

✓ **Recommendations (e.g. DGKJ)**

- Age 16+: more freedom but still clear rules
- Screen-free times: during meals, before sleeping, during homework time
- Important: Do not charge the phone in the bedroom
- Start with a basic mobile phone if possible experts increasingly recommend smartphones from age 13 at the earliest

Further information

Federal Agency for Child and Youth Protection in the Media (Bundeszentrale für Kinder- und Jugendmedienschutz, BzKJ)



JIM study (Youth, Information, Media)



German Society of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendmedizin - DGKJ) Screen time recommendations



Klicksafe.de - Media education & Youth media protection



For further questions and material requirements, please feel free to contact us

Viola Aurich and Nicole Wellhöfer

Consulting Team:

Language Education in Secondary Schools

aurich@sprachfoerderzentrum.de / wellhoefer@sprachfoerderzentrum.de

Tel: (030) 403 9492 235

SprachFörderZentrum Berlin-Mitte

Badstraße 10

13357 Berlin - Gesundbrunnen

www.sprachfoerderzentrum.de



What Does the Smartphone Do to My Teenager?

Information & Recommendations for Parents



Why Language Development in Adolescence Is Important

Adolescence is a crucial phase for developing vocabulary, grammar, expression and reading skills. Digital media can support this development – but also slow it down. It depends on how and how much teenagers use their phones.

Today, young people mainly write short messages. Capitalization and punctuation are often omitted. Words can quickly be looked up online, and AI may help with homework.

This becomes problematic if this unfinished style of writing later appears in job applications or university papers.

This short guide shows possible risks and how parents can support their children.

⚠️ Language Risks of Excessive Smartphone Use

1. Less complex language production

Due to simplified text messages

2. Reduced attention and reading skills

Shorter attention spans caused by multitasking

3. Limited vocabulary development

Emojis, memes, and abbreviations replace real language

4. Sleep and concentration

Late smartphone use causes sleep deprivation and less energy for learning

👨👩 Recommendations for Parents

1. Agree on clear rules

- Set media-free and phone-free times

➡ *This creates structure and avoids constant conflict.*

2. Talk instead of controlling

- Show interest:
"What are you watching right now? What do you like about it?"

- Show interest in TikTok, YouTube and games

➡ *Teenagers open up more when they feel taken seriously.*

3. Be a role model

- Put your phone away during meals
- Answer messages later
- Keep visible offline times

➡ *Rules only work if adults follow them too.*

4. Actively support language development

- Let teenagers tell stories
- Read together
- Ask open questions ("What do you think about this?")

➡ *This strengthens vocabulary and argumentation skills.*

5. Develop media literacy together

- Talk about fake news, algorithms and data protection
- Question content ("Who posted this and why?")
- Show positive digital resources (dictionary apps, learning videos)

6. Quality instead of quantity

- Encourage creative and informative content
- Avoid endless scrolling

➡ *Parents can help develop healthy digital habits.*

7. Solve conflicts constructively

- Stay calm
- Clearly explain your concerns
- Offer alternatives (walking, cooking, etc.)