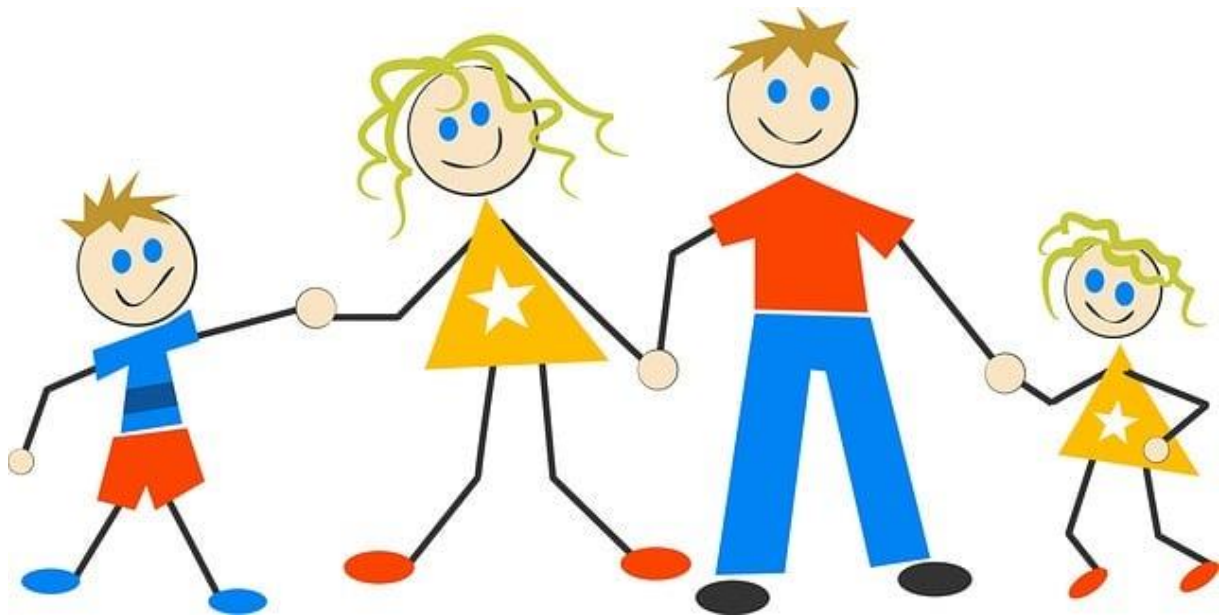
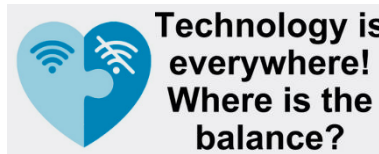




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TUTORIAL FOR PARENTS

developed in the project

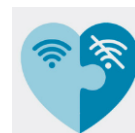


Developed by: Marta Uzarska-Bachmura

Warsaw, September, 2023



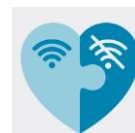
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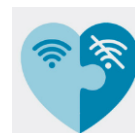
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INTRODUCTION

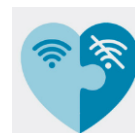
The tutorial presented to you is a form of instruction addressed to parents of primary school students in the field of shaping personal and social competences of children and youth at the primary school level in the context of dynamically developing information and communication technologies (ICT). The tutorial is enriched with knowledge in the field of prevention of behavioral addictions, which include ICT addiction. Using the tutorial, the parent can gain practical knowledge on recognizing the signs and consequences of technology abuse, the use of various behavioral addiction prevention strategies, including the development of children's personal and social competences. The tutorial also contains content showing how to strengthen the school community in the area of ICT addiction prevention, the effectiveness of which increases when all its members are involved in its implementation. The issues contained in the tutorial, which are the theoretical basis for the prevention of behavioral addictions, will allow parents to use practical knowledge more effectively. Implementation of the recommendations and actions contained in the tutorial can contribute not only to strengthening children's personal and social competences, but also to stopping the deterioration of school performance resulting from the abuse of ICT.

Remember, that you do not need to carry out all the proposed actions, but you can choose only those that your child needs and you are able to realise. You can even start with one small task and realise that it matters. The tutorial contains examples of the actions that might be an inspiration for you so feel encouraged to use your own ideas which will support your child.

Good luck!



The dynamic development of technology (ICT) makes family and school to counteract the effects that may affect primary school students abusing ICT, in particular computers, smartphones





I. ICT IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1. WHAT IS ICT?

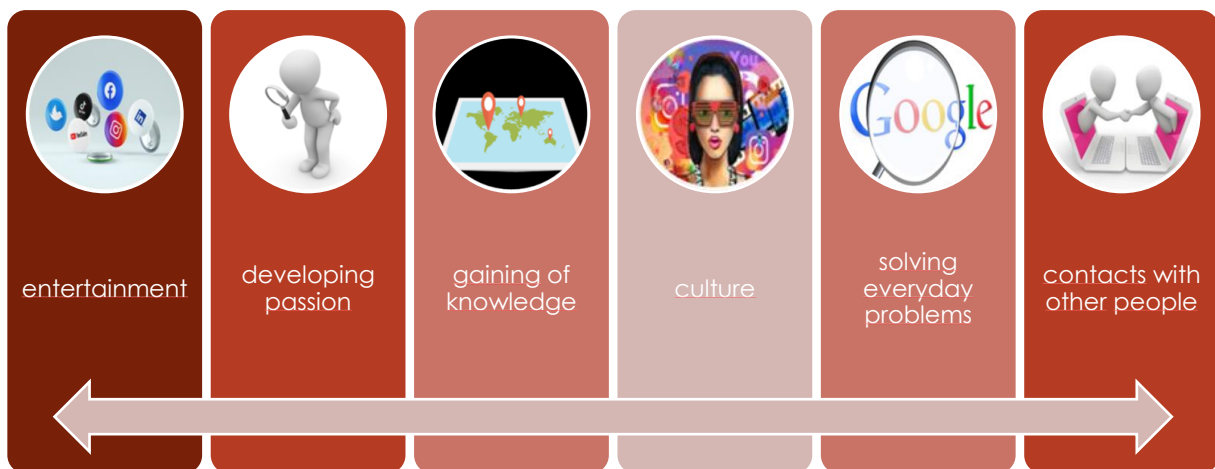


Information and communication technologies (ICT) elements

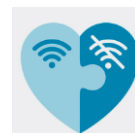
2. OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY ICT TO THE YOUNG GENERATION

Due to the dynamic development of ICT in recent years, they are present in most areas of children and adolescents lives. Primary school students are people who belong to a generation brought up in conditions of unlimited access to technology, and they do not know the times when there was no Internet, social media, smartphones and applications. This has a huge impact on the way they function.

Thanks to ICT, children have access to a world where they can realize themselves in many areas.





Areas in which children can realise their needs and interests thanks to ICT




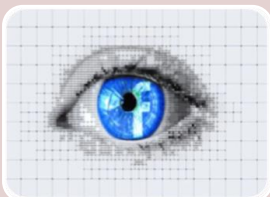




3. RISKS RELATED TO THE USE OF ICT BY CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Regardless of the opportunities offered by ICT, the risks of improper use of ICT by children and young people should be taken into account. Although the Internet is a natural environment for primary school students, it does not mean that they are more resistant to the negative aspects of using the Internet.

			
deterioration of mental and physical health, including the development of addiction	deterioration of school performance	limiting the possibility of shaping social skills in real situations	experiencing an excess of stimuli, overloading with excess content

Risks related to the abuse of ICT (part 1)

			
cyberbullying, cybercrime	access to materials containing content harmful to the child	inability to detect false content, the so-called fake news	making dangerous acquaintances

Risks related to the abuse of ICT (part 2)





4. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO FIND A BALANCE IN THE USE OF ICT?

ICT present in the lives of today's primary school students is based on the mobile, fast and universal Internet, as well as on algorithms that personalise content reaching children and teenagers. These aspects have a strong impact on increasing the risk of ICT abuse and experiencing negative consequences related to it.

Everything indicates that implementing sustainable use of ICT among children and young people is a key issue in preventing ICT addiction.



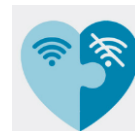
As humans, we have been in contact with the rapidly developing technology for a relatively short time and we do not fully know all the consequences of intensive use of ICT, especially when it comes to the youngest, who have been in contact with it practically from birth.

The experience of therapists dealing with behavioural addictions shows that it is easier to take care of this balance when social and personal skills of children and adolescents are strengthened. These skills protect against the abuse of technology as they enable children and young people to develop harmoniously. Deficiencies in social and personal competences increase the risk of experiencing excessive stress, which may encourage children and adolescents to relieve it by excessive use of ICT.

Development-friendly forms and ways of using ICT depend on their age, therefore it is important for their parents to be aware of this. Parent-controlled use of ICT can be an opportunity for their cognitive, physical and motoric, social and emotional development.

The dynamic development of technology will constantly generate new challenges to us, but certainly actions to eliminate the already known adverse effects should start as soon as possible, because the future of the youngest generation is at stake.

Recalling the example of widespread cigarette smoking from the past, which initially was an important and natural element of the life of people at that time, and only after a long time, when a large number of them suffered health damage, it was recognized as a factor





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negatively affecting health. This caused the introduction of restrictions, bans and raising public awareness of the harmfulness of nicotine addiction.

Perhaps our society, being at the beginning of dynamic changes in the development of ICT, should draw conclusions from this lesson and make every effort to protect the youngest from the development of ICT addiction before the entire generation experiences negative consequences. People who develop addictive behaviours at a young age will automatically have limited chances for a healthy and harmonious development in the future. **Abuse of ICT can affect not only the well-being of primary school students, but also limit their educational opportunities, and in the future may limit their professional development opportunities.**

Undoubtedly, technological progress cannot be undone, but the impact of ICT use on children and young people should be discussed and researched, and actions aimed at sustainable use of technology should be implemented.



We all live in a digital world. And that requires the use of ICT. So we cannot disconnect completely, but any abuse of it is always wrong

Therefore, appropriate attitudes regarding the safe use of ICT should be modelled. And it is better to do this by setting home and school rules aimed at sustainable use of ICT, than by applying absolute bans on the use of smartphones, computers or the Internet.



II. WHAT ARE BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS?

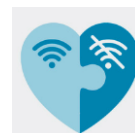
1. DEFINITION OF BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS

Behavioral (functional) addiction is a group of symptoms associated with repeated, long-term and fixed repetition of a specific activity (or group of activities), the purpose of which is to achieve a feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, joy or even euphoria.



The main reason for performing activities that are associated with addiction is to try to reduce bad mood and internal tension.

Addictions to performing a given activity occurs when there is an internal compulsion or a strong desire to start it and continue it as long as possible. **It is characteristic for addiction, not only behavioural, that the addicted person has more and more difficulties in controlling the behaviour associated with it and the internal need to increase the frequency of engaging in addictive activities.** If the activity is interrupted or its performance is limited, undesirable withdrawal symptoms appear, including both physiological disorders on the part of the body, e.g. headaches, excessive sweating, hand tremors, insomnia, and psychological problems, e.g. aggressive behaviour fear, irritability, shame, or guilt. An addicted person repeats a given behaviour despite the fact that it is unhealthy and dangerous for its functioning, because defence mechanisms cause distortion and blocking of difficult, threatening content related to addiction and its negative consequences. Therefore, the addicted person develops various illusions that discourage him from changing his bad habits. An addicted person also rejects the negative opinions of the environment about the actual consequences of addiction.





2. TYPES OF BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS



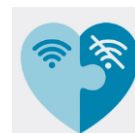
The most common behavioural addictions include:

- addiction to shopping,
- pathological gambling,
- compulsive overeating,
- orthorexia - excessive focus on healthy eating,
- work addiction
- **addiction to using a computer and computer games,**
- **network addiction - addiction to the use of the Internet,**
- **phonoholism - addiction to a mobile phone.**

Among children and youth of primary schools, the last three types of addictions, those related to ICT technologies, have been widespread in recent years, and the dynamics of their development seems to be directly proportional to the increase in the number of applications of technology.



Interestingly, some behavioural addictions are socially accepted, and sometimes even an addicted person can be appreciated and distinguished for their commitment to performing activities, as is the case with people affected by work addiction





3. WHERE DO BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS COME FROM?

There is a widespread view in the scientific world that a combination of biological, psychological and environmental factors contributes to the development of addiction. None of them are addictive on their own, although the impact and importance of each factor may vary from patient to patient.



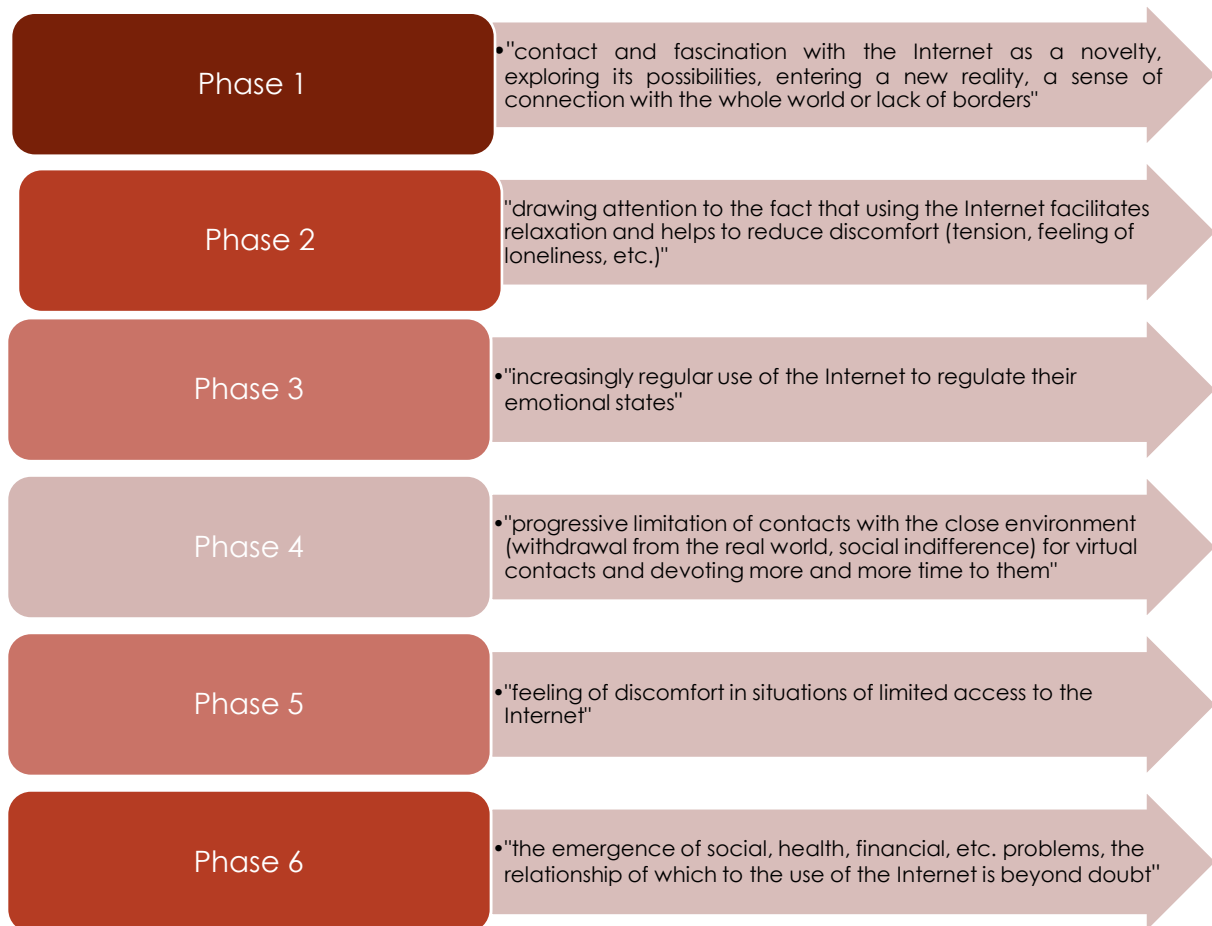
Factors that increase the probability of addiction include:

- negative family relationships, including primarily violence, neglect,
- low level of social and personal competences, including, above all, low self-esteem,
- loneliness,
- lack of opportunities to develop interests and passions,
- mental disorders such as depressive symptoms with anxiety,
- other deficits, eg attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Asperger's syndrome, autism.

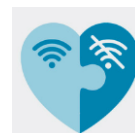


4. SPECIFICS OF ICT ADDICTION

4.1. PHASES OF INTERNET ADDICTION DEVELOPMENT



Phases of addiction development based on the concept of Bohdan T. Woronowicz



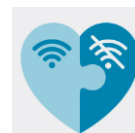


4.2. TYPES OF INTERNET USERS

A. "Caught in the Net"	B. "All at once"	C. "Full Circle"	D. "Killing time"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•excessive internet use•neglecting important areas of daily life (school, social life, household duties)•focus on a specific type of online activity•negative consequences of Internet abuse (sleep disorders, anxiety and irritability in the absence of Internet access)•difficulties in limiting the use of the Internet, even when aware of the negative consequences of its abuse•Young people in this category may be hungry for experiences outside the internet. Due to the lack of appropriate social competences, however, they feel excluded, oppressed by their peers, or disappointed with their lives as a result it leads to closure in the world of the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•balancing daily activities with intensive internet use•activity both online and offline•stress caused by an overloaded daily schedule•Young people in this category are hungry for life and experiences both online and offline. They manage to satisfy it thanks to a high level of social competence. Online activity may in this case be strongly related to off-line activity (e.g. teenagers with many friends are also very active on Facebook, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•a period of Internet abuse followed by autocorrect (come full circle)•a change in behaviour may occur as a result of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. glut (feeling that "it is enough")b. becoming aware of the negative consequences of Internet abuse (e.g. health problems, low school performance, conflicts with parents)c. new motivations (e.g. love relationships)•This type is open to new life experiences and willingly establishes contacts with peers. As a result of strong psychophysical changes associated with the teen-age, he enters the phase of abusing the Internet, which ends with self-correction of behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•the offline world is perceived as boring•no alternative activities•online activity is a convenient time filler•Internet use as a mechanical reaction to boredom•This type is close to new life experiences. It may also be characterised by limited social competence.

Types of users (EU NET ADB - Study of Internet abuse by young people in Poland and Europe)

This typology can be a tool for categorising which users show symptoms of dysfunctional Internet use.





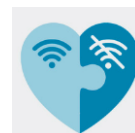
• In the case of users of **types A ("Clutched") and D ("killing time")**, Internet abuse may be associated with other problems (anxiety, depression, attention disorders, etc.). In these cases, internet abuse is often just the 'top of the iceberg' - a visible sign of deeper psychosocial problems requiring further intervention. Due to the low probability of autocorrect, professional help is usually required.

• **Type B ("All at once") and C ("Full Circle")** users appear to be normal, and their problems with Internet abuse may be related to specific developmental features of adolescence. Problems with abusing the internet in these cases are likely to correct themselves. These people usually do not require professional help. However, „coming full circle" with Type C can take a long time and additional help is often required.

4.3. SYMPTHOMES OF ICT ADDICTION



Symptoms of ICT addiction





4.4. ICT ABUSE RESEARCH



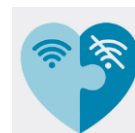
- The percentage of people using the Internet in a dysfunctional way is the highest in Spain, Romania and Poland, and the lowest in Germany and Iceland.
- Dysfunctional use of the Internet is more common among boys, older teenagers and those whose parents have primary education.
- Dysfunctional Internet users are more likely to suffer from psychosocial disorders
- There is a strong association between gambling, social networking and online gaming and dysfunctional internet use

EU NET ADB - Research on Internet abuse by young people in Poland and Europe



- Psychiatrists observed 48 people, 22 of whom were diagnosed with smartphone addiction (SPA)
- Doctors have noticed that phone addiction physically changes the shape and size of the human brain.
- They listed three areas where gray matter was lost: the left anterior insula, inferior temporal cortex, and parahippocampal cortex. Defects in the anterior insula have previously been observed in people addicted to alcohol or drugs
- According to the authors of the study, they have obtained the first direct evidence of a link between mobile phone abuse and physical changes in the brain.

Research by Psychiatrists at the University of Hiedelberg - Structural and functional correlates of smartphone addiction





III. CONSEQUENCES OF ICT ABUSE, ESPECIALLY THE SMARTPHONE

ICT users, including smartphones, who lose control over their use of technology are referred to as 'digital slaves'. Abuse of ICT and being constantly online has a number of consequences.

These include the following negative consequences:

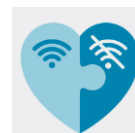
- **losing the ability to set boundaries in the use of ICT**, which manifests itself in neglecting duties, resignation from other activities and needs.



An addicted person is unable to stop performing an activity because they are driven by the compulsion to continue this activity

Further effects include losing track of time while performing activities, and thus constantly being late and postponing other tasks.

- **personal problems as well as disturbances in social relations.** There are difficulties with communication, especially in real life, there is an impoverishment of vocabulary, and the motivation to perform other activities decreases. There is a need to isolate from the world and withdraw from social life, which may result in the loss of friends, weakening of relationships with family, conflicts with peers, parents and other people from the close environment. Limiting contacts of the person abusing ICT only to virtual ones may result in the feeling of being socially excluded.





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A person who isolates himself does not acquire or loses the ability to:

- establish interpersonal relationships,
- coexist in a group,
- empathize

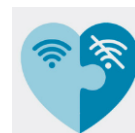
This person may become physically and verbally aggressive.

Person abusing ICT may also experience uncontrollable emotional outbursts.

• **educational and intellectual problems.** Children and young people who abuse ICT, especially those with lower intellectual abilities, may experience a deterioration in their school performance. They may develop a belief that it is not worth studying, which leads them to skip lessons, not to do their homework. There is a loss of interest in what is going on at school. Children do not need to expand their knowledge, they lose the ability to acquire knowledge. They are not interested in other fields, because their interests are limited to what is related to ICT.

• **cognitive problems.** There may be problems such as attention deficit disorder, including problems with concentration, thoughtfulness, thoughts focused only on the activity that is associated with addiction.

• **health problems, both mental and physical.** Eyesight problems may occur, e.g. deterioration of eyesight, watery and bloodshot eyes, which is associated with excessive staring at screens. There are also problems with the spine due to long sitting and posture forced by ICT devices, as well as reluctance and lack of time for sports. Children and adolescents may forget about their physiological needs, e.g. about eating, drinking, getting enough sleep. By prolonging the use of ICT, they stay up at night and are sleepy during the day. They can try to fight somnolence with stimulants, e.g. drinking coffee or energy drinks. There may also be other health problems resulting from a sedentary lifestyle, e.g. problems with the shoulder, neck, wrist, joints, body posture, muscle pain, tendon contractures. Children abusing ICT may feel exhaustion, physical and mental fatigue. They can also suffer from a decrease in health immunity, which results in various diseases related to this. Among mental disorders, the most common symptoms are: low self-esteem, distorted perception of reality, living with illusions, a sense of alienation.





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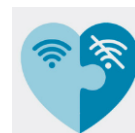
Abusing ICT can also lead to depression, nervousness, irritability, aggression, anxiety behaviour. This may be the result of an excess of negative and a lack of positive emotions

Their resilience may also drop. Withdrawal from ICT can result in withdrawal syndrome and, in some cases, the need for serious psychiatric treatment.

Although there are a few positive consequences of ICT abuse, it should be underlined that there are much more negative consequences.

Among the positive consequences, the following can be distinguished:

- mastering fast typing on ICT devices,
- the opportunity to meet new people from different parts of the world,
- practising foreign languages, in particular English,
- develop interests,
- expanding knowledge.





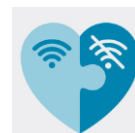
IV. HOW TO RECOGNIZE THAT A CHILD IS ABUSING ICT

New forms of communication and entertainment are an important element of the lives of children and teenagers, for whom virtual space has become a natural place where they fulfil their needs. **The generation of new media users is called "digital natives"**. The author of this concept is the American media researcher, writer, designer of computer games and educational systems, Marc Prensky, who in an article published in "On the Horizon" in 2001, characterised digital natives as opposed to digital immigrants. Prensky defined digital natives as the generation born after 1980, for whom computers and the Internet are as natural elements of the world as electricity, radio or television were for the generations that preceded them. **The term digital native was created on the model of the term native speaker, i.e. "user of the native language", which means that for representatives of this generation, the "homeland" is the world of digital technologies based on communication on the Internet.**



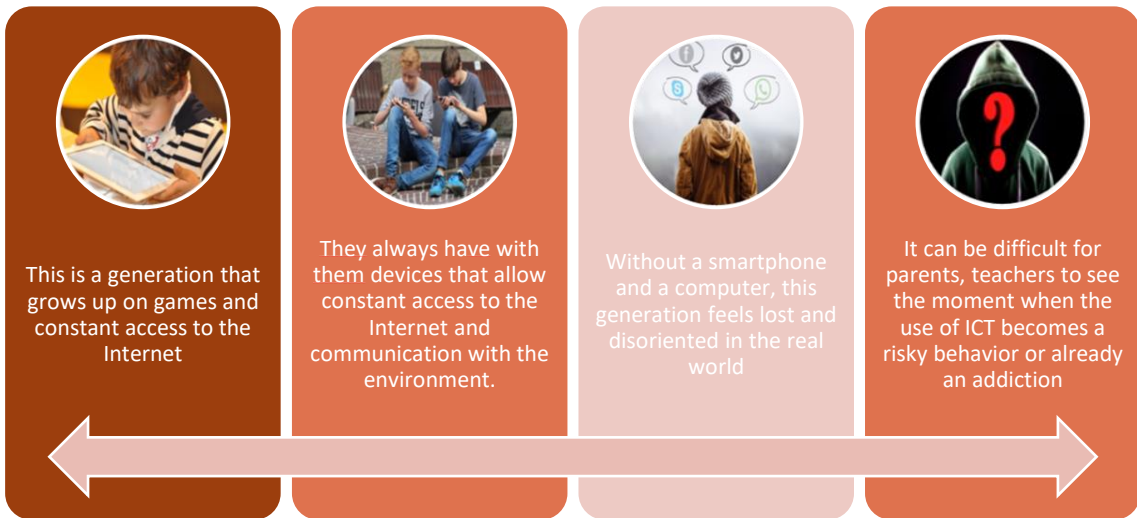
The generation of digital natives treats the Internet, computer or telephone as natural tools for interpersonal communication, image creation, entertainment, study and work

This is a generation that grows up on games and constant access to the Internet. They always have with themselves devices that allow constant access to the Internet and communication with the environment. Without a telephone and a computer, a representative of this generation feels lost and disoriented in the real world (J. Morbitzer, On the essence of the media of the young generation).





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Features of „Digital natives”

In this situation, it may be difficult for the child's environment to see the moment when the use of ICT becomes a risky behaviour or already an addiction.

At school, this can be particularly difficult to detect, as children spend most of their time using ICT after school.



Thus, parents play a key role in recognizing that a child is abusing ICT. To determine the level of ICT use, they can use the questionnaire attached to the tutorial. Completing the questionnaire and obtaining a specific result, which can be interpreted thanks to the accompanying explanations, can help parents recognize how the child uses ICT.





V. ACTIONS THAT A PARENT CAN TAKE TO PROTECT A CHILD FROM ICT
ABUSE

**1. Introduce rules that support the sustainable use of
technology in your home**



Be a positive
example for your
child by using
ICT in a
sustainable way
yourself



Teach your child
how to use ICT
safely



Create an
environment in
your home that
fosters mutual
listening and
understanding



Use technology
as an
opportunity to
talk about things
your child is
interested in

Rules that support the sustainable use of technology (part 1)



Get involved in
finding ways to
spend time offline
with your child

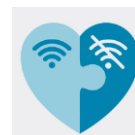


Monitor how your
child uses ICT



Respect your
child's privacy
and consider
what content you
post online that
uses his image

Rules that support the sustainable use of technology (part 2)



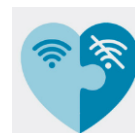


1.1. BE A POSITIVE EXAMPLE FOR YOUR CHILD BY USING TECHNOLOGY IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

Children learn by imitating the behavior of their parents. If you want your children to use technology in a healthy way, you need to remember that they are watching you, seeing how you use devices, for example, a mobile phone, and they repeat your behavior.



- Avoid using devices during meals
- Limit notifications. Decide which apps can send you notifications and disable those that don't require your immediate attention.
- Find out what sites, apps or media you spend the most time on. As you learn more about your habits, set a reasonable screen time limit.
- Do not bring technological devices into the bedroom and stop using them an hour before going to bed.



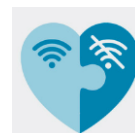


1.2. CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR HOME THAT FOSTERS MUTUAL LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING

When the child is not listened to by parents, he talks less and less about himself. **Only active and attentive listening will allow the parent to understand what the child really want to say.** Through active listening, we show the child that we are interested in what he want to say. The child, not feeling ignored and disregarded, will want to talk to the parent. Otherwise, the child may try to cope on their own and look for support and understanding outside, e.g. on the Internet.



- Don't keep asking the same general questions, like "How was in school?", but try to find out something more specific, like „how the test went?”, „did you enjoy the new activity?”
- When talking to a child, avoid short answers, but try to answer in a more elaborate way
- Do not put pressure on your child by asking many questions at once, as the child may then answer evasively. There's a good chance he'll say more when he can speak calm
- Do not negate the child's emotions, eg. "Don't overdo it!" when a child says "Mom, I'm angry because Antek spoke to me badly!", instead say "It must have been sad"
- Keep eye contact with your child during the conversation, this way you show the child that what he says is important to you
- Confirm that you have understood what the child is saying to you, e.g. "Yes, I understand", or make sure, e.g. "If I understood correctly, then...", "You meant to say that..."
- Respect your child's feelings by saying, for example, "I understand that you're afraid you did poorly on a test."
- Express your feelings about your child's behavior and the consequences "When you yell at your sister, I'm afraid she's sorry"
- Describe what you notice about your child, eg "I see that you are angry for some reason".



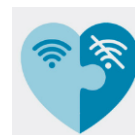


1.3. USE TECHNOLOGY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT THINGS YOUR CHILD IS INTERESTED IN

Obtaining information from the child about what is interesting for him on the Internet may allow the parent to obtain information that the child would not provide directly to him. **The parent can obtain information about the emotions that the child experiences, what the child lacks, what he is interested in, what is important to him.**



- a) Ask your child what he finds most interesting online, how he likes to spend time online.
- b) Depending on what the child says, try to find out more.
 - If it's listening to specific music, find out more about what kind of music it is, what bands make it, what your child likes most about this music, when he likes to listen to it
 - If it will be observing profiles of specific people, find out who these people are, what the child values them for, what is cool about what the child learns from their profile
 - If it's a game, find out what the game is about, what the child finds fun about the game, why they prefer this game over others
 - If it's an IM conversation, find out who he talks to most often, why he likes talking to these people so much, what this conversation gives him

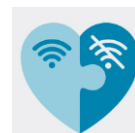




1.4. TEACH YOUR CHILD HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY SAFELY



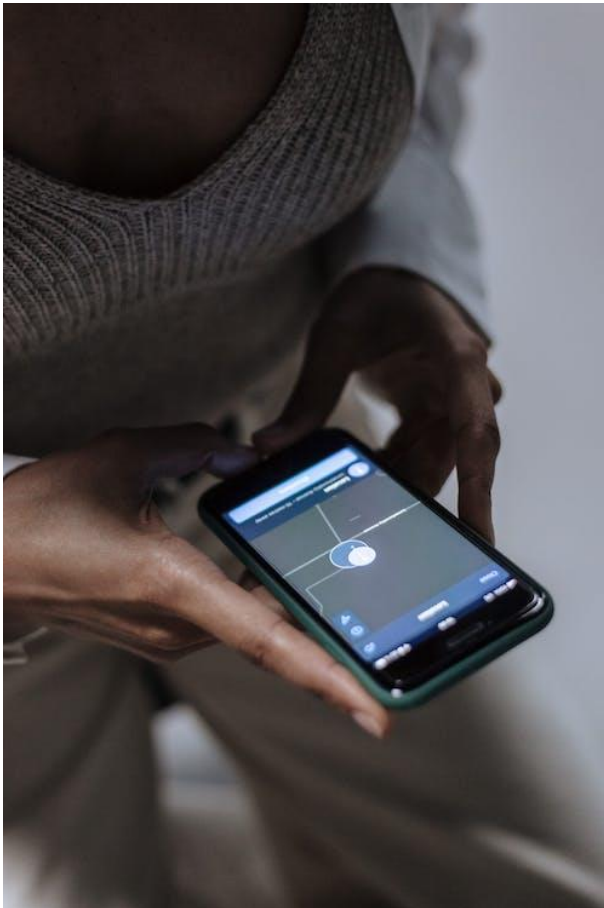
- Make the child aware that he cannot give personal information (name, address, telephone number) to people he met on the Internet or meet with them without parental consent, because they may pretend to be someone they are not
- Make your child aware that they should not send photos or videos to people on the Internet without parental consent
- Make your child aware that you cannot use offensive language towards other users as it is hate speech and it may be prosecuted.
- Make your child aware that he should be critical of online content. This content can be posted by anyone, and often it is not checked, so he can find a lot of information there that is not true. Much of the content posted in social media has little to do with the real life of the people who present it, so a child should not be compared to people he knows only from the Internet.





1.5. MONITOR HOW YOUR CHILD USES ICT

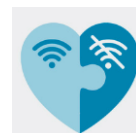
It is the responsibility of the parent to prevent the abuse of ICT by children. Children have the most time to use technology at home, which is why it is so important to set boundaries for children and monitor whether the child uses them.



- Learn more about privacy settings for tools, apps, and services, such as Google Play, Google Family Link
- Always enable parental controls on devices (or filters or monitoring systems)
- Determine how much time your child can use the devices.
- It is important not only to establish but also to enforce the rules. Therefore, check the time your child spends using devices through parental control systems, e.g. Google Family Link or other available, proven programs that monitor children's online activity

How to set up parental controls on Google Play?

- a) Open the Google Play app (aka Play Store) and remember that you must be logged in to your Google account.
- b) Click on the account icon in the upper right corner of the app.
- c) Select Settings -> Family -> Parental Controls.
- d) Enable Parental Control.
- e) Set and confirm the PIN code (do not show it to the child) - if one smartphone is used by several people, you can assign different settings to different accounts
- f) Specify the content you want to filter and approve it.





How does parental control work on Google Play?

As you can see from the instructions above, Google Play's parental controls only apply to downloading apps, mainly PEGI restricted games. It is therefore not perfect protection, as it is limited only to what the child can download and pay for.

Each attempt to download a game that requires payment requires PIN authorization. With the same PIN you set with Google Play Parental Controls. Google Family Link offers much more.

How do I set up parental controls on Google Family Link?

- a) Download and install the Google Family Link app on your smartphone.
- b) Open it and mark your account as family administrator.
- c) Download and install Google Family Link for Kids and Teens on your child's device.
- d) Add children's mailing addresses (Gmail) to your version of the application.
- e) Set filters in the browser and in applications.

What does Google Family Link protect against?

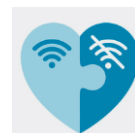
The fact that Google Family Link really works is best evidenced by the negative comments of teenagers under the application. The fact is that Family Link allows you to enable restrictions on:

- a) games, music, movies and books downloaded via Google Play.
- b) adult websites in the Chrome browser.
- c) all websites on the Internet, excluding those selected (specified by the parent).
- d) Google search filters (Safe Search activation).
- e) search filters on YouTube (except for content addressed to children).
- f) time spent with Android applications - here you impose a total block and time limits on each application.
- g) the daily limit of using the device, and when it is supposed to have bedtime (the device is then blocked, but phone calls can be made).

In addition, as part of Google Family Link, you can check where your child is using the Check child's location function.

The interface also allows you to check how much time your child has actually spent with the app, which is useful when you don't impose a time limit and want to take your word for it. Here you will verify how a given word relates to reality. The same applies to downloading applications, including those from unknown sources, as well as adding users to the device - which involves an attempt to circumvent Family Link security.

Not only that, Google Family Link works on Chromebooks, i.e. on laptops with the Google operating system.





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**It is recommended that children aged 6-9 use the devices
for no more than 1-2 hours with frequent breaks**



**It is recommended that children aged 10-14 use the devices
for no more than 3 hours without exceeding this time**



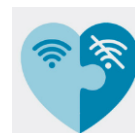
1.6. GET INVOLVED IN FINDING WAYS TO SPEND TIME OFFLINE WITH YOUR CHILD

Spending time offline is an effective method of preventing technology addiction. A child who knows how to spend free time in an interesting and engaging way without using technology will be less likely to abuse technology. Easy and quick access to technology makes spending time online the most popular form of entertainment and relaxation for today's young generation. The more a child learns about ways to spend their free time that are attractive to them, and the more often they use them, the greater the chance that they will naturally limit their use of technology.

The role of the parent is to inspire the child to look for various forms of spending time outside the network.



- Ask the child on a regular basis how he would like to spend his free time
- If the child has no ideas for spending time offline, suggest what he could do
- You can create together with you child a list of activities your child enjoys. The child will be able to use these ideas when he has free time
- If possible, engage in various activities that you can do together with your child, eg. go cycling, rollerblading, play football.
- Connect with the parents of children, who are your child's friends and try to arrange activities together. You can arrange shifts with other parents, e.g. each week one of the parents takes care of a group of children.
- Encourage your child to participate in organized group activities. Observe whether the child is actually interested. If the child clearly signals that these activities are not for him, do not force the child to participate and look for other activities.

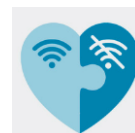




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1.7. RESPECT YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY AND CONSIDER WHAT CONTENT YOU POST ONLINE THAT USES HIS IMAGE

Take into account that anything you put online about your child may be found years later and used in ways that your child would not like. **A child is a separate entity who deserves respect and the right to privacy, so keep the content you post about them to a minimum.**





2. Support your child in developing social and personal competences

2.1. BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND PERSONAL COMPETENCES

The role of social and personal competences, also called soft, is crucial for the future of the young generation, because thanks to them, children and youth learn how to live and cooperate with other people, how to function within groups, how to deal with their own emotions, and how to optimally use possessed potential.

A child characterized by a high level of these competences is less likely to abuse ICT because it has a chance to develop in a harmonious way. By supporting the child in developing social and personal competences, the parent also has a chance to protect him from the deterioration of his school performance, because it is related to the abuse of ICT.

In addition, it should be taken into account that the dynamic development of technology means that the socio-economic situation in the coming decades may change in a way that is not entirely predictable. Experts predict that when the generation of today's primary school students enters the labor market, many current jobs may disappear. **A high level of soft skills facilitates a quick and flexible response to changes, so they become crucial in responding to the challenges of today's world.**

Why is developing soft skills important?



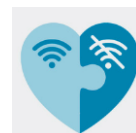
By developing these competences, children and youth learn how to live and cooperate with other people, how to function within groups, how to deal with their own emotions, and how to optimally use their potential



A high level of soft skills facilitates a quick and flexible response to changes, which become crucial in responding to the challenges of today's world

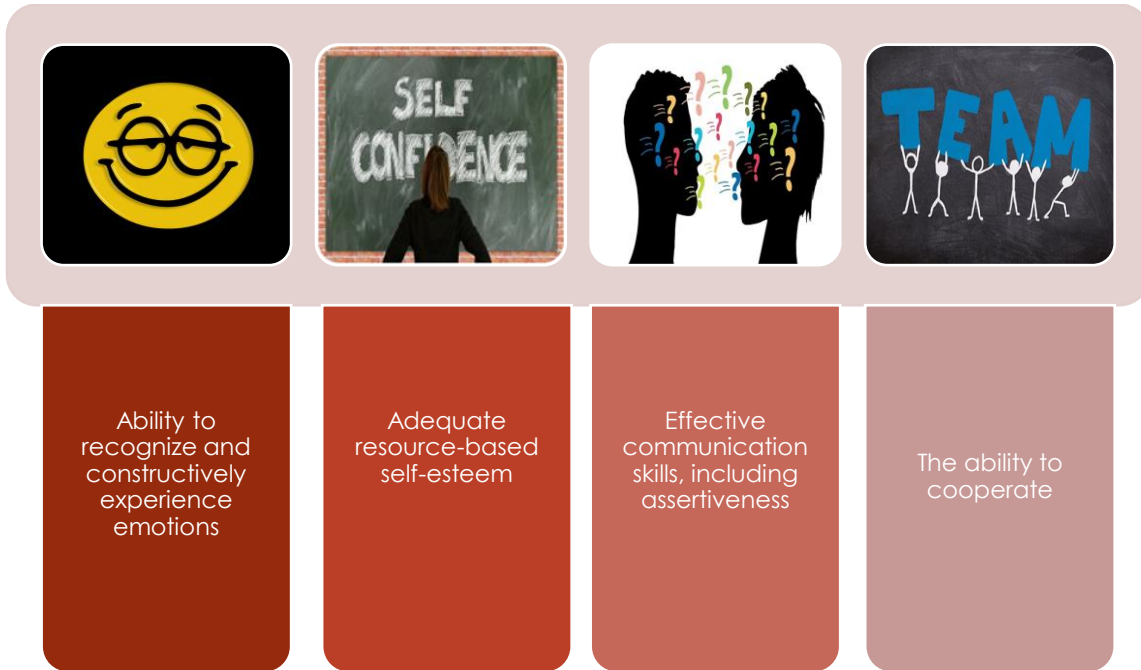


A child characterized by a high level of these competences is less likely to abuse ICT because it has a chance to develop in a harmonious way





2.2. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL COMPETENCES CRUCIAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A YOUNG PERSON AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL STAGE AND THEIR ROLE IN PREVENTING ADDICTIONS

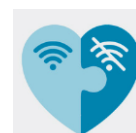


Competences particularly important to develop at the stage of primary school



Ability to recognize and constructively experience emotions

Emotion regulation, i.e. recognizing and constructively experiencing emotions, is the process by which people influence what emotions they have, as well as how they experience and express them. **Emotion regulation occurs when a person tries to control their reactions to a given situation – the person reveals and experiences them or inhibits their disclosure and experiencing, depending on what he considers more adaptive.** The basis of all actions aimed at regulating emotions is minimising the experience of negative emotions and maximising positive emotions. It is impossible not to feel emotions, but you can learn how to express them, deal with them in a constructive way.





A very important element of regulating emotions is awareness and deepening the ability to control and discuss with our thoughts. It is true that in the first moment a person receives signals from the world through the senses and body, then in the head he secondarily evaluates and directs the vector of feeling and its intensity to consciousness. So a lot depends on what we think about a given reality, how we call something, e.g. "it's scary" or "it's hard", "I never succeed", etc. For this you need insight into our thinking and learning talking to your thoughts. This is where the knowledge of the ABCD and E models is useful. A is the reality that reaches our senses, B is the thoughts that we usually run unconsciously about what we perceive. C is feelings as a response to those thoughts, and D is a behavioural response to those feelings. It is worth being aware of this process in order to gain the ability to control the mood and give yourself the opportunity to have a positive and caring discussion with the original, often extreme and frightening assessments, which in the model is marked with the letter D, i.e. corrective thoughts.

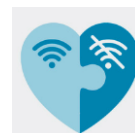
According to Mellibruda this competence is important in preventing ICT addiction because it is closely related to the psychological mechanisms of addiction. The mechanism of addictive regulation of emotions says that the only way to obtain positive emotional experiences is addictive behaviour. Similarly, in the case of a depressed mood, to feel better, the only way is to do something that gives you pleasure. Thus, the ability to recognize and constructively experience emotions reduces the need to obtain positive emotional experiences that addictive behaviours.



Adequate resource-based self-esteem

Self-esteem is a set of various judgments and opinions that an individual relates to himself/herself. These judgments and opinions may concern both the current characteristics of the entity and its capabilities. The adequacy of self-esteem, i.e. the awareness of the characteristics actually possessed, gives an individual the opportunity to use their resources in a way that is conducive to maintaining good mental condition and well-being, and affects constructive coping with everyday problems and stress.

Addictions arise on the basis of low self-esteem and strengthen it. Although they bring temporary relief, in effect they arouse negative emotions, causing a sense of guilt, shame and loneliness. Loneliness is associated with a negative experience and defined as a subjective emotional state combined with real isolation. Loneliness is an important factor in ICT abuse.





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Effective communication skills, including assertiveness

We can talk about effective communication when people understand what they are saying to each other. **By communication competence we understand both the ability to transmit a given message and the ability to understand the received message.** In communication, assertiveness is important, which is the ability to express one's own opinion, feelings, attitudes in an open way, within the limits that do not violate the rights of others and one's own.

Effective communication is important in preventing addiction to ICT, because it helps to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, but also affects other social competences such as cooperation and conflict resolution. A person who has the ability to communicate effectively does not avoid direct contact with people, has emotional relationships with family, friends, and is able to express his needs and take care of them, which increases the well-being of the individual.

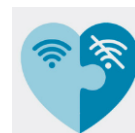


Collaboration skills

Cooperation is the ability to work in a group aimed at achieving common goals, team performance of tasks and joint problem solving. Collaboration is also the ability to create bonds among team members. Establishing relationships is possible thanks to the exchange of thoughts and experiences, sharing emotions with each other.

To develop the ability to cooperate, other psychosocial skills are necessary, such as active listening, recognizing and naming one's own and other people's emotions, communicating needs (including asking for and offering help, refusing and accepting refusal), solving problems and conflicts, sharing, dealing with unpleasant emotions and possible failures.

Collaboration is important in preventing addiction to ICT because it is related to relationships, communication, problem solving as well as seeking help and support in the environment. **The factor protecting against addiction is social awareness, realising the importance of building relationships, showing respect for other people, recognizing the impact of one's own actions on the behaviour of others, taking into account tolerance and respect for differences.**



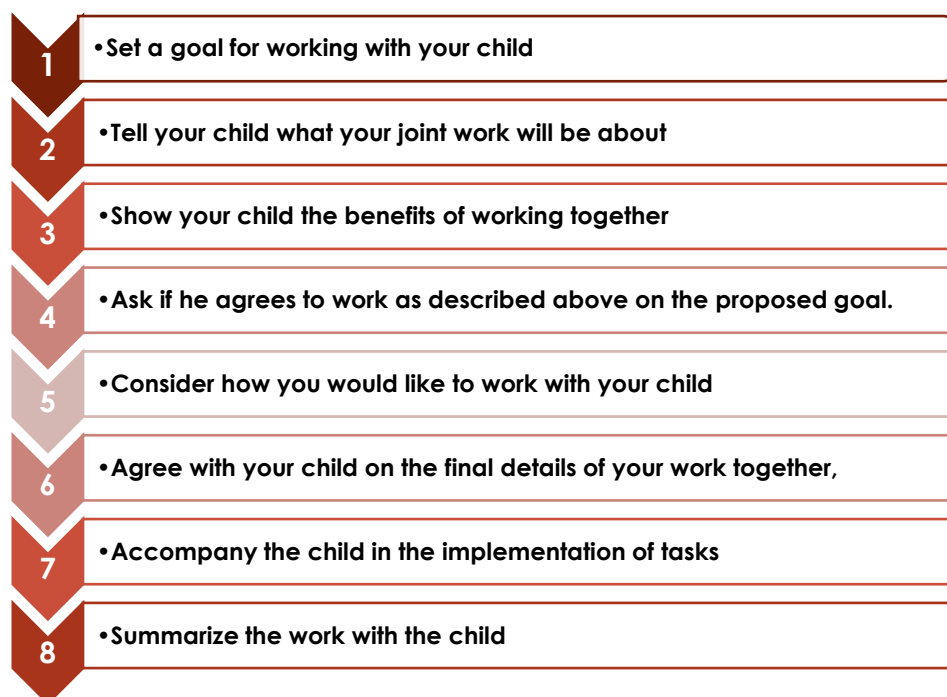


2.3. HOW TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS SOCIAL AND PERSONAL COMPETENCE

A parent who would like to become a trainer of social and personal competences for a child should know about the level of his competences. **The questionnaire attached to the tutorial will help the parent to determine the level of these competences.**

The results obtained by the child enable the parent to identify those competences whose development requires support from the parent.

2.4. HOW TO TRAIN WITH A CHILD IN A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SOCIAL AND PERSONAL COMPETENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF EXISTING TECHNOLOGY



Stages of training with a child

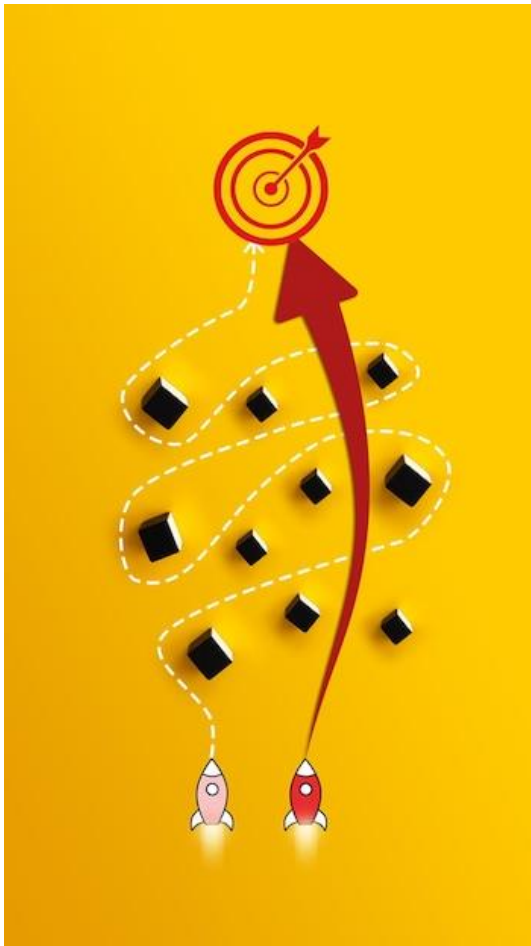




1. Set a goal for working with your child

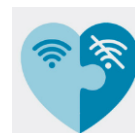
It will be helpful to read the list of competences and complete the questionnaires included in the tutorial. The questionnaires will help determine the child's needs in the area of developing competences and will also be helpful in determining whether the child's use of technology is sustainable.

Suggest a goal that is appropriate for your child.



You can say that you will work on:

- the ability to cooperate, which will allow him to find himself better in a group, carry out various tasks together with the group, e.g. play team games, do homework together, undertake and implement joint initiatives together with others
- the ability to communicate, which will allow him understand others and make others understand him better, thanks to which it will be easier for the child to talk to others
- self-confidence, which will contribute to the fact that the child will feel better about himself, understand himself better, know his strengths and weaknesses, achieve the goals he set for himself
- assertiveness that will allow him to talk about his needs and limitations in such a way as to take care of himself and at the same time not make someone else feel bad.
- the ability to spend free time in a way which develops him, allow to use technology in a healthy way during, and spend time on entertainment, hobbies and other "live" activities



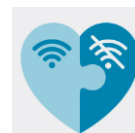


2. Tell your child what your joint work will be about



You can say that:

- you will give your child different tasks to complete.
- your child will have a certain amount of time for each task
- you will tell your child how to complete tasks if the child needs guidance.
- if the child finds the task too difficult, you can change it in a way which will allow him to complete it.
- after completing each task, child can talk with you about difficulties, feelings connected with the task (e.g. whether it was joy, anger, shame), what he learned and how he would like to use the acquired skills in the future





3. Show your child the benefits of working together

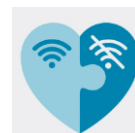


You can say that thanks to your joint work, he will achieve many benefits, e.g.:

- will get to know yourself better,
- will gain new skills and improve those he already has,
- will spend time with family and friends in a pleasant way,
- will feel better about himself and in contacts with other people,
- it will be easier for him to talk about himself and his needs, as well as about what he has difficulties with

4. Ask if he agrees to work as described above on the proposed goal

If the child has doubts, try to explain them or slightly modify the goal. **It is important that the child is willing to work towards the goal, because only then the effects of your joint work can be crucial.**





5. Consider how you would like to work with your child

If the recommendations set out below are not possible to introduce in your family, you may modify them.

- **Work on achieving the goal should last at least 3 months.** It can be extended if possible. Remember that it is better to do less than to do nothing, so if you cannot work with your child for at least 3 months, take a shorter time.
- **You can take notes when you are working together,** because it will help you evaluate the effectiveness of your cooperation. Write down the tasks that the child completes, the date when he/she started the task, when he/she is supposed to finish it, and when he/she actually finished it. After completing the implementation, rate the effect of the task on a scale of 1-5 (1-child did not make any attempts and did not complete the task, 2-child made an attempt, but failed to complete the task, 3-child made several attempts and partially succeeded in completing the task, 4-child managed to complete the task in full, but had no idea how to use the acquired skills in the future, 5-child managed to complete the task in full and had an idea/ideas how to use the acquired skills in the future)
- **It is recommended that the child has enough time to complete the tasks.** Parent asks the child if he agrees to perform the task proposed by the parent. If the child needs more time to prepare, think over the final version of the task, the parent gives him this time and does not pressure the child to complete the task according to the parent's proposal, which does not fully suit the child.

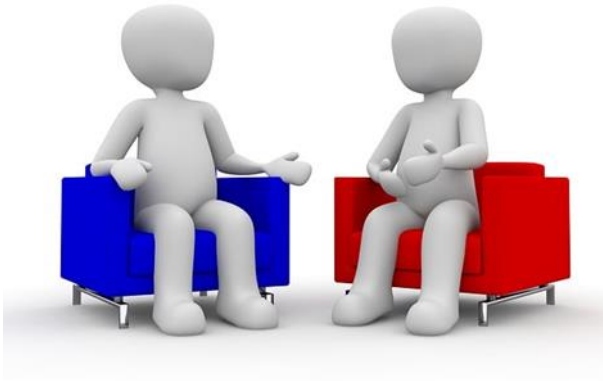


- **The child may ask the parent for guidance during the task.** If the child does not ask questions, the parent asks the child about the progress and offers his help in case of difficulties.
- After the completion of the task or the final decision that the child is unable to complete it, **the parent proposes the next task.**





6. Agree with your child on the final details of your work together, in particular:

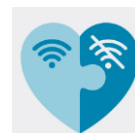


- How much time he has to achieve the goal
- What tasks will it have to perform
- How much time he has to complete individual tasks, with the information that you can extend this time in case of difficulties
- Encourage your child to talk about difficulties in completing tasks on a regular basis
- Tell your child that you will help and guide him if he has difficulty in completing the task
- Introduce the possibility of modifying the task if the child will not be able to complete the task in the assumed form

7. Accompany the child in the implementation of tasks



- If the child asks, try to answer his doubts as much as you can
- If the child does not ask questions, you ask how he is doing the task, whether he has difficulties, what gives him satisfaction, what he feels
- If you find it appropriate, give your child hints, modify the tasks





8. Summarize the work with the child



- When you finish the training, review your notes and summarize your work with your child
- Ask the child what the training has given him, what he has learned and how he will want to use these skills in the future
- Give your child feedback on the training and the effects, you think it has brought

2.5. EXAMPLES OF GOALS FOR SELECTED SKILLS AND TASKS TO BE USED DURING THE TRAINING OF COMPETENCIES

When defining specific goals for working on personal and social competences with your child, you can use the examples of goals and tasks given below. The presented examples can only inspire you to define your own, more specific goals and tasks that are tailored to your child's needs.

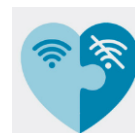


The ability to cooperate

Goal: Increasing participation in group activities

Tasks:

- a) We involve the child in joint household works, e.g.
- cleaning together, baking a cake, preparing a meal (we agree with the child and other family members who will perform specific tasks, and then we carry out the agreed tasks together),





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- b) We arrange family activities, and involve the child in co-organizing this activity, e.g.
- we propose a bicycle trip, the child is to suggest where and/or when the trip will take place, we agree on the final idea with all family members, and then we implement it
 - going bowling/cinema/restaurant, etc., the child suggests when it will take place, we agree on the final idea with all family members, and then we implement it
- c) We encourage the child to choose a sport/other activity he likes and join a group that participates in them. We ask the child to tell us what he did with others, whether he was satisfied with it, whether he encountered any difficulties in cooperating with others, what were the results, what feelings did the interaction with others arouse in him



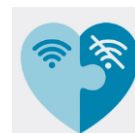
Ability to communicate

Goal: Increasing the frequency of live communication

Tasks:

- a) we encourage the child to invite a friend to the house. After the meeting, we ask the child what they did during the meeting, if he would like to talk about what they talked about, what interested him in this conversation
- b) together with the child, we organize an activity with his friends (the parent takes care of the group if the age of the children and the type of activity requires it). We ask the child to present the idea to his friends and find out which of his friends wants to take part in the meeting. We may suggest, for example,
- a bicycle trip
 - going to the Cinema
 - a visit to the bowling alley
 - roller skating
 - playing ball
 - going to a restaurant

After the meeting, we ask the child if he liked going out together. Did the child talk to friends about something that interested him (if he wants to tell us about it). We can also ask how he felt about his interactions with his colleagues.





Goal: To improve listening skills

Tasks:

- a) we tell the child a story from our own life, e.g. from childhood, or another story that may interest the child and we ask him to summarize it in a few sentences. We encourage the child to ask questions while listening if he doesn't understand something or would like to know more details.
- b) we tell the child that if he does not understand something that another person has said, he can ask that person to explain it in more detail. In a few days, we ask the child if he managed to obtain information that allowed him to understand this issue, how the child felt when he was asking the questions. Finally, we encourage the child to try to behave similarly in other similar situations.

Goal: To improve the ability to express yourself clearly

Tasks:

- a) we ask the child to tell us in detail about his day. While listening, we ask specific questions.
- b) we ask the child to tell someone the story and ask if he understood everything, and if not, to tell the child what was unclear. The child should clarify the unclear issues.

Goal: Learn to express your needs

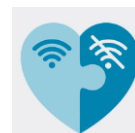
Tasks:

- a) remember or imagine that one of the family member is asking you for something that you do not want to do. Think about how you could express it so as not to hurt the person being in a similar situation, in reality, try to say that you don't want to do it in a way which does not make the person sad.
- b) imagine that you need a friend to help you with something. Think about how you can ask him to do it so he doesn't feel forced to do it. Being in a similar situation in reality, try to express your request in such a way as not to put pressure on your colleague

Goal: Learn to express your opinion

Tasks:

- a) ask your child to remember a time when he or she participated in a family conversation and had an opinion that he or she did not express. What would it say then? Would it hurt anyone to say that? If so, ask them to express their opinion in a way that shows respect to the interlocutors. Ask him to speak in such a way in similar situation which will occur in the reality that none of their interlocutors would feel offended





Adequate resource-based self-esteem

Goal: To increase awareness of possessed features and predispositions

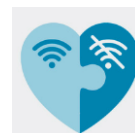
Tasks:

- a) we ask the child to write down/tell what features he considers to be his advantages (features, what he is good at) and justify why he thinks so. After the child presents them, comment on what the child wrote/said. You can say that you think so too, or you can hint to your child that you have noticed that he is good at something else as well.
- b) we ask the child to write down his faults (features, what he has difficulties with), and justify why he thinks so. After the child presents them, comment on what the child wrote/said. Tell your child that if someone is motivated, he can work to change it. He can also accept disadvantages, because everyone has them.
- c) we ask the child to ask someone what he likes about him. After the child does this, we ask what the person said, how the child react on it, and what his feelings. You can ask what else he thinks other people like about them. At the end, we can also express our own opinion, and say what we think the child can be liked for.

Goal: Raise awareness of agency

Tasks:

- a) we ask the child to remember some difficult situations that he coped with, and to tell how he coped, what he felt then. We tell the child that we are proud that he did so well.
- b) we ask the child to remind some difficult situations with which he could not cope and try to think how he could deal with them if a similar situation happened again. If the child has no idea, we support the child in finding solutions by guiding. Finally, we emphasize that the search for solutions is also of great value, even if it is not entirely possible to implement.





3. Support your child in the sustainable use of ICT through training aimed at acquiring new habits in this area

Examples of goals and tasks for training

Goal: Modification of the way technology is used

Tasks:

We agree with the child that we are implementing a new way of using devices, e.g. not using devices at meals; last use of devices at least 2 hours before bedtime; not using devices during conversations; using devices after doing homework.



Write down the established rules with the child on a piece of paper, hang it in a visible place and monitor whether the child follows them on an ongoing basis.

Goal: Reducing the time spent using technology

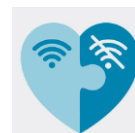
Tasks:

We agree with the child that during the week after school he spends no more than ... hours using the devices, and the weekend We determine that time-gathering apps will be enabled on devices that parents will have access to.



According to specialists, children who are 6-9 years old can use devices 1-2 hour per day, and they should have breaks. Children who are 10-14 can use devices no more than 3 hours.

Write down the established rules with the child on a piece of paper, hang it in a visible place and monitor whether the child follows them on an ongoing basis, using the applications that have been enabled.





4. Support your child in spending free time constructively through training aimed at acquiring new habits in this area

Examples of goals and tasks for training

Goal: Find ways to spend free time offline that your child is passionate about

Task:

Ask your child to list activities he did in free time that he enjoyed. Next, ask your child to write down activities that he have not done in their free time so far, but which they like and would like to do.



If you have ideas about how your child could spend their time, you can present them to your child and ask him what he thinks about them

Goal: Increase the amount of time, which child spends offline

Task:

Agree with your child that each week he will plan which activities he would like to do in the next week. Decide together with a child whether it is possible in the coming week and let the child try to pre-plan on which days it would take place.



Agree that he will modify these plans on an ongoing basis if the situation requires it. Write down all your ideas on a piece of paper and hang it in a visible place. Once a week, summarize the task with your child. Each time the child performs what he assumed, let him talk about the emotions that accompanied him. If something didn't work, talk about why.





VI. COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND PARENTS IN THE FIELD OF ICT ADDICTION PREVENTION

1. THE ROLE OF A STRONG SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN EFFECTIVE ICT ADDICTION PREVENTION

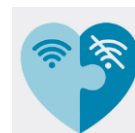
The school is a community that is co-created not only by teachers, students, but also by parents. **Functioning within the school is an important experience for students, preparing them for life in society.** In order to develop students' soft skills effectively, which will not only prepare them for life in society, but also will be an effective prevention of addictions, all members of the school community should know their role and cooperate with other members of the community with commitment.

The parents have a key influence on addiction prevention and their children's development of social and personal competences. **Certain family backgrounds are protective factors against the abuse of technology, such as maternal or paternal interest.** There are also factors related to the functioning of the family that affect the abuse of ICT, e.g. lack of support, dysfunctional behaviour of one or both parents, conflicts in the family.

As Magdalena Rowicka points out, **"in the case of behavioural addictions, research on protective and risk factors is limited, although the results of evaluations of programs using educational strategies suggest a significant impact of psychosocial deficits on engaging in problem behaviours** (including gambling, computer abuse, compulsive shopping or compulsive exercise)."

Support offered by the project "Technology is everywhere. Where is the balance?" can help parents to acquire skills useful in preventing ICT abuse. School representatives can advise them on what forms of support should be provided to the child. During regular group meetings (coaching) parents will have opportunity to exchange experiences with other parents who train with their children.

The role of school representatives is also to conduct group and individual training in the field of developing students' soft skills. As people who are prepared to work with children, observing their students at school, sometimes they can detect factors that may affect the development of ICT addiction. In particular, teachers who have the most frequent contact with students and the broadest knowledge about their functioning, can play a key role in preventing ICT addiction. An important role is also played by pedagogues and school psychologists, who, thanks to their professional preparation, can effectively support teachers in activities taking place at school.





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The school community in counteracting ICT abuse

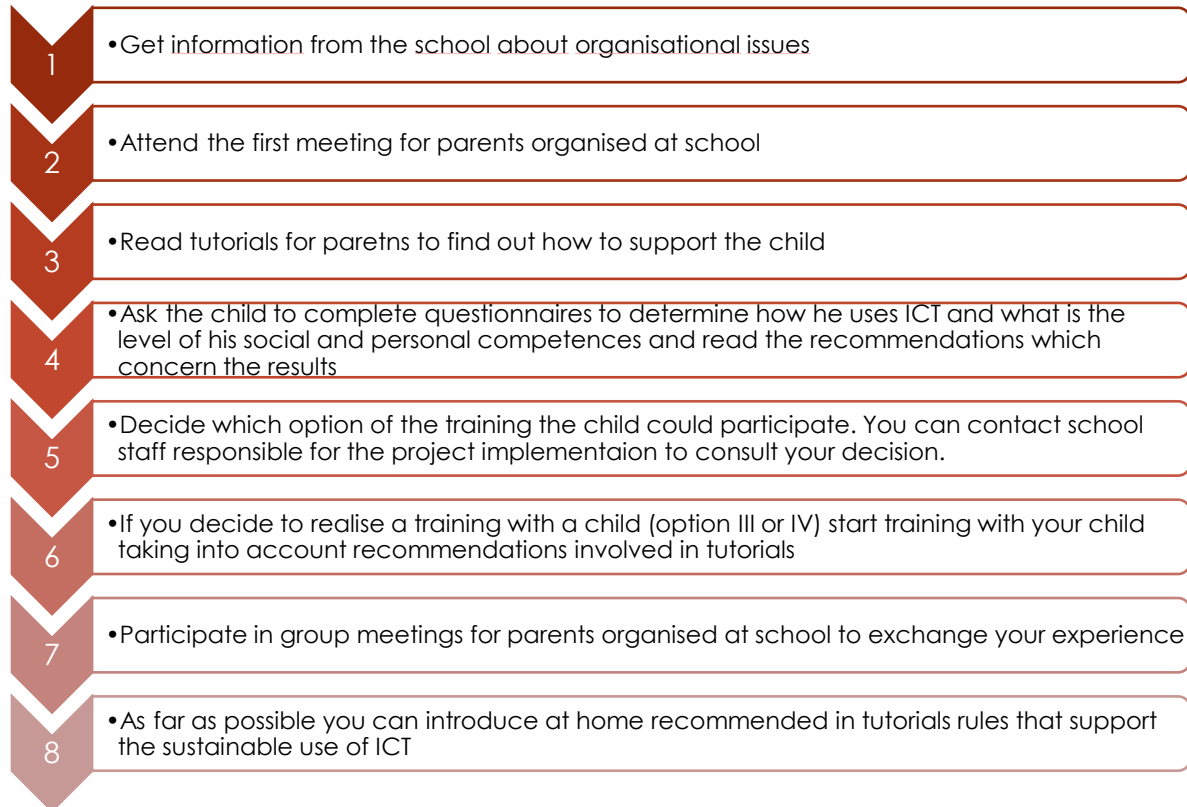
Therefore, effective implementation of ICT addiction prevention is possible only through the cooperation of all members of the school community. Every member of the community has an important role to play.

Taking into consideration that some parents may be interested in developing their own social and personal competences, some schools have established partnerships with local family support centres. Families can obtain from them information about places where adults can get support in developing their own competences. Schools can also organize meetings for parents with the support of specialists employed in these centres. Parents, who will increase the level of their social and personal competences will be able to detect irregularities in the development of their children, and support them more effectively in the development of competences.





2. SCHEME OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS



Parent's participation in the project step by step

2.1 During the first school meeting, the school representative presents to parents the assumptions of participation in the project "Technology is everywhere. Where is the balance?"



Parents, who express interest in taking part in the project, receive a tutorial that contains practical knowledge on recognizing signs of addiction to technology, addiction prevention and shaping personal and social competences of their children.

- a) Each child, whose parent agreed, takes part in group activities carried out as part of the project.



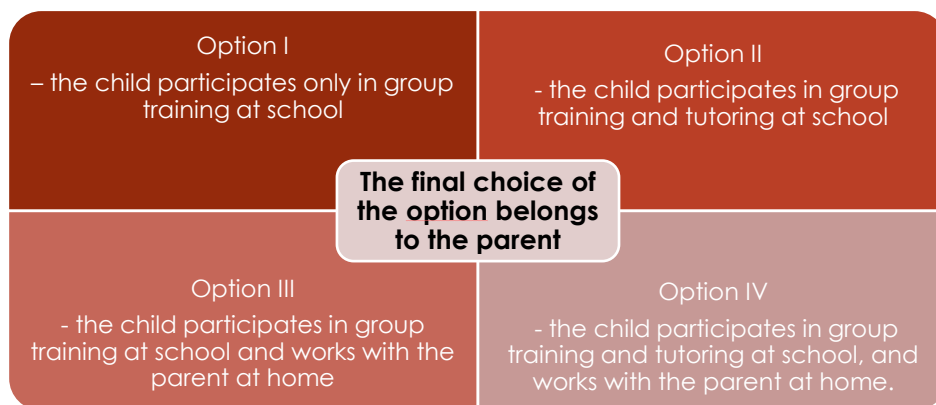
- b) In addition, the child can take part in individual activities at school (tutoring) and work with the parent at home to train personal and social competences.
- c) Independently, a parent may attend parents meetings. These meetings aim is to support parents who work with their children at home on the development of personal and social competences.

2.2. Using the parenting tutorial, a parent can identify their child's strengths and weaknesses in the area of personal and social competences, as well as the risk of technology abuse (using the list of competencies and questionnaires included in the parenting tutorial).

2.3 The parent contacts the school representative and consults the child's needs in the field of competency training, and then they determine the option of training that the child will be covered by, at the same time specifying the purpose of working with the child if the child is covered by individual work.

Options of training that can be offered to a student:

- a) Option I (minimum, recommended in exceptional situations when individual work is not possible or the child shows a very high level of competence) - the child participates only in group training at school
- b) Option II (recommended when it is not possible to work with the parent at home) - the child participates in group training and tutoring at school
- c) Option III (recommended when the school representative and the parent decide that tutoring is not necessary because the child has good conditions to work individually with the parent) - the child participates in a group training at school and works with the parent at home
- d) Option IV (maximum, recommended when the school representative and the parent decide that the child needs more individual support) - the child participates in group training and tutoring at school, and works with the parent at home.



2.4. The parent, who is working with child at home, is implementing activities aimed at achieving the assumed goal.

- a) The parent acts as a trainer of personal and social competences in the home environment and also takes care of maintaining a balance in the use of technology by the child.



- b) The role of the parent focuses on motivating the child to realise the tasks developing his personal and social competences and to maintain a balance in the use of technology in everyday life.
- c) The parent defines the purpose of working with the child, as well as the tasks that the child performs. His aim is also to monitor the implementation of the tasks and give the child tips and feedback.
- d) To make a work with child effective, the parent should introduce the recommendations aiming at sustainable use of ICT and be a positive example for the child, because the child imitates him.
- e) The parents may participate in meetings organized at schools, during which they have the opportunity to exchange experiences with other parents, as well as take advantage of the advice of the staff of the school.

2.5. At the next meetings parents have the opportunity to discuss with other parents and the school representatives the work carried out with the child at home.



The group discussion is intended to inspire and support each other. At the end of each meeting, the school representative asks each parent to indicate on a scale of 0-5 how much the child has come closer to achieving the goal (0-not at all, 5-achieved the goal) and asks parents to write down results, thanks to which the parent can observe the progress of the child in achieving the goal.

2.6. At the last meeting, the work is summarized. A representative of the school gives parents the opportunity to discuss the effects that children have achieved as a result of the training. Parents are asked to complete a short survey on the effects of working together with the child, which is an opportunity for the parent to reflect on the process of working with the child.

2.7. If the child is covered by individual work with the teacher, the child works with the tutor at school, implementing activities aimed at achieving the assumed goal.

2.8. The parent can use the contacts provided by the school to local centers where parents can get support in developing their own competences.

2.9. If the school decides to organize meetings with specialists in the development of social and personal competences aimed at parents, they can participate in such meetings at the school



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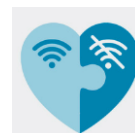
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