

Chapter 1: Media-wise Children

Child image Solidoe translates to:

A child with media literacy can use the potential of media in a self-aware manner, without harming themselves or others.

Every parent and every child is unique, and the times in which children grow up also require a tailored approach. In a time with many digital possibilities, which are even easily accessible to the youngest, new questions arise. For example, what impact does the use of all digital resources have on the health and development of children?

We notice that children are (almost) always faster than we as educators in dealing with digital resources and the world that comes with it, and that makes us insecure. Both parents and Solidoe employees are looking for the right approach.

What is very clear is that children grow up in the current world, are curious and want to discover everything, the real world and the virtual world. These worlds go well together for them.

In order to do justice to their urge to explore, children need support, stimulation and rules, just like with all other developments they go through, from potty training to learning to swim. Educators can assess whether children are doing things that are appropriate for their age and/or development, can stimulate children to explore further and can set limits.

The role of childcare:

In raising and guiding media-wise children, we at Solidoe take the same approach as we do with other developmental processes. We support and stimulate, let children experiment on their own, and help where needed. We give them more and more freedom to figure things out on their own, but we keep an eye on them. We pay extra attention to those digital activities that involve multiple children at the same time.

How do we guide digital activities?

- We do not offer active digital media to children from 0 to 2 years old (except for music and sometimes a digital picture book). They are still developing so intensively, and digital media are not necessary.
- We tailor the activities (games, apps, movies, etc.) to the age and development of the children.
- With the children from 2 to 4 years old, we mainly go on a journey of discovery together. Digital books, short games or short film clips about something a child asks, for example how does the spider make its web? We literally sit next to them to give extra explanation.
- We also go on a journey of discovery together with the children from 4 to 6 years old. They can do more themselves, but at this age we still sit next to them.
- Children from the age of 7 can use digital resources independently, with the pedagogical staff present in the background.
- We install good apps and games and set filters that are appropriate for the age and developmental stage and explain them.

- We choose as many online activities as possible where multiple children can play/work together.
- We talk to the children about their experiences with digital media. What do they do? Why? What is fun? What is not allowed and why not? This is how we stimulate critical thinking in children and make them aware of the reliability of the sources they use.
- We make agreements with the children about what they can do online and how it fits into the daily routine. We also discuss how they can take other people into account when playing digitally.
- Both employees and children only use digital resources from Solidoe. Unless it adds something or is relevant in the context of the activity, for example when creating/executing a digital scavenger hunt.
- Facebook or other public forums are not used in the group.
- We make agreements about social behavior, also online, and explain that we do not tolerate bullying.

Chapter 2: Media use as enrichment

At Solidoe, we see the use of digital media as an enrichment of playing and discovering. We want to guide this media use well and use it to support development-oriented activities.

We know from parents that they find it important that the children in our groups, unlike at school and at home, can play and develop. They prefer to stimulate playing together, sports, playing outside, crafting, board games, etc. At the same time, they acknowledge that the online world is important and should definitely be used, even because the children are growing up in an increasingly digital world.

At Solidoe, we have a lot of experience with creating a safe and challenging group. We offer activities in the areas of language, motor skills, creativity and social skills that are appropriate for the age or development. We strive for a good balance between online and offline activities. We encourage children to participate in various activities, both active and passive. A lot of variation is important for good development.

It is striking that when a child plays football or crafts every afternoon, we are less on top of it than when a child is gaming every day. With football and crafting, we assume that there is interaction, that the child is active and engaged in multiple ways. With gaming, we have the image of a child who plays alone and is 'locked up' in their game. That image is only partly true. There are more and more possibilities for gaming or other digital activities where multiple children participate or where children are challenged to influence the game themselves. At Solidoe, we prefer digital activities that promote interaction and participation, such as a competition on the Wii, making a stop motion movie, a digital scavenger hunt, or a vlog about the theme of the holiday.

How do we connect online and offline play?

When organizing activities, all developmental areas are covered: language, motor skills, cognitive and social skills. The challenge now is to enrich or support these activities with digital possibilities and to connect online games with offline games. How convenient is it that when children disagree about game rules, they can look it up online and even see in a video how a game rule should be

applied.

We can also involve children even more in the organization of activities. For example, when making a schedule for the sports day. They have to think about how to make the schedule work, it also requires a lot of consultation, thinking ahead and taking into account different aspects of organizing.

Another example of connecting online and offline games is: retelling your favorite book in the group and then converting it into a photo comic strip. Then they have to think about how they are going to do it, with whom and where they can take those pictures.

There are so many things that children find interesting, that they have questions about. How wonderful it is to challenge the children and yourself to find out things and use them in the activities we offer. We have taken the first steps to develop online and offline activities.

In order to be able to offer more and more of this kind of activity, extra knowledge and experience is needed. It is very important that we do this mainly with the children.

Chapter 3 Work in Progress

We know that digital developments are moving fast and bringing about changes that we cannot yet foresee. We also know that children in particular are quick to pick up on and use these developments. This means that we, as professional educators, must grow along with digital technology in order to be able to guide children properly. This requires us to be curious about new possibilities, to keep our technical skills up to date, and to keep talking to children and parents about what we find pedagogically responsible.

This chapter: Media-wise parenting at Solidoe must therefore be a chapter that we discuss annually at the locations and in the parent committees.

How do we discover the digital world?"

Children are quick to pick up on the latest trends, know which vlogger has the most followers, etc. As adults, we are usually one or more steps behind the children in this area. It is important to listen to the children and follow them. By talking to them, you can discover together whether the game or site is suitable for this child and/or group. In Appendix 1 we provide a list of sites that you can use for this.

Digital communication and the friendships that arise from it are normal for children and just as important as the friends they see every day. As adults, we are challenged to take this form of communication and remote play with the resulting friendships seriously. At Solidoe, we see the maintenance of digital friendships as something that children do at home. At the locations, we focus on activities with the group and have an agreement that the children will not go online on Facebook or other forums.

How do we ensure safe media use?

The agreement that neither children nor employees use their own smartphones or tablets has to do with ensuring everyone's privacy at the daycare. This way, we want to prevent photos/videos from being unintentionally posted online. (See photo policy / link)

We will need to make children aware of their digital traces and teach them how to deal with privacy. It is still difficult for them to understand that sharing private photos and activities is not only fun but can also have negative consequences.

Discovery and autonomy are important pillars in our pedagogical policy, which conflicts with the safety we also want to guarantee. We are looking for a responsible way in which we can give children the space to explore online. We currently guarantee safety using filters, and we will experiment with how else we can do this.

If we want to make children media-savvy, we will have to give them the space to participate in the world "online" and to support them in their digital social skills. Children often pick up the 'technical' skills they need in a playful way. As educators, it takes time and courage to use the new digital possibilities so that we can continue to guide them well in online activities. We will regularly offer courses in the training program that will allow employees to improve their technical skills.

It is important to explicitly make room in Solidoe's budget for suitable digital materials and subscriptions to responsible sites or apps.

Agreements on the use of social media

The agreements that we use at Solidoe for children, parents and employees can be found in (OHA 11/ link).

What does the digital future bring?

The future is unpredictable. We do notice that digital developments are happening faster than policy making. Precisely because we work with young and curious children, we want to follow the developments quickly (such as digital whiteboards/game robots, etc.). When we use digital activities or purchase new materials at Solidoe childcare, we always check this against our pedagogical principles. We will continue to do this in the future.

In the development of digital activities and the way we deal with them at Solidoe, we continue to consult with children, parents and employees.

In addition to all agreements and policies, attention to fun and relaxation remains very important when playing digitally.☺