncomfortable (e.g. turn off the screen and come and talk to you). Also explain what to do when faced with hateful comments: do not respond, block the people who posted them and report the content concerned.

Children who experience cyberbullying do not always feel able to talk about what is happening to them. Feelings of shame or guilt may hold them back. It is therefore important to look out for indirect signs, such as headaches or stomach aches, or not wanting to go to school. Here are some tips:

- Take the time to talk to your child in a calm and reassuring place.
- Contact the **BEE SECURE Helpline** on **8002 1234** for free and confidential support tailored to your situation.



SEE ALSO:

Guide “*Tu es victime de cyber-harcèlement?*”
bee-secure.lu/cyber-harcèlement-guide

i. “Have you ever seen pornographic content?”

Use the following points suggested by Klicksafe²⁰ to help your child take a step back and think critically about pornographic content and what it portrays.

“It is normal to be curious and to look for information on the internet, including about sex. But let’s talk about some of the problems with pornographic content.”

“Have you ever received sexual images or videos that made you feel uncomfortable? If this happens to you in the future, you can always come and talk to me about it.”

Sexuality as portrayed in pornographic content has little to do with a real emotional relationship. Talk to your child about how sexuality is portrayed in pornographic films. The following examples illustrate what can be “artificial” in this context:

- **Bodies:** people in pornographic films are generally very muscular, have little or no body hair, and wear make-up. The lighting is also professionally arranged.
- **Language:** the dialogue and sounds in the different scenarios are scripted in advance. The language used is often insulting or portrays sexuality as cold and aggressive. This can be problematic because language can influence our behaviour
- **Pleasure :** performers in pornographic films are paid to perform sexual acts in front of a camera. The “pleasure” shown is therefore staged.
- **Interactions:** the way people interact in pornographic films is often mechanical and lacks affection. Sexual and interpersonal relationships should always be respectful and consensual.
- **Roles:** women are often portrayed as willing and submissive, while men are portrayed as sexually capable and able to perform for a long time. These portrayals can reinforce problematic stereotypes and gender roles.



SEE ALSO:

The podcast « Méi wéi Sex » : sexpodcast.ara.lu
Planning familial : planning-familial.lu
Centre LGBTQ+ CIGALE : cigale.lu
safersex.lu

²⁰ Klicksafe is the German Internet Safety Awareness Centre co-funded by the European Union.

POINTS OF CONTACT



BEE SECURE Helpline: You can contact the BEE SECURE Helpline on 8002 1234. Children, young people, parents, and teaching and educational staff can receive advice and support on all aspects of media. The helpline is confidential, free of charge and anonymous.



BEE SECURE Stopline: Help combat illegal content on the Internet. If you come across online content that you believe may be illegal, you can report it anonymously at stopline.bee-secure.lu. Illegal content includes Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), racist, revisionist and discriminatory content, as well as terrorist content.



ZEV, Zenter fir exzessiivt Verhalen a Verhalenssucht

Young people use digital media every day, whether to communicate, learn, entertain themselves or access information. While these uses offer many opportunities, they can sometimes become excessive or problematic and affect psychological well-being, physical health, social relationships or education.

The ZEV supports young people and their parents in dealing with challenges related to digital media use by providing advice, personalised support and, where necessary, therapeutic care.

The ZEV also supports schools and youth organisations by providing professionals with training on balanced media use, as well as prevention activities for children and adolescents in out-of-school settings.

zev.lu



10

INFORMATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Publications

BEE SECURE regularly publishes content on topics related to the safe and responsible use of the Internet by children and young people, including guides, thematic fact sheets, educational materials and reports.

bee-secure.lu/publications

Trainings

BEE SECURE offers various awareness training sessions for children and young people, continuing education for teachers and educators, as well as information sessions for parents.

bee-secure.lu/parents

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Screens, YES, BUT at the right time!

10 RULES

- 1 We avoid screens for 1 hour before bedtime.

- 2 Screens come after homework.

- 3 We choose video games together.

- 4 We use only one screen at a time.

- 5 Our screen-free zones are: the bedroom and the kitchen.

- 6 Screen time is allowed on _____ and on _____ .

- 7 When we watch a movie together, we choose one that is suitable for everyone.

- 8 We turn off the TV and disable notifications during homework.

- 9 Before stopping a video game, we allow time to save the game.

- 10 Every day, we plan a screen-free family activity.



WORD SEARCH



SCREENS AT HOME: IT'S ABOUT...

Find the action words related to screen use at home in the grid below!

R	K	U	Q	U	E	S	T	I	O	N	I	E	J
E	L	I	S	R	U	E	O	Z	E	H	R	L	X
U	A	I	M	F	A	D	F	E	A	O	F	E	D
C	E	C	S	O	E	F	A	P	L	P	L	A	Y
J	O	U	O	T	M	U	J	O	T	L	V	R	H
P	E	M	H	L	E	Y	E	P	A	E	T	N	E
T	D	U	M	V	L	N	U	A	U	H	R	U	S
E	Y	E	D	U	C	A	T	E	T	F	E	M	I
P	A	G	O	I	N	D	B	M	E	U	F	A	V
M	U	A	E	U	S	I	H	O	U	A	L	V	R
T	J	N	T	A	V	C	C	D	R	Y	E	P	E
F	R	A	M	E	O	M	U	A	U	A	C	T	P
U	L	M	H	Y	E	A	T	S	T	U	T	A	U
E	F	A	V	L	T	U	J	H	S	E	O	E	S



- MANAGE
- SUPERVISE
- LISTEN
- EDUCATE
- QUESTION
- DISCUSS
- LEARN

- COMMUNICATE
- PLAY
- HELP
- REFLECT
- FRAME
- COLLABORATE



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Guide for parents
Screens at home
Manage, educate and guide
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For more information, see

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