



Foto Vera Hartmann Gockhausen

Toddlers and screen media

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Toddlers need a screen-free environment!

For healthy development, children need emotional security, attention and interaction with their caregivers. With babies and toddlers coming increasingly in contact with screen media, parents are facing a major challenge which calls for a sensitive approach.

Babies and toddlers react to screens

Toddlers can't help experience their family's media use since screen media are part of the family's everyday life. Frequently, little ones feel that screens get more attention than they get themselves. It is therefore important to handle media in a responsible manner:

- Do not constantly get distracted by your mobile.
- Do not surf the Internet in the presence of your child.
- Give yourself a break from the screen when you're out and about with your child.
- Do not use screen media to occupy or calm down your child.

Children need

- your undivided attention and eye contact.
- reliable relationships.
- peace, quiet and recreation.
- their own sensory experiences.
- ample opportunity to move freely and get fresh air.

Playtime allows children to learn with all their senses and advances their overall development

Many exciting household items are suitable for toddlers' playtime. For example:

- filling a plastic bottle with clothes pegs.
- playing with wooden spoons and old pans.
- investigating the Velcro fastening on old clothes.
- placing different-sized boxes on top of each other or inside each other, put things in and take them out.
- etc.

Toddlers also find many interesting things **outside** the house that stimulate and hone their senses (hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling), for example:

- setting different-sized stones on top of each other.
- smelling old pieces of wood, bark or dried leaves.
- feeling the smooth surface of fresh chestnuts.
- digging in sand (or mud).
- observing or touching an earthworm.
- etc.

This flyer was drawn up in collaboration with the Addiction Prevention Office of the City of Zurich and the Specialist Infant Department Zurich involving various specialists as well as with the assistance of the Swiss Association of Mother-Child Advisors.

Recommended reading

jugendundmedien.ch has compiled key information regarding the opportunities and risks associated with digital media. On the Internet platform set up by the National **Youth and the Media** Programme, parents, teachers and caregivers find contact details for information and advice centres nearby.



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