

PRESS NOTE

SMARTPHONES AND PCS: THE DECALOGUE FOR THE “DIGITAL HEALTH” OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

The Bambino Gesù Pediatric Hospital and Almaviva Initiative: A Course for Families on the Use of Devices

Rome, July 20, 2023 - One hour per day before the age of 6 and a maximum of two for school-age children. No smartphones or tablets at all before 18 months. Never at the table, during meals, or before bedtime. The use of digital devices should be managed by teaching people about “critical and responsible” use. This is just some of the advice contained in the “**decalogue for digital health**” of children and teens, drawn up by specialists at the Bambino Gesù Children’s Hospital as part of the “**A scuola di... digitale**” project, carried out in collaboration with professionals from **Almaviva**, a leading Italian group in the field of digital innovation. The objective is to promote greater awareness and a better understanding of the possibilities that digital tools offer and to minimize the potential risks of excessive and unfiltered use.

The project, sponsored by the **Institute for Child and Adolescent Health** in collaboration with Almaviva, offers a series of [online educational videos](#) that explain how to balance the use of tablets and smartphones during the various stages of a minor’s life, how these devices can provide support to children and teens with learning disabilities, and the potential consequences for eyesight as a result of prolonged exposure to screens, as well as how social media channels followed by children work and what the metaverse and artificial intelligence are. The “Decalogue for the Digital Health of Children and Teens” concisely answers many of the most common questions that parents have, suggesting a conscientious and constructive approach.

*“Children’s health and well-being,” says **Alberto Villani**, Head of General Pediatrics and Director of the Bambino Gesù Children’s Health Institute, “are multidimensional concepts that include physical, psychological, and social aspects. With smartphones and tablets acquiring an increasingly central role in the lives of parents and children, it has become crucial to promote conscientious and responsible digital consumption in order to preserve the health and well-being of children and teens. It’s very important to talk about these issues, all the more so in the summer, a time when the young and very young have a great deal of free time on their hands, so as to provide parents with the tools they need to develop awareness and manage their children’s relationship with digital devices as effectively as possible.”*

*“Digital technology,” says **Michele Svidercoschi**, Chief Communications and Institutional Relations Officer for Almaviva, “is a valuable tool for inclusion and teaching, simplifies people’s lives, and opens up important opportunities, from the field of education to that of telemedicine and healthcare. The collaboration with Bambino Gesù aims to provide children and their families with more tools that promote knowledge, so as to contribute to the growth of a culture that’s digitally aware”.*

THE DECALOGUE FOR THE "DIGITAL HEALTH" OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

- 1. No screens before 18 months:** For children under eighteen months of age, it is important to avoid screens entirely and to encourage learning experiences that engage the senses, such as physical play and real-world exploration.
- 2. One hour a day of digital exploration:** Between the ages of two and six, children can be allowed one hour a day (preferably split into 2 or more periods of 20-30 minutes each) to explore digital resources, such as age-appropriate apps and content, in a creative and educational manner.
- 3. Restrict, but not prohibit:** For school-age children and teens, we must set a maximum limit of two hours per day for the use of digital devices in order to balance time spent online with other activities, such as sports, reading, and studying.
- 4. A good night's sleep:** We must discourage the use of digital devices within an hour before bedtime in order to ensure peaceful and quality sleep for children.
- 5. The smartphone is not a sedative:** We must teach children alternative strategies for dealing with emotions, such as outdoor play, reading, or drawing, instead of always resorting to digital devices.
- 6. Quality time with family:** We must devote meals and time with the family to conversation and shared activities, avoiding the use of smartphones and tablets.
- 7. Digital time management:** We must use time management features provided by smartphone manufacturers to help children understand and regulate the time they spend on devices, promoting conscientious use.
- 8. Teaching about online safety:** Parents are the primary role models for their children and therefore must be careful about the data and content that they share online, demonstrating responsibility and a respect for privacy.
- 9. Protected online:** We must teach the importance of using secure passwords and protecting their privacy, such as setting social media profiles to private mode and being careful about who follows them online.
- 10. Open and informed communication:** We must maintain a constructive dialogue with our children, starting with an effort to learn about the digital world and must teach them critical and responsible use of devices.

All of the "A Scuola di...digitale" videos are available here:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfz2d0YQO1iIfVjvre6NDDhQWMO5DJpEZ>

The Institute for Child and Adolescent Health

The Institute for Child and Adolescent Health is a multidisciplinary socio-healthcare institute established with the mission of promoting health and prevention through the expertise, professionalism, and healthcare experience of the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital. The Institute's main objective is to promote "health literacy" with a particular focus on: diet and nutrition during childhood, sports, proper use of pharmaceuticals, safety, promotion of proper neuro-cognitive development, and advanced professional training for all healthcare professionals (pediatricians, general practitioners, nurses) involved in promoting and safeguarding health. The institute oversees the content of the "["Il Bambino"](#)" section of the website and publishes the monthly multimedia magazine "["A scuola di salute"](#)" (Learning About Health) for teachers and families. The format of the magazine is predominantly monographic, with contributions from all of the hospital's specialists.

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Almaviva Group

Almaviva Group, a leader in Information & Communications Technology in Italy, synonymous with digital innovation, guides the country's growth processes by meeting the challenge that company's must face in order to remain competitive in the digital age, innovating its own business model, organization, corporate culture, and ICT. With a foundation of strong "Made in Italy" skills, Almaviva has created a global network of 46,000 people (7,000 in Italy and 39,000 abroad) and generated a turnover of €1.096 million in 2022. It operates through 44 offices in Italy and 31 abroad, with a major presence in Brazil as well as in the United States, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Egypt, Finland, the Dominican Republic, Tunisia, and Brussels, the nerve center of the EU.

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