

An initiative of
méd:a
ANIMATION

Screens and media: To support parents



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DISCOVER ALL THE VIDEO TUTORIALS (IN FRENCH)



This activity tool is designed to **support all parents** in their parenting role regarding **the challenges of managing the use of media and screens in the family**.

Digital media are ubiquitous in everyone's lives and they are used for exploration, playing, entertainment, communication, learning, and work. Nowadays, no one can avoid the use of screens and digital technology. While media provide a host of opportunities, they are also a central **concern for parents**. How can we prevent media from becoming a bone of contention? How can we support children's digital media practices?

Do you work with adults? Parents who share such concerns? Then this activity box is made for you and them!

In it, you will find **suggestions for collective activities on how to deal with the use of digital media and screens in the family environment**.

Each activity has a specific goal. While the activities are not interdependent, they complement each other. Feel free to choose the activities depending on your public and aspects to discuss.

Our aim is **to reach out to every parent, including those who are linguistically vulnerable, illiterate or socially disadvantaged**

Unlike existing resources—brochures, information websites, etc.—this tool offers easy and fun activities that don't require reading **or writing skills but rely on discussion and debate**. They are designed to help everyone reflect on media uses in their homes and take a step back from their own practices. Let's not forget that adults are still children's number one role models!

Designed
for parents
of young children
and teenagers
and their grandparents
as well!

Do you use this tool with your public?
Feel free to share this moment on social media
by mentioning @mediaanimationasbl
or sharing your feedback at:
info@media-animation.be





How to use this box

Each box provides the necessary material to carry out each activity with around **ten participants**. If there are more participants, you should use a second box.



1 instruction sheet



2 x 29 yellow 'Practices' cards



1 x 33 pink 'Emotions and symbols' cards



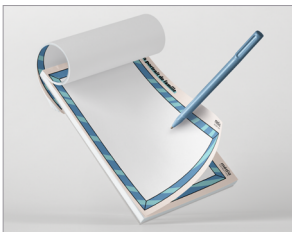
5 x 6 red 'Equipment' cards



2 X 10 blue 'Characters' cards



2 x 15 green 'Different ages, different needs' cards



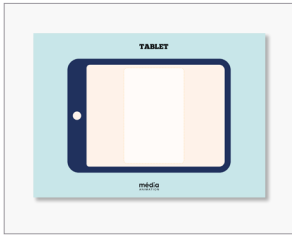
1 'Family portrait' sheet pad



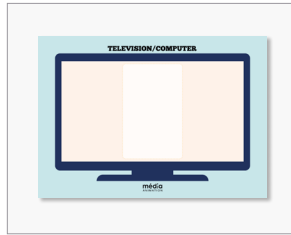
1 'Online, offline: What's the difference?' poster'



3 'Smartphone' material



3 'Tablet' material



3 'Television / Computer' material



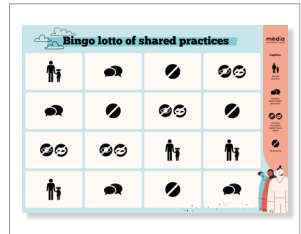
3 x 4 'Road signs' material



3 x 9 'Activity zones'



15 'Small screen time zones'



2 bingo lotto grids

Additional material for specific activities:

For the 'Family portrait' activity:

- drawing material (coloured pencils and markers)

For 'The 24 hours of the day' activity:

- 3 sets of 24 similar items that you have at hand (24 wooden blocks or 24 tokens, 24 sugar cubes or 24 beans, etc.)
- 3 more sets of 24 similar items, different from the first (24 blocks, tokens or matches in another colour ...)

The activities may include different stages:



Individual



In small groups



Collective

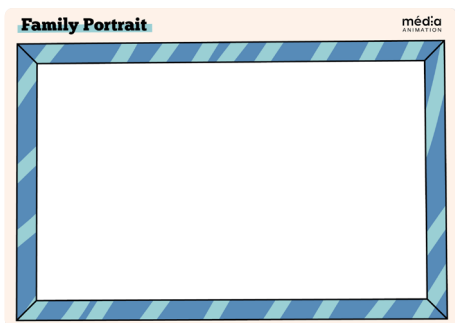
Enjoy the discovery!

Family Portrait

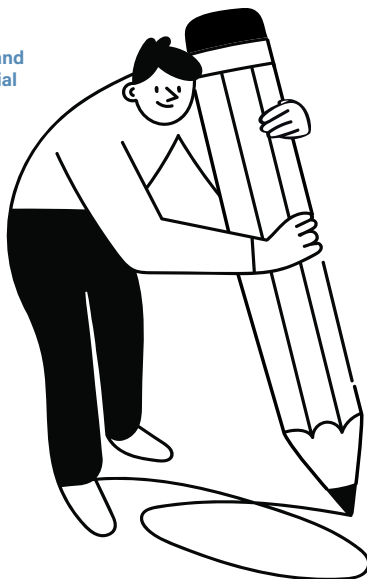
By producing a portrait of their family and associating the devices used with specific household members, participants will become aware of all the digital practices in their home. This is a good starting point for further reflection on the overall management of such uses at home rather than focusing on only one type of practice.

Material

- drawing material (coloured pencils and markers)



Download the material and discover the video tutorial





Goals

- Raise awareness of the need for a comprehensive approach to screens.
- Draw up an overview of the uses of these screens.
- Show a breakdown of digital uses in families, particularly between parents and children and among siblings.

How to proceed



1. Each participant represents the members of their household on their portrait sheet. They decide the limits of their household (1st degree or extended).

Alternatively, if some participants are uncomfortable drawing; they may use the 'characters' cards to compose their household.

2. Then, they choose the screens in their home from the 'equipment' cards and draw them on their portrait. Using arrows and diagrams, they associate each household member with the device(s) they use. They also reflect on the uses and practices around these screens: who uses them? To do what?



3. As a group, they take turns presenting their family portrait, focusing on how the equipment is used and by which family member.



4. At the end of the presentations, there should be a group discussion around the following questions:



What are the main differences between the parents' and the children's screen practices?

What do they have in common?

What situations create shared enjoyment?

What situations are a source of tension?

NB. To avoid uncomfortable situations or comparisons, we strongly recommend focusing on discussing the practices and uses of screens rather than on the importance and value of the equipment.

Online, offline: What's the difference?

This activity proposes a metaphor between activities carried out in public and society and online activities. The participants are encouraged to draw parallels between different life habits and physical services (in public / society), and online practices. The activity then compares behaviours, norms and rules in force in the first or second context.

Material



Download the digital
version of the poster
and discover the video
tutorial

Goals

- Understand that the uses of digital technology and proper online behaviour are an extension of appropriate people skills and behaviour in everyday life.
- Raise parents' awareness of the need to implement rules for their children's use of online media.

How to proceed



1. The moderator invites participants to look at the poster and explains that it represents a metaphor between situations that happen 'in public, in society' and 'online' practices. The group identifies these situations based on the following question:



What do we do in public/society that we can do online as well?



Participants name the practices they have identified,

Examples:

- *Shopping in a store and shopping on Internet;*
- *Taking classes at school and distance learning;*
- *Participating in a demonstration and signing a petition online;*
- *Being assaulted and cyberbullying;*
- ...



For each public/society situation identified, which rules, guidelines, or areas of concern would you share with your children? And your teenagers?

2. Then, the moderator asks the participants questions and starts a group discussion:

Examples:

- *We teach them not to talk to strangers;*
- *We teach them to be self-reliant and follow the Highway Code;*
- *We teach them responsibility, how to manage their money when they go shopping;*
- *We teach them to protect their belongings against pickpockets;*
- *We teach them manners and to be respectful in their gestures and words;*
- ...

3. Then:



How would these areas of concern be identical to situations experienced online? In what respect would they be different?

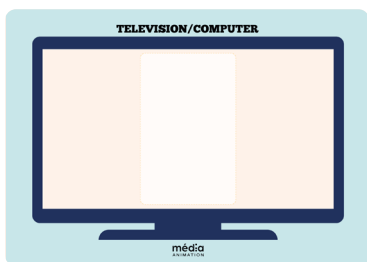
The moderator draws the participants' attention to the fact that life in public/society can be risky but that certain behaviours, norms and rules should be learnt in childhood. Such a framework helps reduce risks and unpleasant surprises.

Whether or not they know anything about online practices, parents remain competent to teach these basic rules in line with their family values and to guide their children online as they would when teaching them how to cross the road.

With or without a screen?

This activity aims to put into perspective the activities children engage in using screens: what do they do, and with what screen? Does the perception of the activity change when separating it from the use of screens?

Material



Download the material
and discover the video
tutorial

'Smartphone, tablet, television/
computer' material

Goals

- Show and understand the differences in perception and consideration between **screen-based** and **screen-free** practices.
- Understand what screens imply regarding the parents' reflection and dialogue concerning the activity and understanding thereof.

How to proceed



1. The moderator forms small groups (of at least two people) and gives them a deck of 'practices' cards and a set of screens. The moderator goes over the material with the participants to make sure they understand what it is.
2. Each participant is encouraged to choose a screen used by their child and, from the 'practices' cards, choose one that their child engages in via this screen and which represents an **area of concern** for the parent. Each participant adds this 'practice' card to their screen.



Examples:

A mother takes the 'tablet' screen because her child uses the tablet a lot. Then, she chooses and adds the card representing video games to show that her child plays games very often on the tablet or that she would like them to engage in other activities.

3. Once this is done, participants share their combinations and the reasons for their choice with the rest of their group.
4. Then, the moderator invites participants to separate the activity in question from the screen and consider the activity per se:

? *What would this practice be like without screens? What kind of activity could it be?*

What difference would it make whether this activity is carried out using a screen or not?

The discussion may continue around the following questions:

? *What do the parents know about the activity carried out via a screen?*

Why do they feel so concerned? Is it because of the activity itself? Or the fact that it is carried out using a screen?

Does the parent share this activity with their child? Why? Why not?

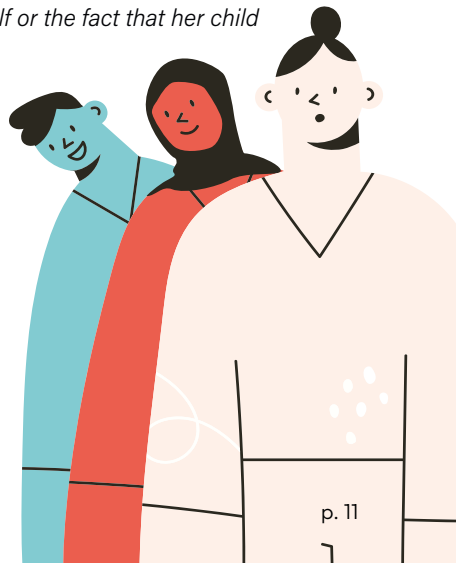
Does the parent discuss the activity in question with their child?

Example:

By separating the video game card from the use of the tablet, the parent might realise that, beyond using a screen, their child is playing.

- *The moderator might guide the discussion as follows: what is the cause of the mother's concern? Is it the tablet itself or the fact that her child is playing instead of doing something else?*
- *Why does her child play so much? To have playmates? To socialise? Out of boredom?*
- *Is the child more attracted to the game or the tablet itself?*
- *Has the mother already played the game with her child? Has she had an opportunity to discuss the game with her child?*

5. The activity closes with a group discussion on the results of the exchanges and the findings the participants shared.



The picto rules

As parents, which rules and guidelines would the participants suggest for other families? This activity is designed to foster discussions regarding problematic situations involving digital media or screens by drawing up a kind of family highway code for screens.

Material



Download the material and discover the video tutorial

The 'road signs' material

Goals

- Raise parents' awareness of the need to implement a framework of rules for their children's screen use.
- Formulate and share rules.

How to proceed







1. The moderator invites participants to form small groups and discuss an issue involving digital media or screens at home. Once the participants have discussed this, the moderator invites those willing to share these situations with the rest of the participants.
2. Then, the moderator invites each smaller group to choose one of the shared situations that speaks to most sense of the participants.

Example of a situation:

Their young children watch cartoons on a screen (television, tablet or smartphone), and when required to stop watching, the children feel very frustrated, leading to systematic fits and arguments.



3. The moderator suggests that the participants think their situation over and ask themselves the 4 following questions using the road signs:

The picto rules  PROHIBITION	The picto rules  WARNING	The picto rules  OBLIGATION	The picto rules  INDICATION
<i>What would be forbidden in such a situation?</i>	<i>What might be an area of concern regarding such a situation?</i>	<i>What would be required in the face of such a situation?</i>	<i>What indication/information would we give about this situation?</i>

The moderator hands out the 4 road signs to each group and places the 'practices' and 'equipment', 'emotions and symbols' and 'equipment' card decks for all to see on a table so that participants may help themselves to the cards.

The moderator then invites each group to represent their 'rules' visually, picking a combination of cards from the table and then placing them on each of the corresponding signs to create their 'picto rules'

Example:

Parents create their picto rules by combining cards, on the 4 road signs:

- *No turning on screens without prior authorisation.*
- *Make sure to state the authorised duration of the activity or the number of episodes allowed.*
- *Obligation to stay with the child when viewing a programme and to discuss what they see with the child.*
- *Note: make sure to choose age and content-appropriate programmes.*



4. The moderator encourages each group to explain their four picto rules to the rest of the participants and discuss them.

The 24 hours of the day

When using screens at home, the parent-child relationship tends to centre on the time spent using them. This activity is an invitation to reflect on the time spent using screens versus other daily activities.

Material



Activity zones



The small 'screen time' zones



[Download the material and discover the video tutorial](#)

- **What you need:** 3 sets of 24 similar items that you have at hand (24 wooden blocks or 24 tokens or, 24 sugar cubes, etc.) Prepare one series for each group.
- a second set of 24 similar items, different from the first (24 blocks, tokens or matches in another colour ...) Prepare one series for each group.

Goals

- Understand that using screens is just one activity among many others.
- Awareness of how much time is spent on screens in the course of a day, including time that 'overlaps' with other activities.



How to proceed

1. The moderator presents and defines each of the 9 activity zones—school time, sleep, meals, hygiene, outside activities, transportation, indoor activities, free time, and screen time—and explains that each added element (cube, token, etc.) represents one hour of the day.

(Initially, the moderator does not propose the small additional 'screen time' zones)



2. The moderator explains the context: Imagine a typical school day (Tuesday, for example) in an X-year-old (depending on the average age of the children in the group) child/teen's life.

The moderator provides an initial series of 24 elements representing the hours and then invites the participants to distribute the 24 hours of the day between the zones according to the number of hours devoted to each activity, to represent a '**typical day**' as usually experienced by the child.

The moderator then invites participants to repeat the exercise, this time with the second series of 24 elements, to represent an '**ideal day**' from the parents' point of view.

The zones may be moved around and partly overlap one another.



3. Once the participants have allocated their hours to the different zones, the moderator questions them.



How many hours are planned for such activities on a 'typical day'?

And on an 'ideal day'?

What are the differences? What does not change?

What issues does this raise?

How much screen time is left?

4. Suppose the debate moves on to the fact that it is hard to associate a specific number of hours with screen time, given that these practices are mobile and systematic. In that case, the moderator should provide smaller 'screen time' zones, which may overlap with other activities. For example, screen time can also occur during transport or meals. It can also be an opportunity to reflect on the fact that screens are necessarily present during free time (or not?).

Going further: The moderator could suggest that the parents repeat the activity at home with their child to compare points of view.

Bingo lotto of shared practices

This activity is inspired from *bingo*, the only difference is that here, the grid is not filled with numbers but with online media practices! Does my teenager play video games?

What do I know about my child's communication practices?

Is it something we share?

Material



[Download the material and discover the video tutorial](#)

Goals

- Understand the importance of the parents' interest in their child's practices.
- Identify the digital uses shared by the family and those the child engages in alone.
- Exchange ideas with other parents on better supporting their child's screen practices.



How to proceed



1. The moderator presents the bingo lotto grid and explains the meaning of the symbols. Next to the grid, the moderator shuffles and places, face down, the 'practices' cards.

CAPTION			
Shared practice	Practice which fosters discussion	Practice the parent doesn't know about	No practice

2. Each participant, in turn, draws a card at random and identifies the practice. The participant takes a few moments to think:



Do they share this practice with their child? Discuss it with their child? Are unaware of this practice? Or think that their child does not do that?

Depending on their experience, they place the card on the appropriate symbol on the grid.

3. Then, another participant draws a card and places it on the grid after thinking it over. *During the game, the moderator probes the other participants:* Just like when playing bingo, you win once a row or column is completed!



Has anyone experienced a similar situation at home? Are they comfortable with this situation, and if not, what could be done to guide the child's practice?

Alternative: Playing the game in a collaborative version. Having 2 or 3 teams competing against one another is also possible. In that case, the moderator draws a card, and the groups place the same card in the right spot on their grid, according to the members' experience. As soon as a row or column is completed, **bingo!**

Different ages, different needs

To what extent do media practices positively or negatively impact the psychosocial development of our children and teenagers?

This activity aims to discuss this issue by associating a series of psychosocial needs in childhood and adolescence with an age group and media practices.

Material



Download the material and discover the video tutorial

Goals

- Reflect on the positive or negative impact of certain screen practices on the psychosocial development of children at different ages.
- Understand the evolution of digital media uses according to the needs of children.
- Understand that the framework of rules and support should be flexible to meet specific skills and needs.

How to proceed



1. The moderator places the card decks visibly on a table in three areas: 'psychosocial needs', 'age groups' and 'practices' cards.



2. The moderator invites participants to take turns choosing 4 cards on the table in the following order:

1. A 'needs' card of their choice.
2. An 'age group' card to be combined with the first needs card.



With what age group would you most associate this need?

3. A 'reinforcing' practice card.



What media practice strengthens/encourages/improves/helps fulfil the need?

4. A 'weakening' practice card in answer to question 3.



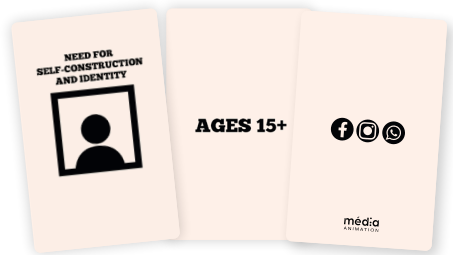
What media practice endangers/discourages/reduces/hinders the fulfilment of the need?

3. Participants observe each other's card combinations and take turns explaining the reasons for their choices.

Examples:

A mother chooses the need to 'express oneself', which she associates with the '3 to 6-year-old age group.' Then, she chooses the 'photography' practice as a strengthening practice, and 'television' as a weakening practice. Taking photos, supervised by an adult, gives children this age a chance to express themselves and explore their environment. Conversely, watching television alone discourages social interactions and hinders language development.

A father then chooses the 'construction of self' need, which he associates with the 12 to 15-year-old age group. He chooses the 'social media' practice as a strengthening one. Indeed, social networks allow teenagers to interact socially with their peers, identifying as part of a group.



4. The participant group reacts to the card combinations proposed. The moderator insists that practices change with the child's age and needs, so the framework and rules must be flexible to meet the context and, most of all, appropriate to the child's age. Moreover, it is up to every parent to decide how flexible the framework should be, depending on their education and family values.

Train to be well prepared

Moderating a group of parents around the theme of screens and children will be an opportunity to come into contact with different family and cultural value systems. Hence, this activity box focuses mainly on individual identification—putting family situations into perspective—and collective, friendly debate.

As someone who works with adults, you'll be all the more ready for these debates if you are familiar with a few basic notions concerning the principles and attitudes of media literacy and learn more about the educational issues surrounding the digital practices of young people and children.

Would you like to learn more about these topics before using our activities box?



Discover our online training module: *"Screens and media: Supporting vulnerable parents"* (in French). This self-training module looks at the basics of media education, explores the media uses of young people and children, and offers methodological guidelines to discuss media parenting issues.

The module also includes the video tutorials or the activities box you are holding in your hands.

Go to:

formation.media-animation.be



Project context

This project is an initiative of ASBL Média Animation, a media education resource centre. This activity tool was developed following the observation that not all parents were equal regarding awareness tools dealing with the issues surrounding screens in the home. During meetings organised by the Betternet consortium, the Belgian consortium for a better Internet, it became clear that there was an urgent need for a simple, effective tool to reach more parents, including vulnerable parents, because of their social, linguistic, economic or cultural situation. The Betternet project is co-funded by the European Union as part of the Digital Europe programme.

The online training programme for professionals working with this public was developed thanks to the support of the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation aux Médias, through its 2022 call for projects.

Discover Betternet at:



betternet.be

**Le Conseil Supérieur
de l'Éducation aux Médias**

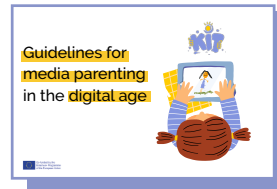


More resources



parentsconnectés.be

The website for parents who wish to keep up with their children's online and screen activities. (In French)



keepintouch-project.eu

The brochure "Guidelines for media parenting in the digital age" is designed to support parents in using media at home and harnessing the creative possibilities they offer. (In English)



myappeduc.eu

Myappeduc.eu MyAppEduc is an app for teachers, librarians and parents who want to guide children aged between 5 and 12 in their use of digital technology.



123clic.be

20 activities to support children under 6 in their use of screens. (In English)

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