Young children (0-8) and digital technology

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# Details

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## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

* Stepping up awareness and empowerment
* Creating a safe environment for children online
* Other

# Abstract

Executive summary
Key findings
The obtained data show that a wide range of technologies and intensive use of
them is considered as a norm in the households, children’s technical skills
correspond to the particular age, as well as the reasons for using technologies are
increasingly associated with entertainment rather than with searching for a
practically useful information and performing deliberate learning activities, but
they also indicate a certain type of habits.
Families rarely practice a joint and purposeful acquisition of technologies, but it is
mostly supported from parents’ side or based on tactics of unsupervised children’s
attempts and principle of randomness. There could be mentioned several reasons
for parents’ lack of participation or fragmentation: they are not interested in
helping children to learn to use the technologies because they see a learning
potential in this activity, they themselves are unable to handle the technologies so
skillfully to teach their children, they consider them to be negative, therefore,
despite the fact that the parents have purchased the technologies and allow the
child to use them, as a matter of principle, they do not consider it to be
appropriate to help children to learn to use them, parents have not immersed
themselves in this issue, thus allowing the process to run its course.
Although neither the parents’ nor the children’s use of technologies as a whole
suggested any specific potential threats, however, regular habits do not
necessarily indicate an in-depth understanding and systemic strategic approach in
the action. In general, the parents in the families do not implement a well-
considered media education, and they have not purposefully developed an
approach to technology use based on psychological and pedagogical arguments.
This is indicated by the inconsistency of imposing the rules and requirements
(time of the day, duration, type of technology, operational specifics),
fragmentation in their implementation, as well as a voluntary use of technologies
within the framework of implementing parental authority outside the technology
area by rewarding or punishing children, by disciplining them with restrictions
regarding technology use, as well as by regulating the free time of the parents to
meet their own needs.
The fact that media education is not implemented purposefully is justified by the
fact that the parents are lacking media competence that would increase the
confidence regarding the appropriate choice of parenting approach.
Understanding both the usefulness and potential risks of the technologies is more
abstract and intuitive, the arguments are often irrational and not from in-depth
studies of literature, or based on conclusion of the field specialists, but rather on
personal assumptions, oral messages of the media and the bystanders. Several
families represented a belief that media education becomes relevant at a certain
age, which is not defined within this study, and that the surveyed children have
not yet reached such age, therefore, in parents’ opinion, poorly targeted approach
is still acceptable.
Parents’ lack of knowledge or unwillingness to analyze the issues regarding the
impact of technologies is also revealed by children’s superficial understanding of
the risks associated with the technology use. The children associate the risks of
technology use more with physical threats, which are more evidently identifiable
and easier to understand for child’s perception - the children are aware of the
mechanically technical damage to the devices themselves and the potential
damage to physical health of individuals, the risks of mental health, privacy or
safety only in abstract terms.
Children’s technology use habits have correlations with parents’ understanding
and practice of technology use. A number of parents’ understanding and logical
courses of action are identifiable:
a) the parents who use technologies actively themselves, but give a
relatively little thought to the content and superficially reflect on the consequences of
technology use, they are more familiar with the child’s digital activity habits and are less
skeptical about children’s interest in technologies, and mostly slightly critically liberal
with regard to the child’s urge to use technologies on a daily basis. The parents in this
model prioritize the value and importance of technologies, but they pay secondary
attention to the child’s physical and emotional safety.
b) the parents who use technologies actively themselves, they look into the
content and see the correlations between the use and consequences, they are more
demanding with regard to the child as a user, and do not only limit the number, types,
duration of use of the technologies, but also ask children to critically assess the role of
technologies in general according to their age, their positive and negative features, as
well as they orient children towards self-discipline with regard to the technology use by
providing parents’ assistance in the virtual reality.
c) the parents who see more negative trends in the existence and use of the
technologies, they are passive and comparatively rarely use technologies. In such a model
raising of a child is more dominated by prohibition to use technologies, which is not
explained with reasonable arguments, or minimal attention is paid to children’s
technology usage habits.
d) the so-called rational technology use model was identified in which the
parents are aware of the role of technologies in the present and the future, consider them
to be a normal routine components of the family, however, they are aware of and
understand the risks involved with regard to the raising of children by trying to balance
between the virtual and real activities and by promoting the understanding of the child, as
opposed to other models where parents are more focused on the inheritance of views, by
not clarifying the reasons and therefore not promoting the child’s ability to judge and
media competence. In this model the parents, unlike the others, believe that the media
competence should be gradually formed from an early age.
e) data from the study allowed to identify a gender contrast model in the
parenting approach, in which the fathers are relatively less prejudiced and more
technically competent technology users, and delegate more freedom to their children,
while mothers are more conservative technology users, who develop more detailed
provisions of use for children and often for spouses as well, so that it would be an
example for children.
Despite the extensive range of technologies both in households with low income
and high-income, the children attaches high priority to the activities of real life -
plays, games, physical activities, social contacts, suggesting that the environments
are separated and the child is able to choose what he prefers in them both.
Inconsiderate and non-purposeful media education in families also influences the
purchase of technologies the reason for which is mostly the availability and
affordability of the product in the market, changing fashion trends in technology
acquisition, which is associated with a certain affiliation to social circles,
implementation tool of penalty and reward system rather than care for achieving
particular parenting and learning objectives.

# Outcome

Research data show that a wide range of technologies and intensive use of
them is considered as a norm in the households, children’s technical skills
correspond to the particular age, as well as the reasons for using technologies are
increasingly associated with entertainment rather than with searching for a
practically useful information and performing deliberate learning activities, but
they also indicate a certain type of habits.
 Families rarely practice a joint and purposeful acquisition of technologies, but it is
mostly supported from parents’ side or based on tactics of unsupervised children’s
attempts and principle of randomness. There could be mentioned several reasons
for parents’ lack of participation or fragmentation: they are not interested in
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appropriate to help children to learn to use them, parents have not immersed
themselves in this issue, thus allowing the process to run its course.
 Although neither the parents’ nor the children’s use of technologies as a whole
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necessarily indicate an in-depth understanding and systemic strategic approach in
the action. In general, the parents in the families do not implement a well-
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