

Zappen & Gamen

Zapping & Computer Games - Tips for Parents and Educators

Dear Parents and Educators,

Today electronic media has a determining influence on everyday family life. The supply is enormous and confronts educators with big challenges.

How does my daughter, my son learn to deal wisely with these media?

Important aspects of the information brochure «Zappen & Gamen» are summarized below.

General Tips in Dealing with the Media

- Keep yourself informed and be an example in the way you cope with the media.
- Join in playing, watching and surfing. Take an interest in the media consumption of your children. Talk about the events and the emotions they arouse.
- Encourage an active organization of leisure time and common activities.
- Protect your child from unsuitable contents. The excessive consumption of computer games with violent content has been proven to have negative consequences on the development of one's personality. Even catastrophe reports of TV news can have traumatizing effects.
- Unsuitable contents can be locked with filter programs – but they do not replace parental presence. Virus protection programs are highly recommended.
- Children and young people under 14 should not have screen-media in the room; otherwise the daily media consumption will increase by around two hours.
- Speak with your children, according to their age, about possible dangers and about what is allowed and what is forbidden.
- Work out with your children rules for media consumption. Set time limits appropriate to their age. It is sensible, from school age, to agree on a weekly media time. Show which consequences will follow by non-compliance with the rules.
- Anyone who uses media as reward or punishment emphasizes its importance. Prohibiting media should only be asserted, when the rules concerning media consumption are broken.



When is it critical?

«Sometimes I cannot simply stop playing computer games.»

- Does your child neglect friends, hobbies and school? Does she/he feel lonely?
- Has she/he spent for long periods 20 – 30 hours per week in front of a screen?
- Does she/he play down the actual extent of media consumption and its consequences?
- Does your child react restlessly, depressingly or aggressively if she cannot play games?
- Does your child get little sleep, does not take care of herself/himself and not eat properly?
- Is watching television, surfing, chatting and playing games a possibility for your child to evade problems?
- Displaying behavioral problems can have different causes, for example, violence experienced or sexual assaults, too.

If some of these signs begin, you should react:

- As educator find a common stand and try to have a talk with your child.
- Show acceptance and respect for her/his interests. Let her/him show and explain to you what she/he does.
- Review the rules and apply the agreed consequences.
- Do something together with your child; encourage her/him to do other activities.
- Do not be alone and get some advice.

Look and act!

Are you uncertain or worried about the development of your son/daughter? Do not hesitate to ask for help. In the brochure «Zappen & Gamen» you will find addresses of professional offices, which can help you if you have any questions and in finding solutions. You will get further helpful information in the brochure.

**You will find this short version in eight other languages on:
www.stiftung-suchthilfe.ch**

TV-Tips

«But all the others are allowed!»

A fast grip of the remote control, in case of boredom, will be prevented, if only the children themselves can think of something else and be active. Decide with your children, which programs are allowed to be viewed. Explain why a program is not suitable. Zapping should be avoided, if possible.

Rule of thumb for the maximum television time per day:

Small children: At most 5 to 10 minutes, never alone

Pre-school children: At most 30 minutes, never alone

6 to 9 years old: 1 hour; 10 to 13 years old: 1.5 hours

Game-Tips

«Through online games I get to know people from all over the world.»

Games on PC, with Gameboys and on game consoles belong to everyday life today of many children and young people. Different skills are fostered with suitable games, for example, logical thinking, skillfulness, powers of reaction and concentration. But games can also be harmful, if they contain elements like violence, brutality or sexuality, and they are not appropriate for the age of the children.

Speak with your children about computer games and get to know the games. Let them explain how everything functions, play with them or watch. In the discussion the contents of the games should not be the central point: How is your child in general? Why is this game especially thrilling? Pay attention to the instructions of the manufacturers regarding age and contents.

Tips for Internet and Chatting

«Chatting makes me feel real grown-up.»

- Do not pass on personal information, also no names, addresses, passwords and numbers of telephone, mobile phone, credit cards, etc.
- Nicknames and E-Mail addresses must not show any trace of one's true identity and should not have any reference to sex or violence.
- There are no safeguards against data and pictures which are stored in the internet. Even «Cam-to-Cam» transfers can be saved and transmitted!
- Sound suspiciousness is important, never believe everything you are told.
- A meeting with internet acquaintances – if at all – should only take place in company and in public places.
- Do not open E-Mails of unknown origin (risk of virus), just delete immediately.
- In case of strange questions and offers, always inform your parents before downloading programs and before conclusion of the contract.

MobileTips

«I could not live without my mobile phone.»

Since mobiles are internet compatible, the same dangers exist as surfing on PC. Think about the scope of application and functions of the mobile. What is necessary, what is not? How can you protect yourself from harmful radiation? It is sensible for children and young people to give a share in the costs, so they will learn how to deal with money. You can have the costs under better control with «Prepaid» offers for sale.

