

THE FAMILY INTERNET BAROMETER

2025

TELE2

PREFACE

Tele2 has continuously conducted surveys with both children and their parents to gain insight into their views on digital life and how we can help support them through our services and efforts. Now we are releasing the report "The Family Internet Barometer" for the fifth time. This year, the report is based on results from two surveys conducted in Sweden in the autumn of 2024 – a survey with 1000 children and their parents, and in-depth focus groups and interviews with children, parents and school staff.

The results from the surveys highlight positive aspects of different screen activities from both children and parents, but still show great challenges for children and parents to meet around an approach that both respects the children's digital experiences and supports in breaking unhealthy behaviors.

A common thread throughout the report is the need to engage with children's digital reality, and to start in time. We hear this both from the children themselves and from the school staff.

Although strict restrictions in the short term remove children from potentially negative digital experiences, it also entails a risk that they are not well prepared for the digital life that they will be introduced to sooner or later.

Being able to take part in children and parents' thoughts on these issues gives us unique insights into how we can continue to enable a safe and secure digital life for our customers and their families. By sharing the results, we also hope that it will inspire others to do the same.

Johan Gustafsson
Executive Vice President Communications and Sustainability



CONCLUSIONS

1.

Children want support, not bans. They ask for help to break bad habits – and appreciate a balanced approach from adults.



87% of children think that the screen rules at homework fairly or very well – especially when they get to be involved in setting the rules.



More than half of children aged 10-13 worry about missing something when they are not online.



76% of children aged 6-13 with a mobile phone ban in school state that the school environment is calmer and safer.

2.

Children's screen time mirrors that of their parents, and parents are also aware of this.



Almost 2 in 3 children of parents with high screen time have at least 4 hours of screen time themselves per day – compared to 1 in 10 children where the parent has low screen time.



1 in 3 parents have tried to change their behavior. 33% say they have tried to reduce their screen time to influence their children's habits.



84% of the parents who have taken part in the Public Health Agency of Sweden's guidelines have acted on it. Most common is to reflect on your own use (48%) or talk to your children (40%).

3.

Both children and parents see challenges with digital life, but parents often find it difficult to reach out.



65% of parents are concerned about their children's digital lives. Mainly for bullying, fake news and unrealistic ideals, not the number of screen hours.



Social media is the most questioned. Almost 50% are negative towards TikTok and Instagram, while learning apps are appreciated.



1 in 5 children sometimes long to get away from the screen. It is most common to feel this way among 10-13-year-olds.

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view the Public
Health Agency's
advice?



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About the survey

1. HOW DO PARENTS VIEW THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY'S ADVICE?

More than one in two parents have taken part in The Public Health Agency's recommendations – but few can live up to them

- 8 out of 10 (77%) are aware of the recommendations
- More than half (56%) of parents have taken account of FHM's recommendations
- Of these, only 15% live up to them

8 av 10 is familiar with the recommendations

56% has taken account of the recommendations

15% Thinks they live up to the recommendations

Base: Parents, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



A majority of parents are positive to the recommendations – but there is one group that is critical

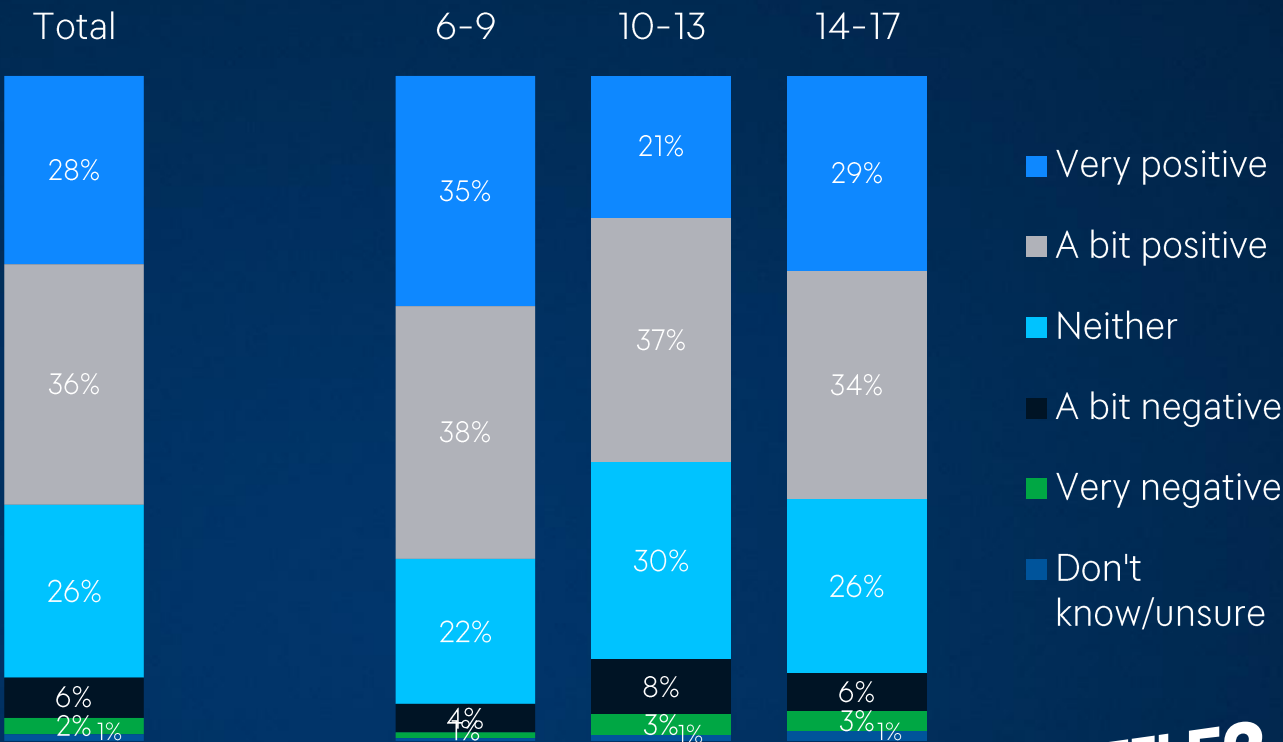
2 out of 3 parents are positive to the Public Health Agency of Sweden's advice on screen time. 1 in 4 are neither positive nor negative and less than 1 in 10 are directly negative. Parents of children aged 6-9 are most positive, where almost 3 out of 4 are positive.

"It's good that there are recommendations and guidelines so that you have something to go by."

"Won't work as everything becomes more and more digital, even through school."

"Unnecessary, it's up to parents to keep track and control screen times."

What is your attitude to the Public Health Agency's development of recommendations on screen use for children?



Base: Parents, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey

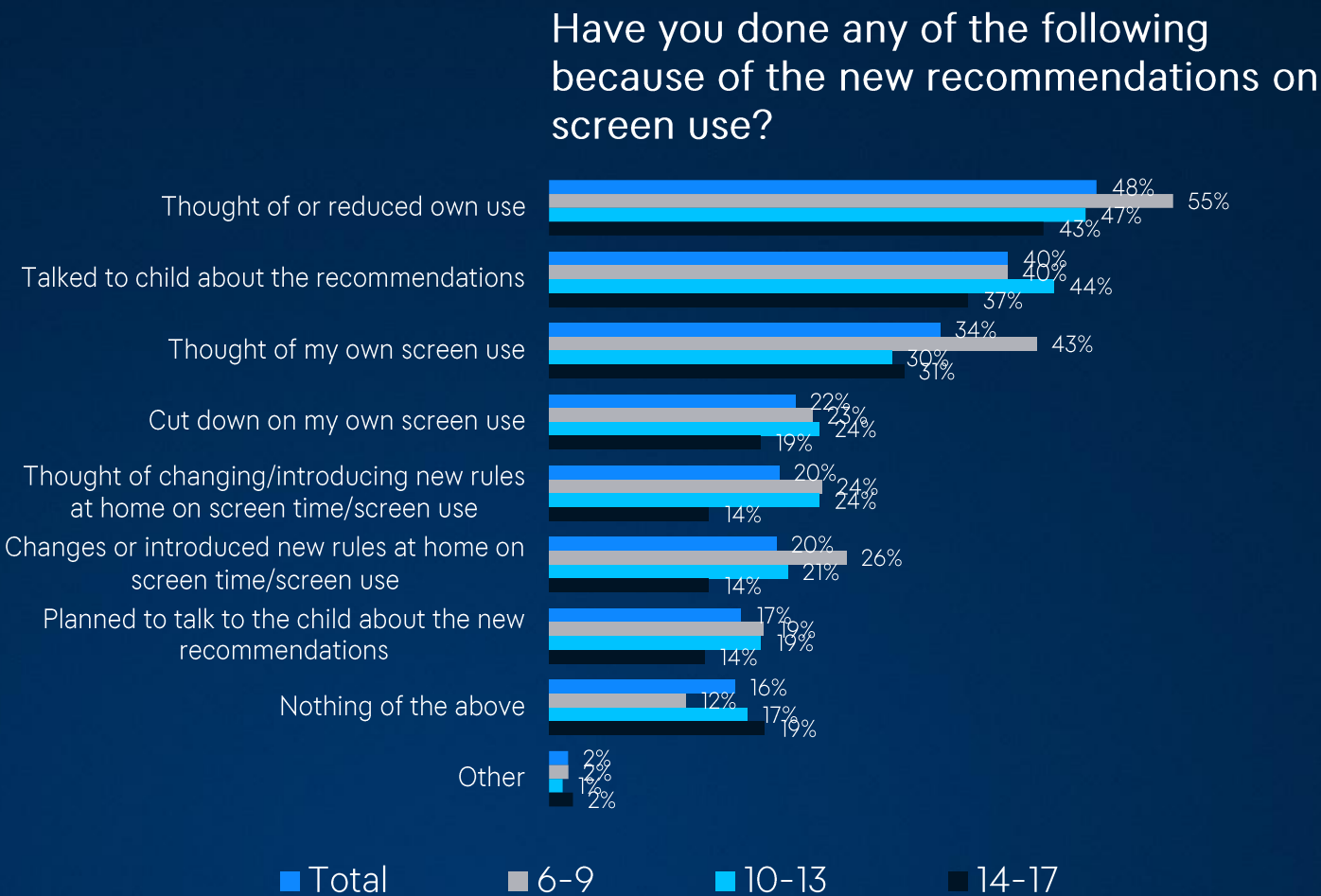


More than 6 out of 10 parents have done something because of the recommendations

Among those who are aware of the Public Health Agency's recommendations, more than 8 out of 10 (84%) have acted in some way. Overall, the Public Health Agency of Sweden's advice has got 2 out of 3 parents (65%) to act in some way. The most common (48%) is that they have thought about their own screen use or cut down on it.

Almost as common (40%) is that the recommendations have been talked to the children.

Slightly less common (20%) is that they have changed or introduced new rules regarding screen time/use.



2. THE CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

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Learning and social interaction are most positive with the screen, while advertising and time consumption are perceived as most negative according to the children

What's the best thing about the Pages and apps you use

- A way to socialize – 21%
- Entertainment – 19%
- Learning/developing – 14%
- Relaxation and escapism – 13%
- Creativity – 10%

What's the worst thing about the pages and apps you use

- Advertising – 14%
- The time thief – 13%
- Bullying and meanness – 12%
- Technology that malfunctions – 11%
- Unpleasant content – 10%
- Costs – 8%

"Learn Spanish and French at Duolingo. Dad is from Chile so it's fun to learn,"

"Talk to friends and watch videos"

"You don't have to think/relax"

"Weird mean people",

"It sometimes lags"

"Advertising that interrupts"

"Scary videos you don't search for"

Base: Children, n = 1,000

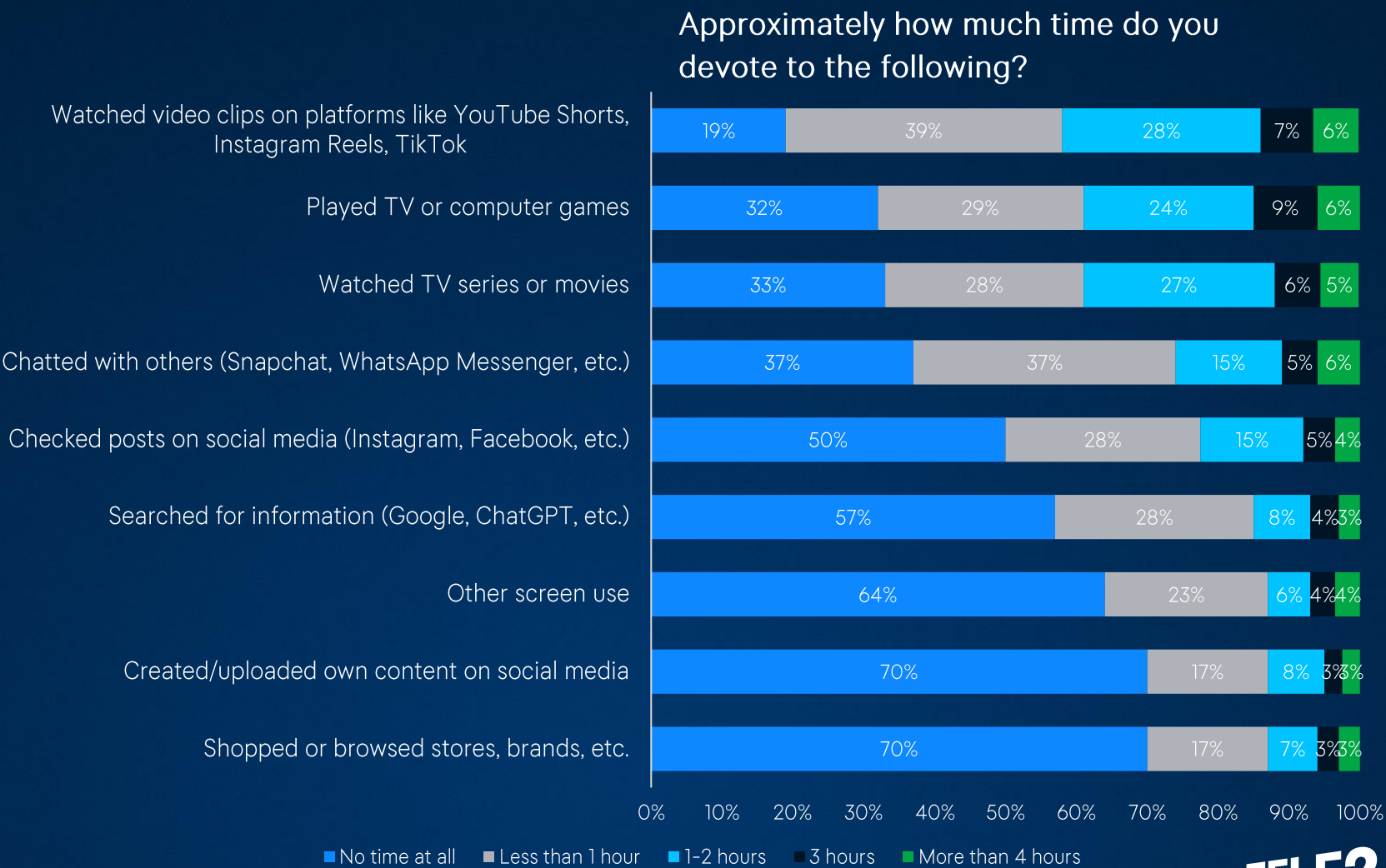
Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



Videos are the most time spent on screen activity by children

Watching videos on Youtube, Instagram or Tik Tok is what the children spend the most time on; 8 out of 10 children spend time on it and 4 out of 10 spend more than an hour a day on a typical day.

TV or computer games and TV series or movies are almost as popular; Almost 7 out of 10 do it on a typical day.



Base: Children, n = 1,000

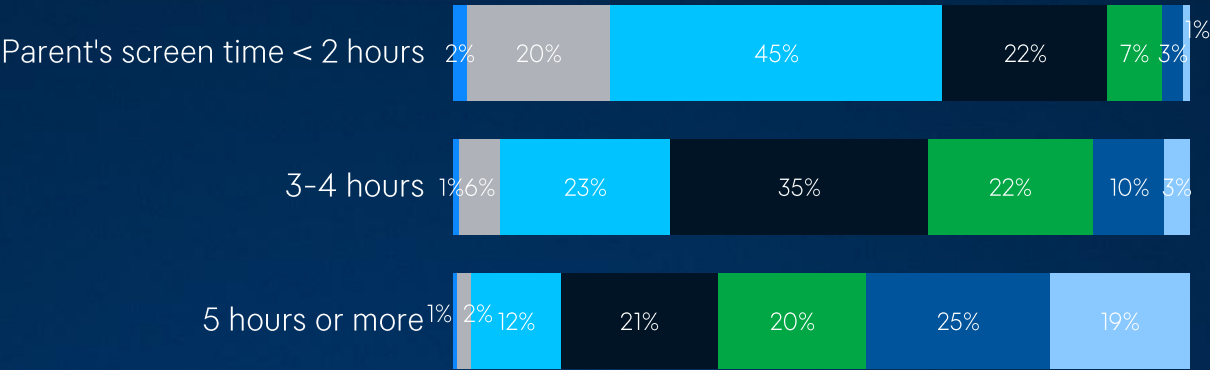
Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



Strong link between parents' and children's screen time

How parents themselves use screens seems to affect children's screen use to a very large extent. In families where a parent had less than two hours of screen time on a typical day, 1 in 10 children used the screen for 4 hours or more. Where the parent had 3-4 hours of screen time, more than 1 in 3 children reached 4 screen hours or more, and where the parent had 5 hours of screen time, almost 2 in 3 children reached 4 hours of screen time or more.

Question to the children: Try to remember what you did yesterday in your spare time. Approximately how long did you use a mobile, tablet, computer, TV or similar in total?



- Didn't use screens at all
- 1-2 hours
- 4 hours
- More than 6 hours
- Less than 1 hour
- 3 hours
- 5-6 hours

Base: Children, n = 1,000

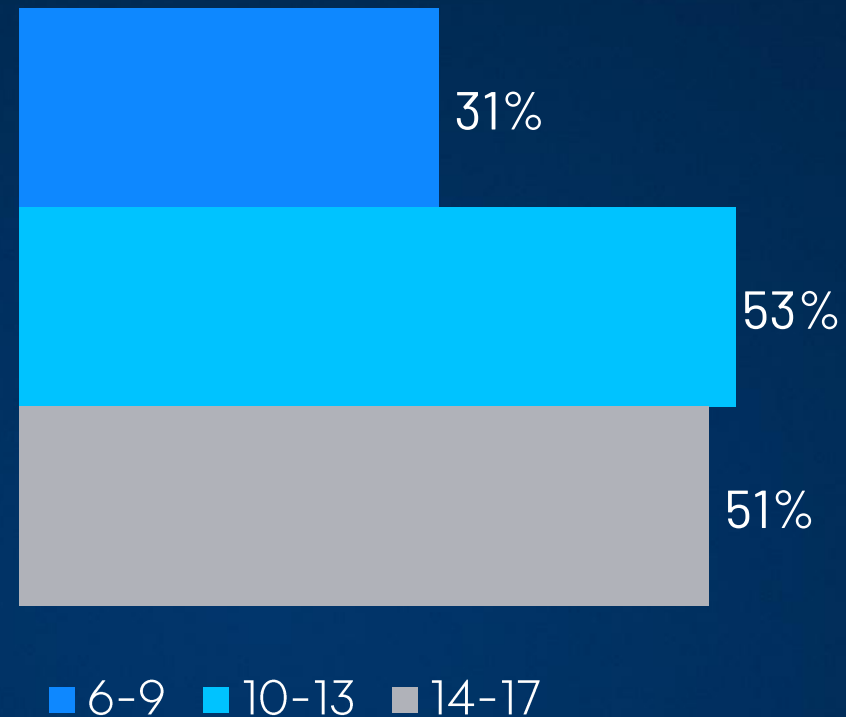
Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



FOMO contributes to many children feeling compelled to be online

Although many children are naturally drawn to the internet, for some there is also a fear of missing important things or ending up outside of the social community if you are not there. Among the youngest children, this is not as common as among 10-13-year-olds and up, where more than half of the children feel worried about this.

Question to the children: I get worried that I will miss important things or be left out, if I am not online (percentage who agree)



Base: Children, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



1 in 5 children sometimes also long to get away from the screen

Although many children appreciate screen life, there are also those who long to get away from the screen. About 1 in 5 children feel this way and the most common is between the ages of 10 and 13.

Many children also have a desire to spend more time with friends also physically; 1 in 4 want it and this applies regardless of age.

Question for the children:
Which of these apply to how you feel?



Base: Children, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



What the children seem to appreciate most is a balanced approach from parents

Children appreciate a balanced parenting strategy that helps them explore both digital and physical life.

The children agree that passive scrolling on social media can be problematic, they also want help to break this pattern of behavior. But children also want to highlight good things about TikTok and similar apps.

"My mum took away TikTok from my phone. It's kind of OK not to be on there anymore. It triggered me. But at the same time, I feel like I'm missing out..."

"I've actually learned some cool stuff on TikTok and can also feel very motivated, even inspired to do something with my life."

Being excluded from social apps creates fomo, and often leads to children working their way around the rules

Being excluded from social apps makes children feel left out of the group, which is a big fear. Not having access to one's social world can have long-term consequences for children.

As a consequence, restrictions often lead to mistrust and a lack of trust between parent and child. This is risky because children may not tell adults when bad things happen online.

"It has happened that I wake up at night to play Roblox or be on TikTok. My mum caught me once, so now I'm not allowed to have my phone in the bedroom. But there's always the iPad."

Parents may need to shift perspectives on the value of digital life for their children

Children see their digital lives as just as important as their offline lives, regardless of what adults tell them.

Children want adults to respect their digital lives more. But it's difficult to let parents in if they haven't been involved from the beginning.

"Grownups ask me if I have any interests, and I say that I like playing Roblox, but they want to know if I do gymnastics or football or something like that."

"I'd rather involve my teachers, not my parents. They don't get how it is. They worry so much and would just ban me from Snap again."

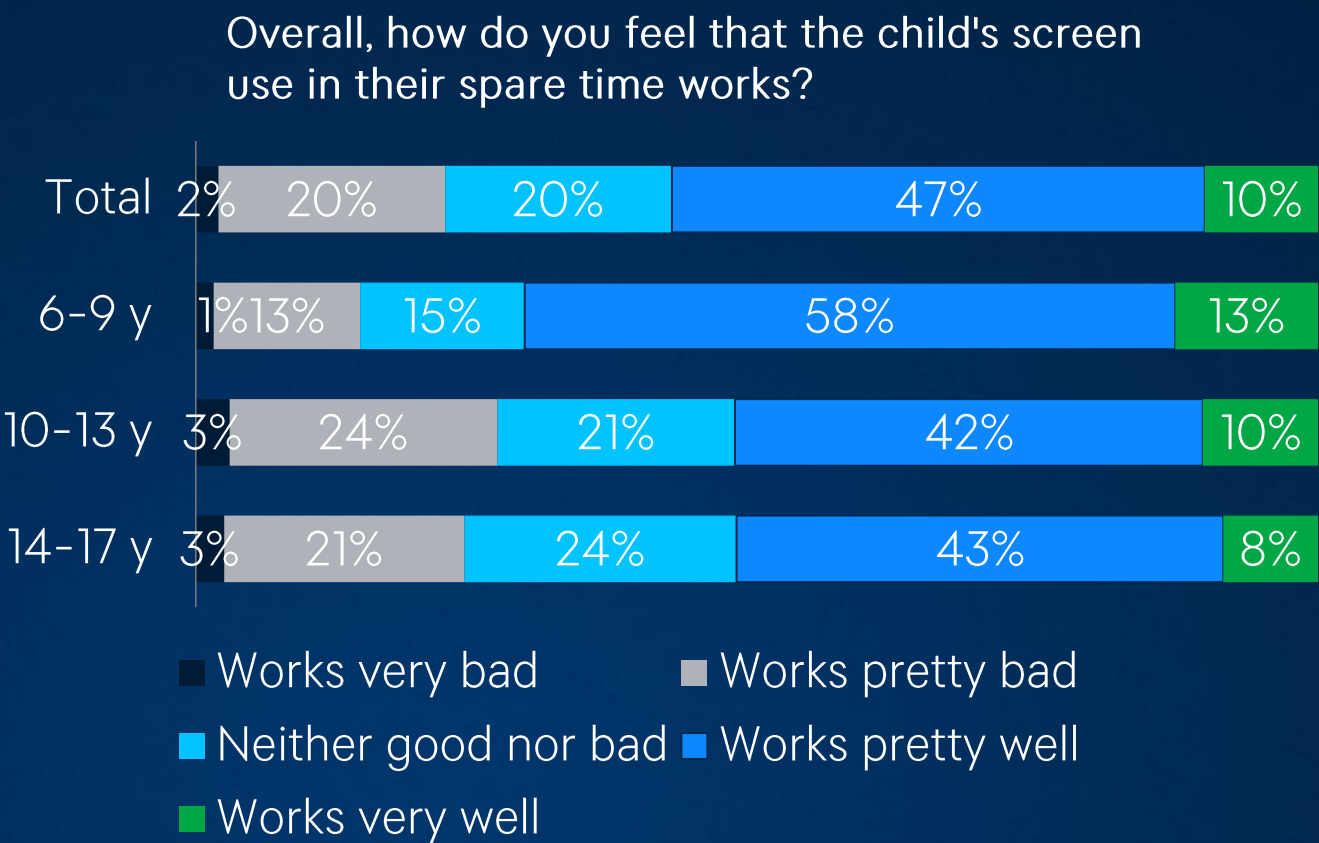
"My dad has always encouraged me in gaming. He's a bit of a gaming nerd, so he gets it, and we also play together."

3. PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Most parents think their children's screen use works well – but among teenage parents, 1 in 4 are concerned

Despite the Public Health Agency’s warnings about screen time, most parents (57%) feel that their children's screen use works well. Teenage parents more often experience problems with their children's screen use; 1 in 4 (24%) think it works poorly.



Base: Parents, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



Parents overwhelmingly positive to many screen activities

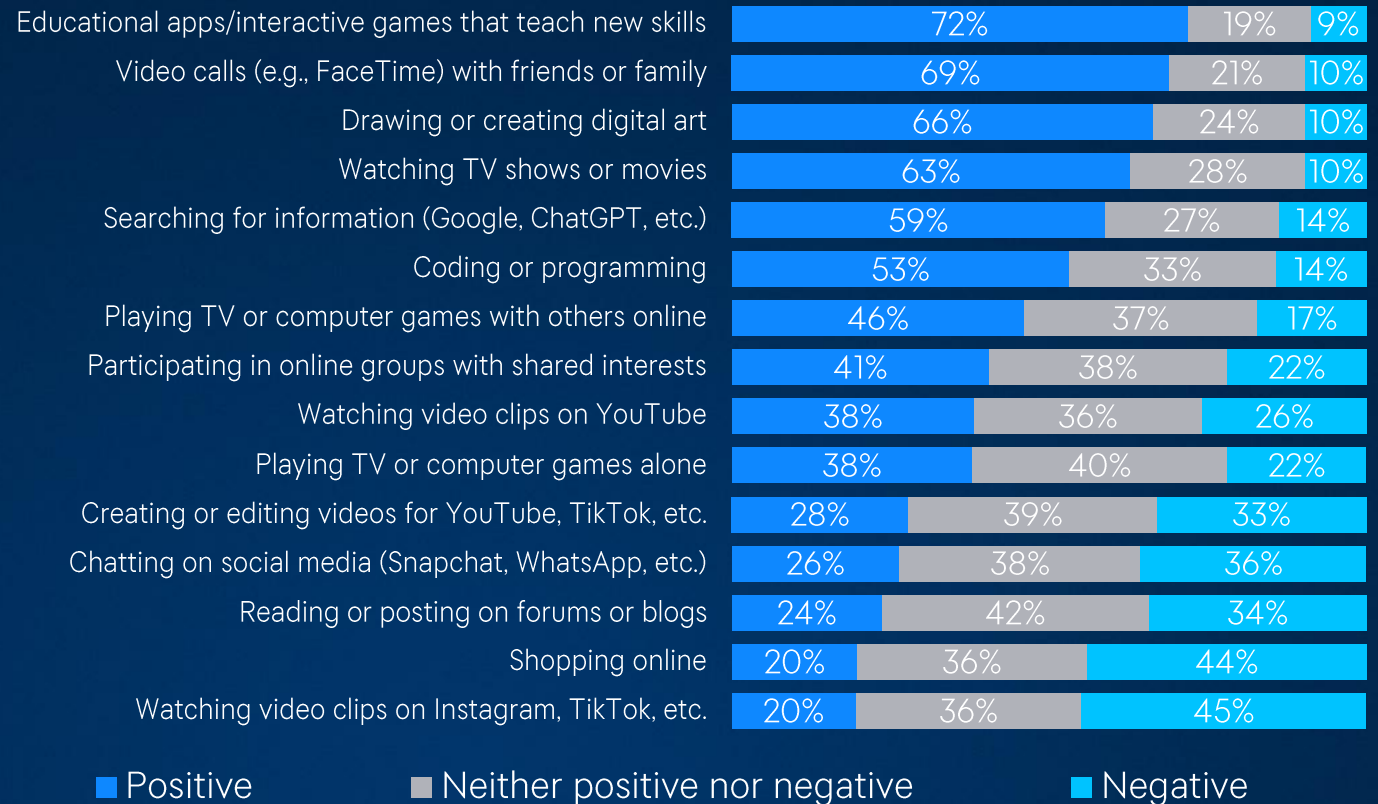
- but many are negative to watching videos on TikTok and chatting on social media

Educational apps and games that have educational content are perceived most positively, but also when screens are used to meet, e.g. through Facetime and creative activities such as creating digital art, are seen as something positive.

There is a more divided view of computer games; Most people see games played with others as positive, while just under one in five are negative. Parents are somewhat more skeptical about playing alone.

Parents are most skeptical about children getting stuck scrolling on Tik Tok or Instagram, perhaps something many themselves can relate to. Likewise, when children spend too much time shopping online.

What do you think about the following screen activities for your child?



Base: Parents, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



Good balance and clear boundaries make it work well, while addiction and conflicts on the other hand can create problems

What makes it work well according to parents

The child has a balance between different activities – 20%
Screen time is already limited – 17%
The child can set boundaries on their own – 15%
Using screen for good purposes – 11%

What are the reasons that it does not work according to parents

Too much screen time – 31%
Perceives that the child has become addicted – 26%
Affects social/physical activity – 18%
Conflicts and quarrels – 13%
Difficulty limiting time – 11%

"I have a very active child so the screen doesn't appeal."
"My child only has screen time on weekends."

"She is able to regulate her screen time herself."

"The child cannot activate itself without a screen."

"Too much time at the screen instead of meeting people physically."

"There is always a fuss when screen time is over."

Base: Parents, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



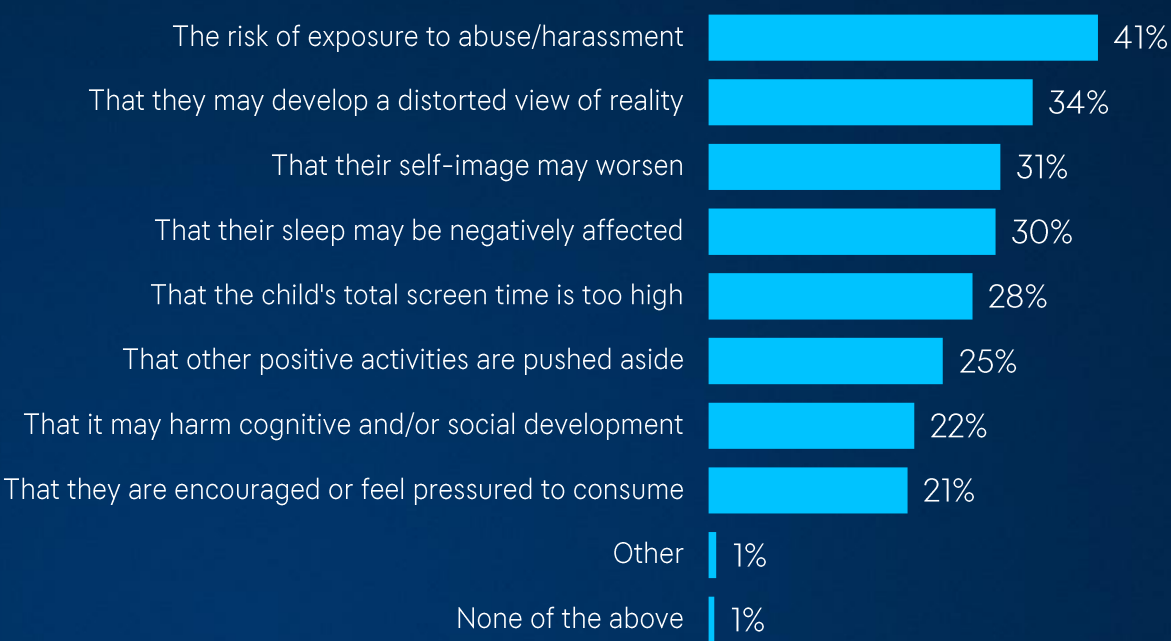
The fact that screen time is too high is not what worries parents the most – the risk of vulnerability, fake news and how self-image is affected is a greater concern

A majority of parents (65%) have felt concerned about their child's life online. Parents of children aged 10-13 (71%) are most worried, followed by parents of 14-17-year-olds (64%). Parents of children aged 6-9 are least concerned (53%).

The concern is not primarily about high screen time in general. The risk of vulnerability in the form of, for example, sexual harassment or bullying, that exposure to fake news gives a skewed worldview, that body-shaming can negatively affect self-image and sleep problems, worries more parents to a greater extent.

What have you been worried about related to your child's life on the internet?

The question was asked to parents who feel concerned, but the figures below reflect the percentage of all parents who felt worried about various aspects of their children's lives on the Internet.



Parents agree that the passive "meaningless" scrolling is the most problematic digital activity

Parents see apps like TikTok as a big threat because of the endless scrolling, which they recognize as addictive based on their own behavior (though mostly via Instagram).

They highlight that the activity is passive, time-consuming and that it is difficult as a parent to control and keep track of what the children are doing. At the same time, it is a platform for unrealistic beauty ideals and constant comparison with the best.

"My daughter spent hours on TikTok, it changed her, all she cared about was her looks and she was never happy with how she looked."

Parents are also often aware that their own behavior contributes to the problem

Many parents admit to being caught up in "mindless scrolling" on apps like Instagram and TikTok. This highlights how addictive and time-consuming these platforms can be, reinforcing their concerns about their children's screen time. Although parents emphasize the importance of limiting passive screen use, they often struggle to lead by example, sending mixed signals in their parenting.

"It's not like I have the best digital habits. I spend a lot of time on Instagram watching reels. But I'm an adult - I can handle it, and I know that much of what I see isn't real."

It seems to be the more unknown long-term effects of a digital childhood that worry parents the most

Parents want to ensure a balance between activities IRL and digital – but are biased towards activities IRL – even when these experiences are negative. Encountering setbacks while growing up in real life is something parents themselves can relate to from their own upbringing. This is seen as character creation and something you learn from rather than something that damages you for life. How digital influences affect children, on the other hand, is still unknown to parents and is therefore perceived as more frightening.

In interviews with parents, 4 problem areas were highlighted that they worry about with their children's digital lives:

That they miss out on experiences IRL

Mental and physical health

Bad/unrealistic influences

Being bullied/ bullying others

"I had long periods of boredom in my childhood- it made me creative and determined. I can't see how any of this will come naturally to son when all he does is passively watch others online. I hope I'm wrong."

"I wonder, do they ever feel that they are good enough online? And what does that do to a child?"

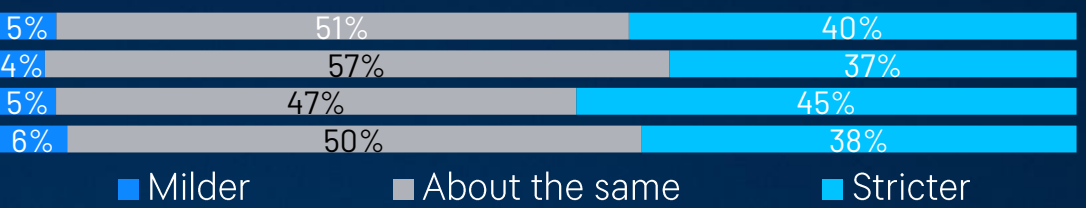
4. RULES AND STRATEGIES

Many parents want stricter rules – but different views on rules between parents can become an obstacle

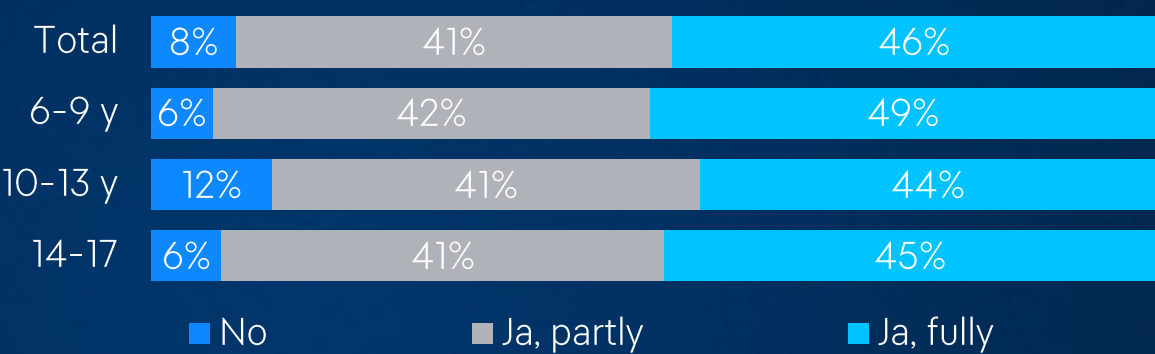
4 out of 10 parents think they should have stricter rules for screen use. Only 1 in 20 parents think that the rules should be milder. Parents of children aged 10-13 are slightly more likely to be stricter rules (45%). Parents of children aged 6-9 are most satisfied with the rules they have.

At the same time, many parents do not agree on the rules among themselves. Regardless of the age of the children, less than half of the parents fully agree on the rules. In families where there is disagreement, it is often a parent who wants stricter rules.

Do you think you should have rules for screen use that are milder or stricter than today?



Do you and the other guardian agree on the rules regarding screen use for the child?



Three most common screen rules in families that have made it work

Have children between 6–9 years old

1. No mobile phones or tablets in specific situations at home (e.g. at the dinner table, during visits, in the morning) (60%)
2. That the child takes care of other commitments (e.g. schoolwork) in order to use a mobile phone, tablet, etc. (56%)
3. Limit use after a certain time (e.g. before bedtime) (49%)

Have children between 10–13 years old

1. That the child takes care of other commitments (e.g. schoolwork) to be able to use a mobile phone, tablet, etc. (61%)
2. No mobile phones or tablets in specific situations at home (e.g. at the dinner table, when visiting, in the morning) (56%)
3. Limit use after a certain time (e.g. before bedtime) (49%)

Have children between 14–17 years old

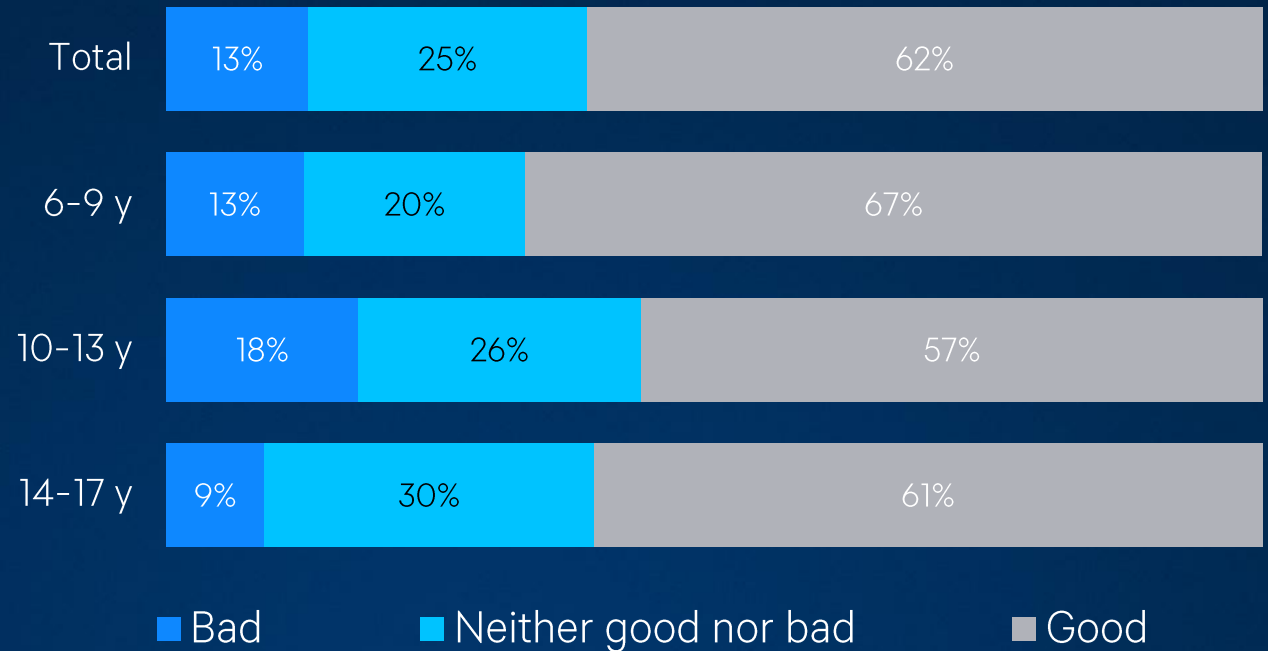
1. That the child takes care of other commitments (e.g. schoolwork) in order to use a mobile phone, tablet, etc. (44%)
2. No mobile phones or tablets in specific situations at home (e.g. at the dinner table, during visits, in the morning) (39%)
3. Limit use after a certain time (e.g. before bedtime) (30%)

The hardest thing to get 10-13-year-olds to accept the screen time rules

The vast majority of children (87%) think that the rules around screen use work at least decently. Children aged 10-13 are least satisfied.

The rules that affect the children's experience most negatively are limiting screen time on certain days, temporary "screen bans" as a consequence of the child mismanaging rules and that certain games and apps are banned.

Question to the children: How well do you think the rules you have at home about screen use work?



Base: Children, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



Not surprisingly, the children prefer to be involved in deciding the screen rules at home

What screen time rules do children prefer if they are allowed to choose?

No rules!	22 %
More screen time	15 %
It's good as it is	10 %
Get to decide more yourself	9 %

"That I got to use all the time"

"That I got to have it more before I go to sleep because I fall asleep better"

"Our rules are really my own rules and work really well"

"That I get to decide for myself how long I should have my mobile or ipad"

"That I can decide for myself but that it must not affect my schoolwork"

"I think it's great as it is now. I have to take my own responsibility and take care of it. We talk a lot about most things at home"

Base: Children, n = 1,000

Source: Ipsos Family Internet Barometer survey



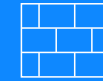
Parents use several different strategies to manage their children's digital lives

During the focus groups, several different strategies and methods were observed to manage the children's digital life and screen use that can be categorized into 4 main categories: The Protector, The Educator, The Enabler and The Balancer.

The strategies can occur in parallel within a family, and it is not uncommon for parents to start with an approach and then change strategy.

Different children may require different strategies, which can be challenging for many parents. As a parent, it can be easier to focus on the positive aspects of digital life, such as language development and improved digital skills. It is also a common strategy many parents adopt after several failed attempts to set rules around their children's screen use.

In some cases, repeated failures over time lead parents to adopt a fifth strategy – the ostrich – which means that you more or less "give up".



The Protector

Approach: Highly vigilant and restrictive.



The Educator

Approach: Focuses on teaching and guiding



The Enabler

Approach: Permissive and supportive.



The Balancer

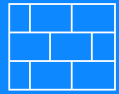
Approach: Strives for a balanced approach.



The Ostrich

A result of a failed approach.
Trying to focus on positive aspects of digital life

Summary of the four parenting strategies



The Protector

Strives to shield their children from the downsides of digital life through strict rules and restrictions. However, this approach is not sustainable in the long run and doesn't prepare children for the realities of digital life.

- Typical strategies include:
- Creating "parking spaces" for devices
 - Enforcing strict screen time rules
 - Banning certain apps
 - Using settings and filters
 - Checking search and chat history

TRUST IS DAMAGED



The Educator

Focuses on an open dialogue and teaching children about all aspects of digital life. Yet, a lack of curiosity and a tendency to lecture can make this approach less effective..

- Typical strategies include:
- Avoid judging; focus on teaching
 - Let kids learn from experiences
 - Join communities or attend lectures
 - Do activities together and discuss them

EASIER IN THEORY
THAN IN PRACTICE



The Enabler

Permissive and supportive, trusting that children learn best from experience rather than restrictions. But too much freedom can lead to overuse and unhealthy digital habits.

- Typical strategies include:
- Supporting hybrid activities like Pokémon Go
 - Dismissing some current concerns as overblown
 - Encouraging exploration of many apps and games

LACK OF RULES CAN
LEAD TO OVER USE



The Balancer

Believes in maintaining a balance between real-life activities and digital life. However, focusing solely on balance without staying informed or involved can lead to blind spots. Also long-term balance is hard to maintain.

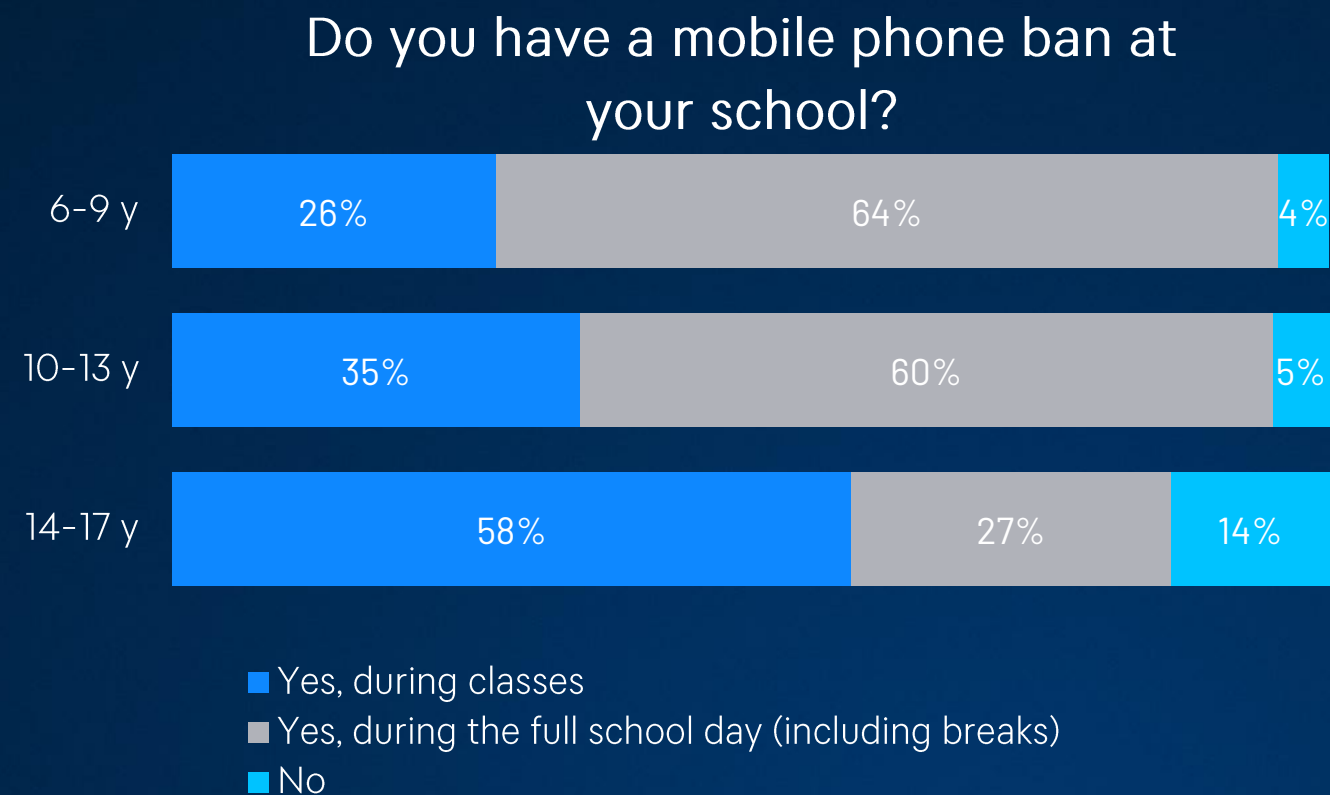
- Typical strategies include:
- Allowing screen time as a reward for physical activity
 - Encouraging physical activities as a "vaccine" for digital-related health issues
 - Supporting real-life activities and relationships

HARD TO MAINTAIN
LONG-TERM BALANCE

5. SCHOOL

A teacher with curly hair and glasses is leaning over a table, assisting a group of four students. The students are focused on their work, which includes a laptop, a tablet, and two small white wind turbine models. The classroom setting is visible in the background with a whiteboard and bookshelves.

Mobile phone ban in schools

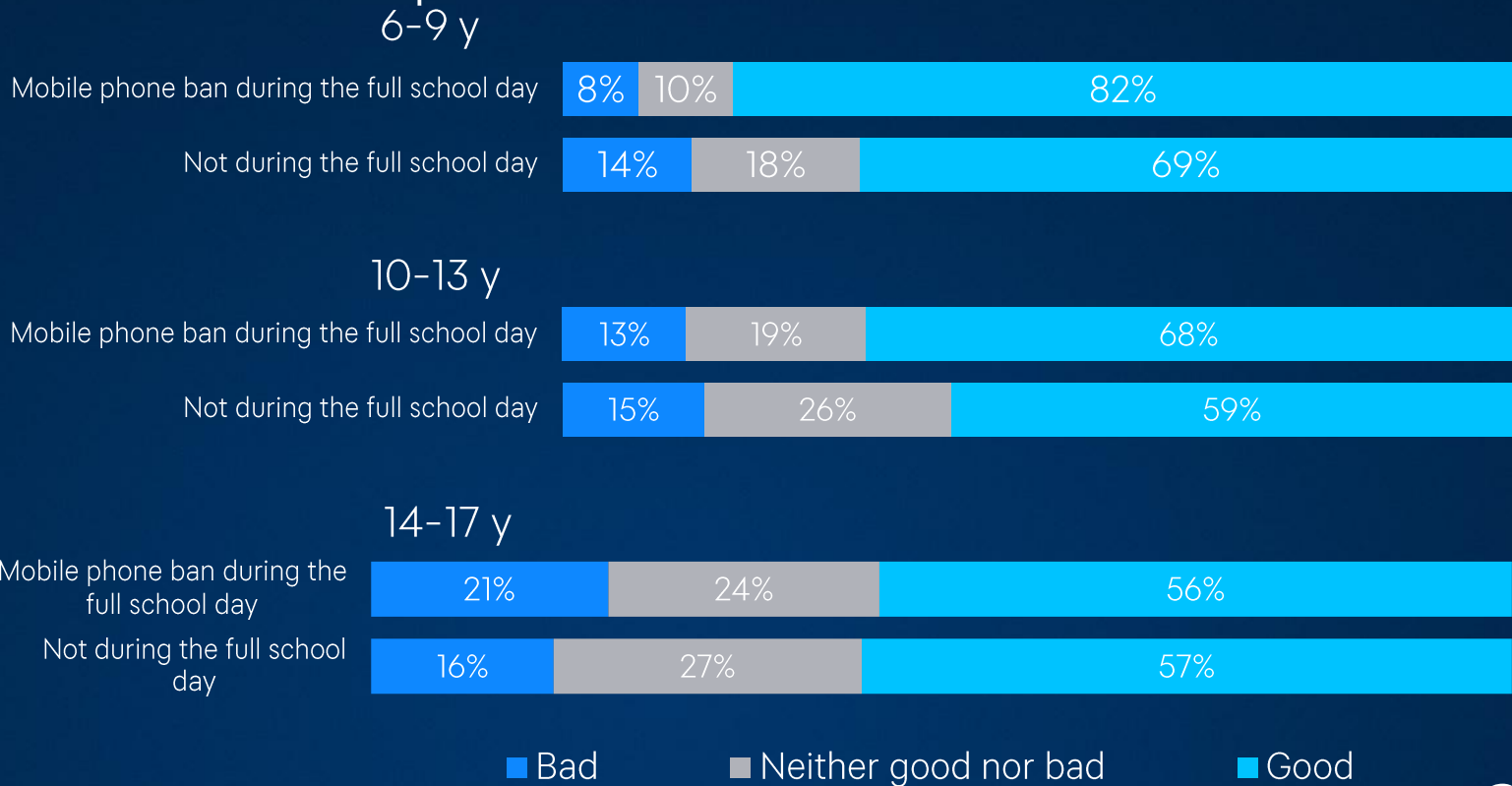


Mobile phone bans throughout the school day contribute to a better school environment in primary and middle school

The results show that children aged 6-13 who attend schools that have introduced a mobile phone ban throughout the school day experience a better school environment than those who attend schools that have not.

When it comes to children aged 14-17, we do not see the same pattern, instead there are more people in that age group who experience a poor school environment in schools with a total mobile phone ban.

If you think about your school environment, for example how safe and calm it feels to be at school, how do you experience it?



6. SUMMARY

Summary of the report

Parents

Most parents are positive about the Public Health Agency's guidelines on screen time, but few feel that they can live up to the recommendations. One explanation may be that the guidelines focus primarily on time consumption, while parents place greater emphasis on what activities their children are doing on the screen. Parents are generally positive about many screen activities but see problems with activities with a greater risk of vulnerability, exposure to "fake news" and "pointless" scrolling. They are also aware of how their own behavior can contribute to the problem.

The uncertain, long-term effects of an increasingly digital childhood worry parents, such as the screen pushing away important experiences "IRL", children being influenced by bad or unrealistic online influences, or poorer mental and physical health.

In families that make it work well, different types of rules are used for children's screen use. The most effective thing seems to be to limit the use at certain situations or times, and that screen use is conditional on e.g. homework being completed.

Parents' digital strategies can be categorized into four different main types: The Protector, The Educator, The Enabler, and The Balancer. Each type uses its own methods to address the challenges of a new digital reality, which has its pros and cons. Many parents also state that they have not been successful in their strategies and therefore adopt a fifth strategy, "the Ostrich", as they have given up in their attempts to set rules and limits around screen activities.

Children

The children themselves point out both positive and negative aspects of their screen activities. Watching videos is what children spend the most time doing, and it is highlighted as positive to be able to relax and disconnect, but also as something problematic to passively scroll on social media, and something they would like help with from parents to be able to break this behavioral pattern. Similarly, children appreciate a balanced parenting strategy that helps them explore both digital and physical life. To succeed with this, however, it is important that parents get involved early and show interest in their children's digital activities in the same way as the physical ones. Children see their digital lives as just as important as their offline lives. Adults need to understand and respect this in order to be able to reach out in a good way. Being excluded from social apps makes children feel left out of the group, and a large proportion of children say that they are worried about missing out if they are not online. As a consequence, strict restrictions can lead to mistrust and a lack of connection between parent and child. This is risky because children may not tell adults when bad things happen online.

School

Among the younger children (6-13 years) who have a mobile phone ban in school, most experience a calmer and safer school environment than those who do not. While mobile bans can create better conditions in the school environment, children will inevitably face the challenges of a digital reality sooner or later. Understanding the importance of digital life and being curious is therefore crucial to succeed in supporting children, both at school and at home.

Recommendations for parents

- Focus on the quality of screen activities: Prioritize what activities your kids do on the screen, not just how long they use it.
- Be aware of your own screen behavior: Parents should be aware of how their own screen behavior affects their children and strive to be good role models.
- Engage early in children's digital lives: Show interest in children's digital activities in the same way as their physical activities. This helps children feel understood and respected.
- Rules and limits are fundamentally positive, but too strict bans can lead to mistrust and do not prepare children for a digital life. Instead, try to have an open dialogue to understand the children's needs and set the rules together.

7. ABOUT THE SURVEY

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black blazer over a white top and a headset, is seated in a grey office chair. She is looking down at a smartphone held in her left hand. A laptop is open on the desk in front of her. The background is dark and out of focus. The overall lighting is dim, with a blueish tint.

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About the survey – Ipsos

The survey was conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Tele2.

The target group for the study was guardians of children aged 9-17 years, living in Sweden, and children in the same families. In order to get a random spread of boys and girls, as well as a good spread of different ages, the children who were next to have their birthday were interviewed.

There were 1,000 interviews with parents and 1,000 interviews with children.

Data collection was done online and the sample was drawn from Ipsos' quality-assured panel iSay.

Data collection took place in November 2024.

About the survey – Augur

The focus groups were conducted by Augur on behalf of Tele2 and consisted of::

- Family interviews at home: 6 parents and 6 children
- In-depth interviews with school staff: 3 school representatives
- Focus groups with parents: 12 participants, divided into two focus groups
- Friend interviews with children 10-13 years: 7 participants

The focus groups were carried out in November 2024.

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