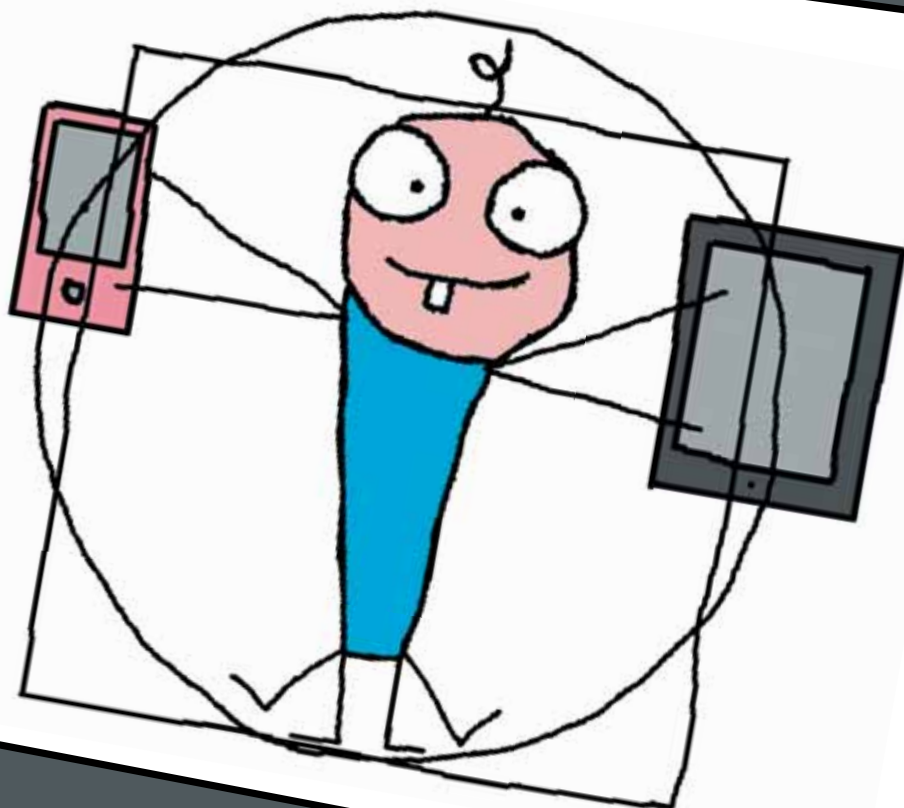


Homo tabletis

when and how to introduce your child
to a smartphone or tablet



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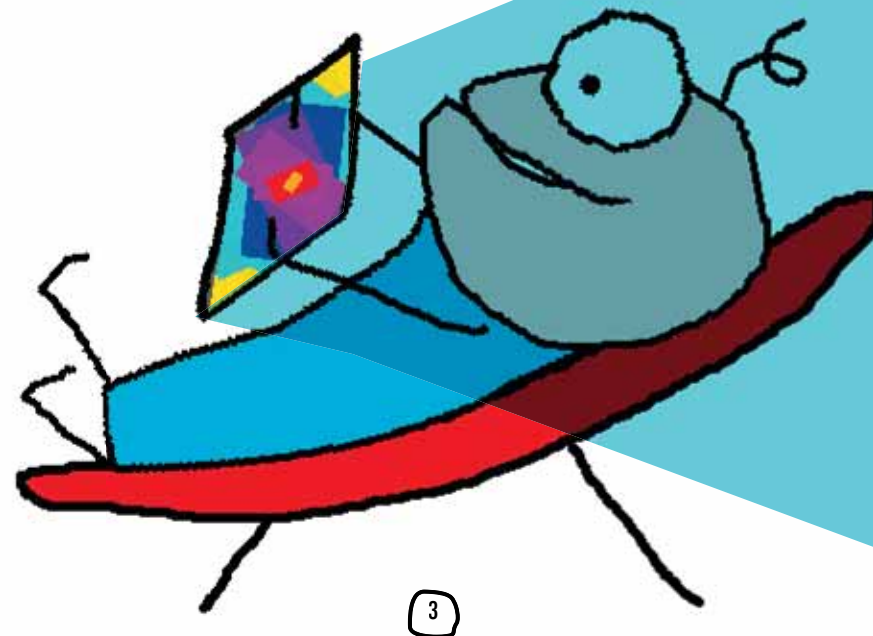
Homo tabletis

Our children spend more and more time in front of a screen or actually many screens. Apart from traditional devices such as a TV set or PC, mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets have recently become more and more popular. We are proud of our children operating them so well. We also have a bit more time for ourselves...

But!

Although properly chosen content can positively affect children's development, too early and too intensive use of electronic devices can be significantly harmful for children.

This brochure is dedicated for parents of children aged 0 to 6. We present challenges, opportunities and advice related to sharing mobile devices with children.



What you should know...

As parents we should know human brain develops the most intensively in the first years of life. For this development, a child needs to experience the world with all its senses – to see, feel, hear, and touch it. Limiting child's activities and type of stimuli can negatively affect the development of brain's neural structures.

A child's brain needs also intensive contacts with other people. Neither TV nor computer will replace talking with parents or other children, playing and reading books together.



It is not enough to just be with a child. We need to interact, while devoting it our maximum attention.

Research increasingly shows that intensive use of electronic media in the first years of child's life has a negative impact on the quality of its sleep, memory, ability to concentrate, read with understanding or write in a legible manner.

(based on materials by American Academy of Pediatrics)

Meanwhile...

- 75% of children 0-8 use tablets or smartphones
- 38% of children under 2 use mobile devices
- From 2011 to 2013 number of children using these devices has doubled and time spent by them on these activities had tripled

(results of the study Zero to Eight: Children's Media Use in America 2013)



When and how?



Children under the age of two should not have any contact with screen devices, including tablets and smartphones.

Sharing electronic devices with children aged 3-6 should be a well-considered decision followed by adopting series of rules.

The most important ones are the following:

- Children should not use mobile devices every day. Children should not use them more than 15-20 minutes at a time, and no longer than half an hour a day.
- Children should access only safe and positive content, adjusted to their age.
- Parents should accompany their children during use of mobile devices, explaining to them what they see on a screen and use this time spent together to interact.
- Children should not be allowed to use mobile devices before sleep. Radiation of tablets and smartphones screens can negatively affect falling asleep and sleep quality.
- Use of mobile devices should not be treated as a reward or punishment. This makes these devices more attractive for children and strengthens their attachment to them.
- Mobile devices should not be used to motivate children to eat, toilet train and so on.

(Based on recommendations by American Academy of Pediatrics)



With benefit for a child

Improper use of electronic media can be dangerous for children. However, the use of mobile devices by children aged 3-6 may positively affect their social, moral and cognitive development.

Properly selected apps may for example:

- motivate children to establish and maintain peer relationships and interactions with adults (e.g. parents and other family members)
- present positive models for children and teach them important social values teach safe and responsible use of technologies
- stimulate childrens' development of speech, writing, and linguistic competences
- stimulate children's visual intelligence
- reduce the effects of social and developmental inequalities

However, keep in mind that the use of mobile devices can be useful for your child **ONLY** on condition that:

- You provide your child with mobile devices in a safe way
- You actively accompany a child while using the technology
- You provide your child with access only to safe, positive and age-appropriate content

DO NOT BE A TABLET PARENT!



**Do not let children under
the age of two use display devices**

IF YOU THINK IT IS THE RIGHT TIME, REMEMBER:

NOT EVERY DAY

AT THE BEGINNING - ALWAYS TOGETHER

NO MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AT A TIME

NO MORE THAN 30 MINUTES A DAY

NOT DURING THE MEALTIMES

NEVER BEFORE SLEEP

ONLY CHILD-APPROPRIATE CONTENT

NOT AS A PUNISHMENT OR REWARD

MORE ON: www.homotabletis.org

What to do?

What to do when we have already accustomed a one-year or two-year-old child to using a smartphone and are not able to take care of it without providing these devices? How to respond to situations when older children use mobile devices in a disturbing way?

These situations include:

- a child responding with irritation or even aggression when the mobile device is taken away or its use limited
- a child having trouble with falling asleep and with other everyday activities as a result of the use of a tablet or smartphone
- a child refusing or being reluctant to perform activities not related with electronic media
- tablet and smartphone being leading subjects discussed by a child.

Remember:

For a preschool child, online activities should be only an addition to attractive forms of spending time without electronic devices.

Parents should agree with each other on the rules of a child's use of mobile devices and apply them consistently.

If situation gets out of control, assistance of a child psychologist can be sought and parents can learn how to spend quality time with their children, how to enforce boundaries and how to help them regulate their emotions.

A consultation from a toll-free helpline can also be helpful. Find your local helpline at <http://helplines.betterinternetforkids.eu/>



Secure before sharing

Before sharing your smartphone or tablet with a child, secure it properly. To this end, you can use parental control apps available on the market. They commonly feature content filtering, child's online time control, etc. They may be found in app stores for a given operating system.

Start by securing a device with a password or access code that only you would know. That will prevent an uncontrolled access to the device by a child. The next step is to properly configure device settings.

For Android devices, select the option "Parental Control" in the device settings and properly configure the settings concerning the content limitations. They concern apps and games, where a parent defines child's age, as well as purchases of music in Google Play store – here a parent can block the access to compositions including vulgarisms.

Owners of iOS mobile devices (iPad, iPhone) can use the function "Restrictions" in general settings. Here you can decide on a limited access to the selected content. A parent can define age limitations concerning videos or software. You can also block child's access to music, video clips and podcasts dedicated for adults only.

In Windows Phone devices one can use "My Family" feature in the Microsoft Family Safety service. Thanks to its configuration, a parent can decide whether the child would be allowed to download games and apps. Using the feature "Game rating filter" we can block the games which are not appropriate to child's age.

"Homo Tabletis" action

Due to the increasing popularity of mobile devices among the youngest children, Polish NGO Nobody's Children Foundation (Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje) has launched the action "Homo Tabletis" aimed at drawing parents' attention to risks related to this phenomenon and promoting positive and safe use of mobile devices

Visit the action website www.homotabletis.org

Watch and share "Homo Tabletis" video spot

and remember:

Do not be a tablet parent!

