Online world in children's homes (residental child care communities)

The research

Safer Internet Centrum | Česká republika

bezpečí

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Online World in Children´s Homes

Content

1. Introduction

The research **Online World in Children´s Homes** aims to map the environment of children´s homes with regard to the risky forms of communication experienced by their child clients in the online environment. In our research, we are therefore mapping the risk situations children from children´s homes face, what preventive measure the children´s homes implement, what topics they address, how they regulate children´s work on the internet (with regard to time limits, content restrictions etc.), and how children actually access the internet from children´s homes.

Our research offers two perspectives – the perspective of the staff in children´s homes and that of the children living there.

Authors

2. Identification of the research

The research **Online World in Children´s Homes** was carried out in cooperation with the Centre for Prevention of Risky Virtual Communication of the Faculty of Education of Palacky University in Olomouc, and the Safer Internet Centre of the Czech Republic.

3. Methodology

The research **Online World in Children´s Homes** focused on two target groups – workers of children´s homes (mainly educators) and underage clients of children´s homes. For the purposes of the research, two unique research tools were developed – questionnaires that were distributed in electronic form (Google Forms system). Children´s homes were also notified by phone that this research was being conducted and that they had the opportunity to participate in it. The staff of the children´s homes then involved their underage clients in the research.

The collection of the data took place from May to October 2021.

3.1 Characteristics of the research population

Population 1 – Workers in children´s homes

A total of 166 workers in children´s homes from all regions of the Czech Republic participated in the research. The average age of the respondents was 45.66 years (minimum age 22, maximum age 70). 74.7% of the sample was male, 25.3% female. 70.48% of the workers had completed university education, 25.51% had completed secondary education with a high school diploma.

Population 2 – Clients of children´s homes (children)

The second research group consisted of clients of children´s homes, 197 children in total. The average age of the respondents was 14.65 years (minimum age 9 years, maximum age 25 years). 54.31% of the sample were girls, 45.69% boys. 79.69% of the sample were under 18 years of age.

4. Results A – Online world in children´s homes

4.1 Internet connection in children´s homes

Our research focused on whether children´s homes are connected to the internet and whether the children clients also have access to the internet. **99.39% of the workers of children´s homes stated** that **they have internet access in the children´s home. 94.58% of the caregivers also said that the children have access to the internet, via WiFi**.

This is confirmed by the clients of the children´s homes—48.73% access the internet only via WiFi, 47.72% through WiFi or cable, 3.55% via cable only.

4.2 Restrictions related to internet use

An important part of the research focused on whether and how children´s access to the internet is limited in children´s homes. **83.13% of the staff of children´s homes stated that they restrict the access of children to the internet**.

A. Limiting the time spent on the internet

78.92% of the workers said that the children have limited access to the internet during pre-determined hours, while 7.23% of children have access to the internet as a reward—e.g. if they fulfil their obligations. Only 13.25% of the staff reported that children have unlimited access to the internet (24 hours a day).

63.86% of the staff said that they regulate the time spent on the internet for all children (regardless the age and gender of the child). Other respondents regulate the time depending on the age of the child:

17.47% regulate the time to children under 15 years of age,
1.20% regulate the time to children under 14 years of age,
3.01% regulate the time to children under 13 years of age,
3.61% regulate the time to children under 12 years of age,
2.41% regulate the time to children under 11 years of age.

We were also interested to know how many hours per day children are allowed to spend on the internet during a normal working day and at the weekend. On a normal working day (Monday-Thursday), children are mostly allowed between 1-3 hours, but this increases to 4 hours when the weekend arrives. The following charts show the detailed distribution of the time children spend on the internet:

Chart: How many hours a day children may spend on the internet (Monday-Thursday)

16%
34%
14%
7%
8%
4%
0%
0%
4%
11%

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 ■ 8 ■ 9 ■ 10 ■ No answer
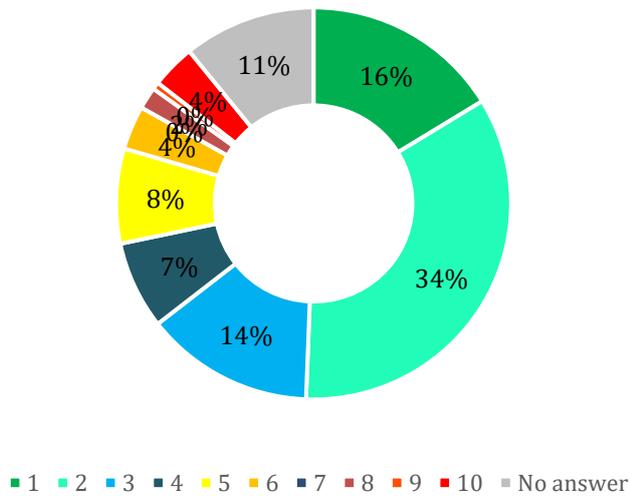
Chart: How many hours a day children may spend on the internet (Friday)

13%
24%
19%
11%
8%
4%
1%
0%
0%
5%
13%

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 ■ 8 ■ 9 ■ 10 ■ No answer

6
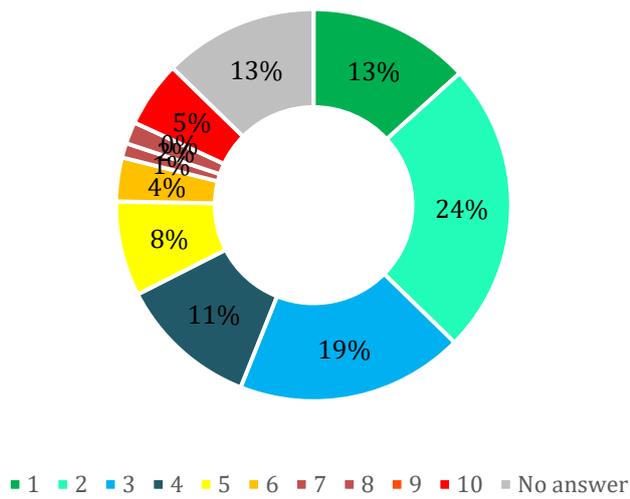
**Chart: How many hours a day children may spend on the internet (Saturday)**
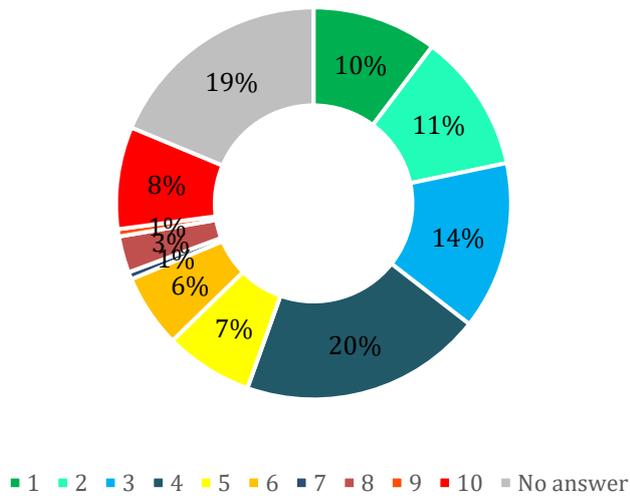
Legend: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 ■ 8 ■ 9 ■ 10 ■ No answer

Chart: How many hours a day children may spend on the internet (Sunday)

Legend: ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 ■ 8 ■ 9 ■ 10 ■ No answer
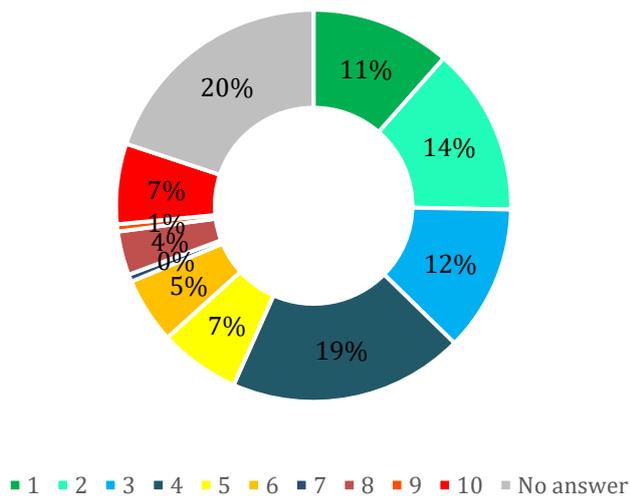
Similarly, we were interested in knowing what time the children have to stop using the internet.

Chart: At what time the children in children´s homes have to stop using the internet
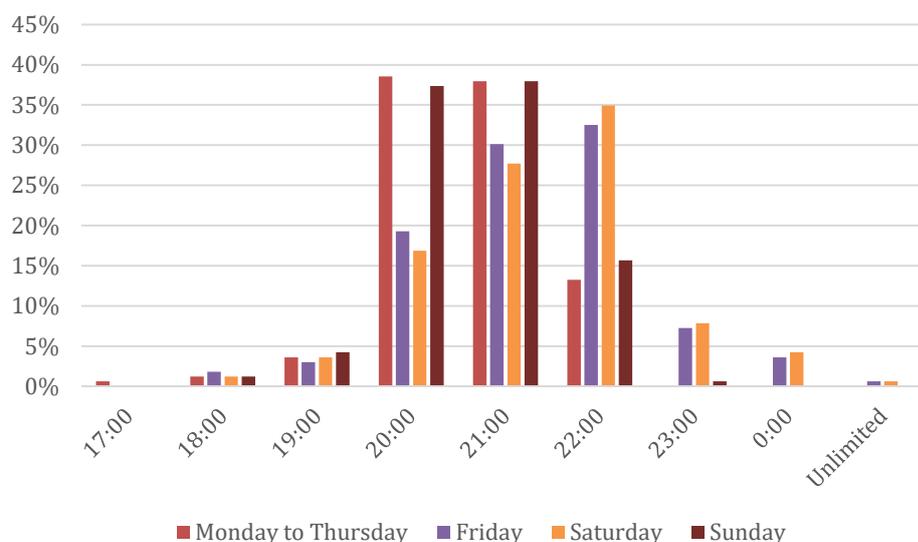
The staff limit the time that the children spend online similarly to content regulation—the predominant method is a verbal agreement (with thorough monitoring), implemented by 51.81% of the carers. This is followed by switching off the technology by the child (the child turns off the technology and respects the agreement), which was confirmed by 36.75% of the educators interviewed. Newt in order of frequency is the removal of the technology from the child (26.51%), verbal agreement without a follow-up control (16.27%), switching off the technology by the caregiver (the technology is turned off by the educator as part of the agreement), or a hardware or software solution.

The clients of children´s homes further completed the information from their educators – **56.35% confirmed that they may spend limited time online and that their educators strictly control this. 19.8% stated that their time online is limited but nobody controls this. 23.86% of the clients may spend unlimited time on the internet**. The most common way of limiting the time spent on the internet, as seen by the child clients, is turning off the internet (36.55%), verbal agreement (31.47%), confiscating the mobile phone (27.41%) etc.

B. Restricting online content

Other ways to ensure the safety of the children in the online environment include restricting the content that reaches the children through the Internet. **22.29% of the educators stated that they do not limit the internet content to their child clients**. On the other hand 46.99% said that they restrict the content to all the children in the children´s home.

The other educators use a variety of age limits when restricting the content:
11.45% restricts content to children under 15 years of age,
3.01% restricts content to children under 14 years of age,
6.63% restricts content to children under 13 years of age,
4.82% restricts content to children under 12 years of age,
3.01% restricts content to children under 11 years of age.

In most cases the content restriction itself is carried out by verbal agreement with the child, during which the educator exercises strict control. This method of content restriction is confirmed by 36.75% of the staff in the children´s homes. This is followed by a verbal agreement with no control, technical solutions (setting a specific service to a child specific mode, securing with antivirus, router setting etc.). 4.22% of the workers stated that they use a written agreement with the child. **8.43% of respondents stated that they do not restrict the content to the children in any way**.

Table: Methods of restricting content in children´s homes
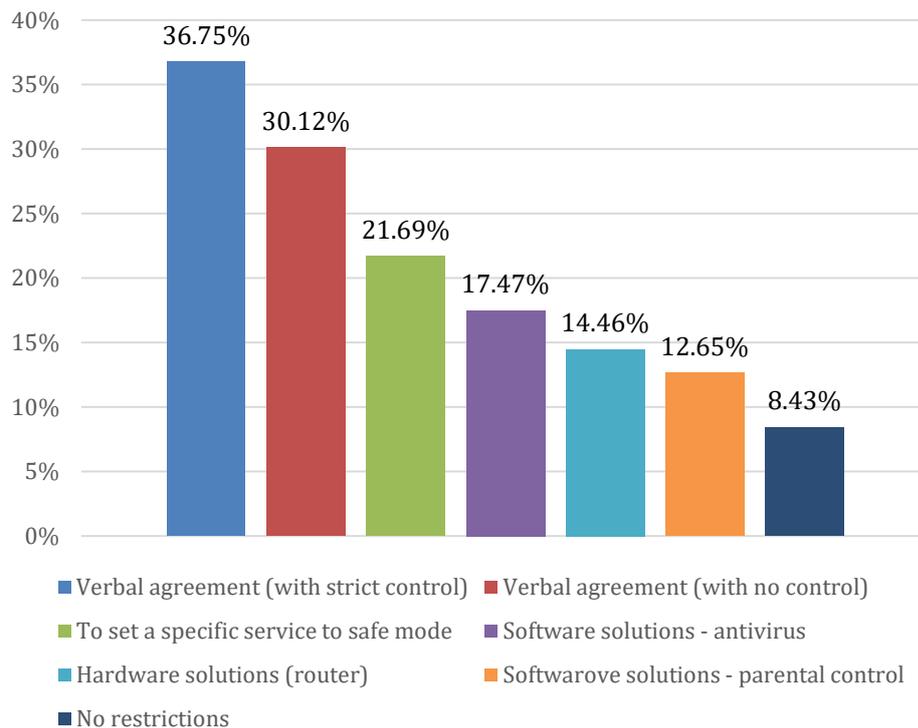
The children´s homes staff were also asked if they were aware of the websites that the children visit online. 74.70% responded that they have partial awareness about the websites their child clients visit online.

We were also interested in knowing which type of websites the children´s homes restrict to their children. First of all, it should be noted that **51.81% of educators said that they restrict children´s access to websites in children´s homes–mostly erotic and pornographic content, violent content and some games**. 46.39% then stated that they do not regulate the children´s access to specific websites.

The clients of children´s homes further supplemented the information from the educators – **56.85% have restricted access to some websites on the internet in their children´s home, 38.58% do not have any restrictions to online content**. The most common way of restricting the content is a verbal agreement (26.9%) and setting up safe searches (24.87%), or verbal agreement with strict controls (18.78%), turning off the technology (10.66%) etc.

29.95% of clients have access to "adult sites" (containing sexual content). 66.50% do not have this possibility.

C. <u>Restricting searches</u>

We were also interested in knowing whether the workers in children´s homes restrict searches in any way, e.g. by switching the search engine to a safer "child" mode that filters out content that is not intended for children. **63.86% of the staff surveyed responded that they do not filter content for child contents and do not use similar types of restrictions**. Conversely, 35.54% stated that they actively use this type of content restriction.

4.3 Children and mobile phones in children´s homes

In our research we focused on whether the clients of children´s homes have their own mobile phone. **80.71% of clients confirmed that they have their own mobile phone**. The remaining part does not own a mobile phone (they borrow it from other clients or their caregivers). 78.68% of clients own a mobile phone with the Android operating system, 8.63% with the iOS system, 1.52% with the Windows system. 5% has a phone without operating system – they can only make calls and send text messages with the phone.

50.25% of clients stated that they have active internet access on their phone (data) without having to be connected to WiFi, 43.65% of clients do not have this option. 76.65% of clients also responded that their carers do not know their password to access their mobile phone.

Our research also focused on whether the child clients were given credit or data for their mobile phone from someone they knew only from the internet. 78.68% responded NO. **17.26% of clients said that someone on the internet had actually purchased data/credit for their mobile phone.** Most often, the clients said that a friend from the internet had bought them the credit/data for no reason, or in exchange for a service. **2% of the clients responded that they had received the credit in exchange for photos or videos of them – including photos or videos of them naked**.

<u>What activities do the children use their mobile phone for?</u>

A separate section of our research was devoted to the activities that the clients undertake using their mobile phone. Most often they use the mobile phone to **write and send message via various online messengers** (FB Messenger, WhatsApp etc.) (55.84%), **watching videos on YouTube** (52.28%), **making calls** (48.73%), **taking photos** (42.13%), **rating content on social networks** (liking etc.) (41.12%) or **playing games** (41.12%). Detailed information is provided by the following table.

Table: What the clients of children´s homes use their mobile phones for?

Activity	Relative frequency (%)
Writing and sending messages via online services (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp etc.).	55.84
Watching videos on YouTube.	52.28
Making phone calls.	48.73
Taking photos.	42.13
Rating content on social networks (liking, rating with emoticons—e.g. hearts on TikTok or Instagram).	41.12
Playing games.	41.12
Communication on social networks (Writing and sending messages to others (on a wall etc.), private chat).	40.61
Writing and sending SMS/MMS messages.	36.55
Listening to music or spoken word (e.g. on Spotify, Apple Music etc.).	36.04
Watching videos on TikTok.	34.52
Watching favourite youtubers, tiktokers, influencers.	26.4
Sharing photos and videos on social networks.	25.89
Browsing social networks (passive, reading posts).	24.37
Searching for information (e.g. on Google).	22.34
Making videos.	19.29
I use my mobile for education purposes (educational apps, educational videos, educational content).	18.78
Managing my social media account (managing my own wall, managing photo and video albums, creating campaigns).	17.77
Reading texts on a mobile (e.g. text documents, books, various PDF etc.).	13.2
I don´t have a mobile phone.	12.18
Watching videos on Twitch.	9.64
Streaming videos (e.g. on Twitch or Facebook).	7.11

(n=197)

4.4 Location from where the children most often use the internet

In our research, we also focused on the room from which the children most often use the internet from. According to the children´s homes staff, **40.36% of children use the internet from their own ("children´s") room**, 31.33% from a room they share with other children in the children´s home, 17.47% from the common room, and 7.83% from a club room.

Similar data was provided also by the clients of children´s homes—**35.03% spend time online mostly in their own ("children´s") room**, in which they are alone, 35.03% in a room, which they share with other children, 11.68% in a common room, 11.17% in a club room.

1.1 Most frequently visited online content

Clients of children´s homes most frequently visit social networks (73.10%), video sharing sites (YouTube, Vimeo) (52.28%), gaming sites (26.90%), online encyclopaedia (23.35%), or news portals (13.71%).

4.5 Most used social media and communication tools

This section is focused on the results of the second part of the research, in which the clients of children´s homes were contacted. The results were obtained from 197 of clients (80% were under 18 years of age).

88.83% of clients of children´s homes confirmed that they have access to social sites/media via the internet at their children´s home. 6.09% of the clients do not have this possibility.

The clients most frequently use the YouTube social platform (86.29%), followed up by the Facebook social network (77%) and the Facebook Messenger communication tool (64.47%). The specifics of Facebook are described in more detail below. The next most popular is Instagram which is used by 60.91% of children in children´s homes, followed by email (60.41%) and also the TikTok social network/media (57.87%). The other tools used included SMS, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Skype etc. 8.12% of the children also knows and uses the public video chatting portal Omegle.

Table – Most used social media (overall results)
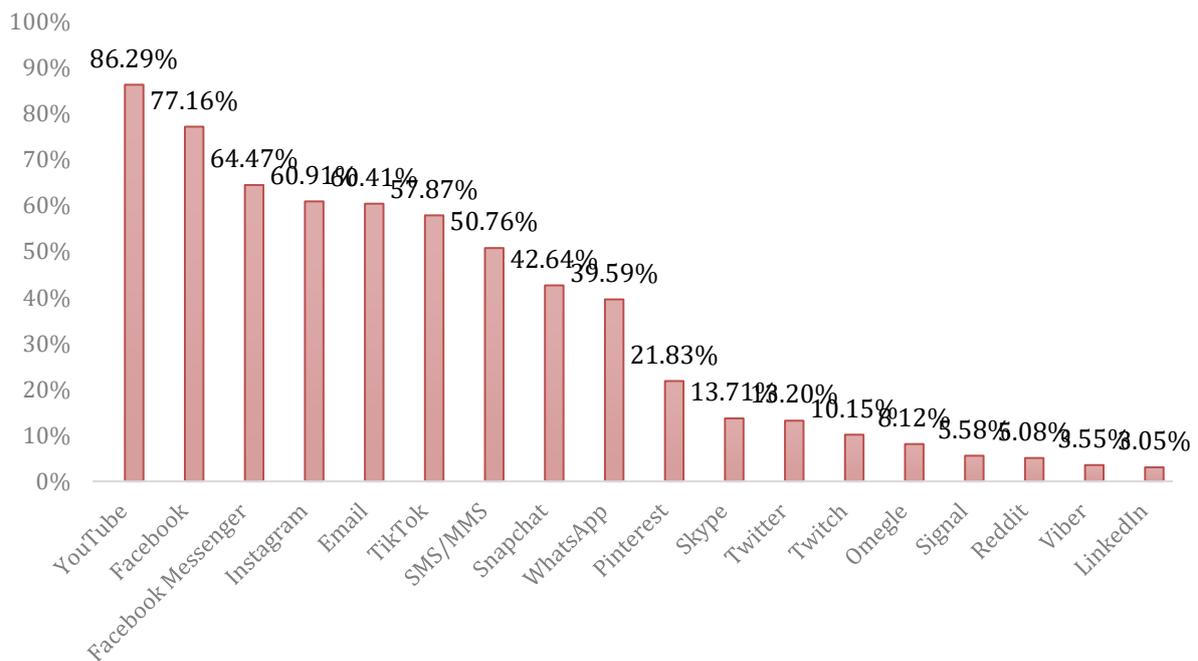
(n=197, age 9-25)

Table – Most used social media (according to age)

Legend: ■ up to 14 years of age ■ 15+
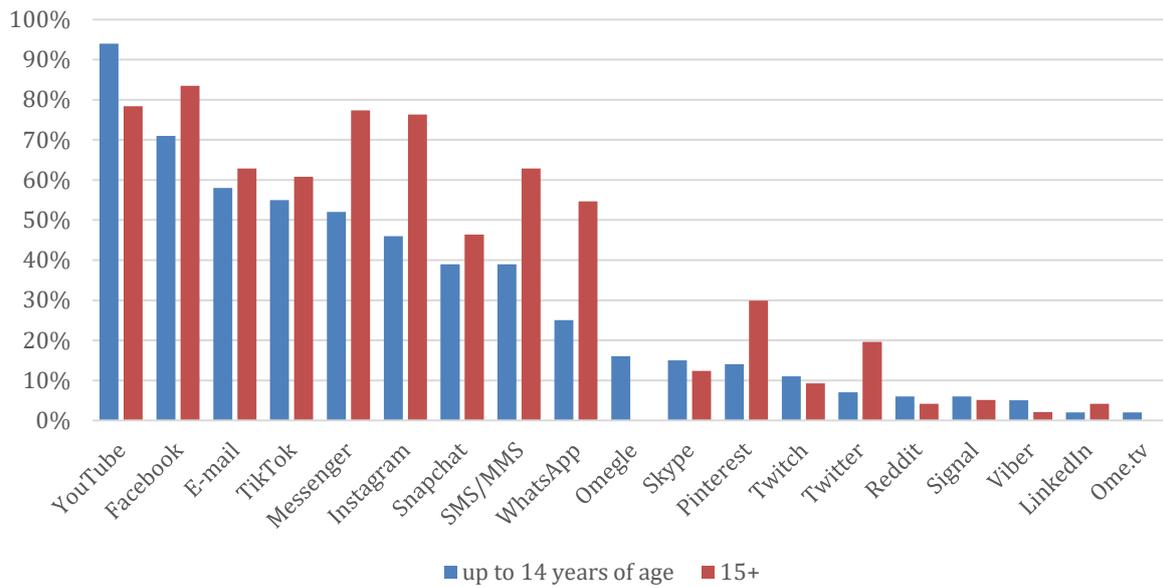
(n=197)

1.1 Security settings on social networks and social media (password, privacy etc.)

This part of our research is focused on whether the clients of children´s homes use universal passwords on social networks, and whether and how they set up a "privacy" setting. **32.49% of the clients said that they use the same password to access different services** (social sites, media etc.), **60.91% then use different passwords**.

As for the privacy setting on social networks—**64.47% of clients responded that they use private setting and only their online "friends" can see their shared content.** 27.41% said that they do not use private setting and that everyone can see their content—even users outside their circle of friends.

4.6 Games played by clients of children´s homes

Clients of children´s homes also play various games. We were interested in which computer games were most popular with them. **19.11% of child clients stated that they do not play computer games at all. The most common game in children´s homes is Minecraft**, which is played by 45.22% of respondents. The **Roblox** platform came second (39.49%), followed by **GTA** (26.11%), **World of Tanks** (24.84%), **Fortnite** (19.75%), or **AmongUs** (17.83%). A detailed overview is summarized in the table below.

Table: Games played by child clients (up to 18 years of age)

Ranking	Game	Relative frequency (%)
1.	**Minecraft**	45.22
2.	**Roblox**	39.49
3.	**GTA**	26.11
4.	**World of Tanks**	24.84
5.	**Fortnite**	19.75
6.	**I DO NOT PLAY GAMES**	19.11
7.	**Among US**	17.83
8.	**Counter-Strike**	16.56
9.	**PUBG**	15.92
10.	**Call of Duty**	9.55
11.	**Zoo 2: Animal Park**	8.28
12.	**League of Legends**	7.64
13.	**War Thunder**	6.37
14.	**World of Warships**	5.1
15.	**Forge of Empires**	4.46
16.	**Game of Thrones**	3.82
17.	**Star Stable**	3.55
18.	**Travian**	3.55
19.	**Rail Nation**	3.18
20.	**DOTA2**	3.18
21.	**Grepolis**	2.54
22.	**Crossout**	2.54
23.	**Vikings: War of Clans**	1.91
24.	**League of Angels**	1.52
25.	**World of Warcraft**	1.52
26.	**Elvenar**	1.52
27.	**Raid: Shadow Legends**	1.52

(n=157, children only)

4.7 Do educators know the passwords used by their clients? (educator´s perspective)

Our research Online world in children´s homes looked into whether childminders know the passwords used by their child clients.

A. Knowledge of passwords to online accounts on social networks

76.51% of educators do not know the passwords of their child clients to access their accounts on social networks and on social media. Only 9.04% of caregivers responded that they know the passwords to access these accounts of all the children in their children´s home. 4.82% of

educators 13, 4.22% know the passwords of children under the age of 15, 3.61% of educators know the passwords of children under the age of 12.

B. Knowledge of password/PIN to access the children´s mobile phones

80.72% of caregivers do not know the passwords of their child clients to access (unlock) the children´s mobile phones. Only 5.42% know this for all the children in their children´s home. 7.83% also stated that they do not have passwords on their mobile phones in their children´s home. Less than 2 percent of the caregivers said that they know the passwords/PINs to unlock the mobile phones of their clients aged up to 12, 13 or 15 years of age.

1.1 Do educators know the passwords used by their clients? (clients´ perspective)

Same questions were given to the clients of the children´s homes to compare them with the caregivers´ statements.

A. Knowledge of passwords to online accounts on social networks

80.20% of clients confirmed, that their educators do not know their passwords to access their social media accounts. Only 9% of clients responded that their educators know their passwords—for some or for all of the social media that the clients use.

5. Results B – Children from children´s homes and risky forms of communication

5.1 Risky situations experienced by children from children´s homes (educator´s perspective)

In this chapter we will focus on risky situations related to the misuse of information and communication technology experienced by children from children´s homes. The data presented in this chapter were collected from the educators who have learnt about or directly dealt with the incidents. However, many incidents are not reported to the caregivers and are not communicated by the children, so there is a possibility that the prevalence of these risk situations may be higher.

The children from children´s homes actively use the internet where they naturally experience a range of risky incidents. Almost half of the children (48.19%) from children´s homes have experienced a situation where someone verbally harmed them and used the internet or a mobile phone to do so. Similarly almost a third of the children confirmed that somebody had used IT tools to distribute humiliating or mocking photographs of them. 22% of the children had experienced threats or intimidation in online environment, 21.69% had experienced a situation where someone had accessed their online account without their permission. 7.83% of children have experienced blackmail.

Table: Overview of risky situations experienced by children from children´s homes in the online world

Risky situation	Frequency	Relative frequency
Someone **verbally harmed** the child via internet or mobile phone (humiliated, insulted, ridiculed or otherwise verbally embarrassed).	80	48.19
Someone **circulated a photograph of the child** via the internet or mobile phone to humiliate, ridicule or otherwise embarrass the child.	49	29.52
Someone used the internet or mobile phone to **circulate an intimate photograph of the child**.	29	17.47
Someone used the internet or mobile phone to **distribute a video** intended to humiliate, ridicule or otherwise embarrass the child.	21	12.65
Someone **cheated** the child in an online environment (shopping, auction, advertisement etc.).	14	8.43
Someone **spread an audio recording** via the internet or mobile phone to humiliate, ridicule or otherwise embarrass the child.	5	3.01
Someone **threatened or intimidated** the child using internet or mobile phone services.	37	22.29
Someone used the internet or mobile phone services to **blackmail** the child.	12	7.23
Someone **accessed the child´s online account** (e.g. email, social network account etc.) without the child´s permission.	36	21.69
Someone **misused the child´s online account to get him/her into trouble** (e.g. harassing his/her friends on his/her behalf).	24	14.46
Someone **has harassed a child by calling** (e.g. repeatedly, in the evening, over a long period of time).	13	7.83
Someone set up a **false profile on social network** for the child.	28	16.87
We did not address any of the above situations in the children´s home.	45	27.11

(n=166)

Methodological note: The attacks cannot be automatically identified as cyberbullying—to meet this criterion they must be intense, repeated and impact the victim physically, psychologically or behaviourally.

A similar pattern of attacks was reported also by the clients of the children´s homes—most often they experienced verbal assaults, threats or intimidation, attacks on online accounts, dissemination of humiliating photos or videos, etc.

How long did the attacks last?

In our research we also tracked how long the incidents went on until they were resolved in some way. **Most of the attacks lasted less than a week (36.75%)**, a fifth of the incidents (22.29%) 1-2 weeks, one tenth of the incidents (9.64%) 3-5 weeks. Very few longer incidents were reported (up to 3% of risk situations).

The clients of children´s homes confirmed these data, with only a significant difference in the length of the attacks—14.6% of child clients confirmed that they had experienced an attack in the online environment for more than 1 year.

Table: Length of online attacks experienced by children from children´s homes

less than one week ■ 1-2 weeks ■ 3-5 weeks ■ 1-3 months ■ 4-6 months ■ did not say
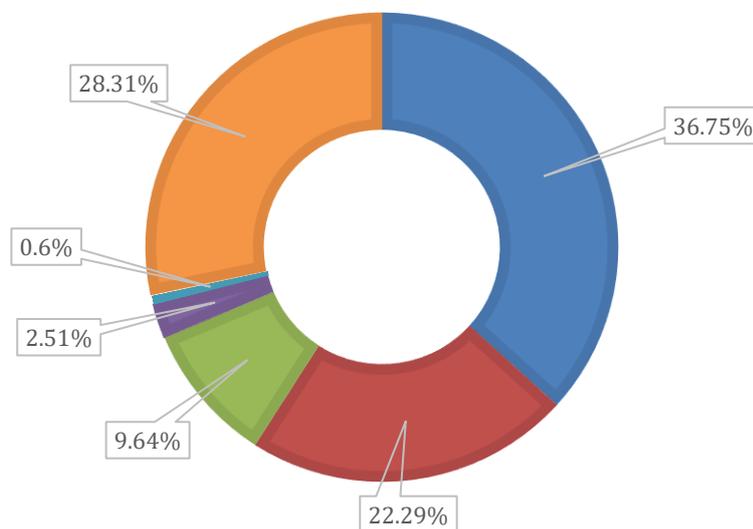
Comparison with the results from the Czech children in the cyber world research

The results of the Online World in Children´s Homes research were compared with the Czech Children in the Cyber World research (2019), which mapped risk behaviour in children across the population—regardless of the child´s background. Although the results are not fully compatible (interviewing children vs. adults), we can still observe that the children in children´s homes experience significantly more risky situations than the average child population. The differences are shown in the following chart.

Chart: Comparing the results of the Online World in Children´s Homes vs. the Czech Children in the Cyber World

Chart bars (Czech Children in the Cyberworld (2018-2019) — blue, Children´s homes (educators´ perspective) — red):

- Verbal aggression: 27.17% / 48.19%
- Disseminating photo to ridicule: 12.25% / 29.52%
- Disseminating intimate photo: 3.38% / 17.47%
- Disseminating humiliating video: 6.51% / 12.65%
- Disseminating humiliating audio…: 3.82% / 3.01%
- Threats and intimidation: 9.75% / 22.29%
- Blackmail: 5.81% / 7.23%
- Accessing online account: 12.64% / 21.69%
- Misusing online account: 4.97% / 14.46%
- Fake profile: 6.88% / 16.87%

■ Czech Children in the Cyberworld (2018-2019)   ■ Children´s homes (educators´ perspective)

5.2 Where did the attacks occur?

The clients of the children´s homes who had experienced some form of an attack in an online environment were asked on which online platform the attack occurred. **62.92% said that the attack happened on Facebook, 32.58% confirmed an attack on Instagram, 32.58% an attack on Facebook Messenger, 15.73% stated YouTube, and 13.48% TikTok**.

5.3 Who attacked?

15.73% of clients said that the attacker was a former friend, 14.61% mentioned a classmate, 13.48% a pupil from a different class (same school), the same number (13.48%) also named a person they only knew from the internet as the perpetrator.

1.1 How did the clients deal with the attack?

37% of the clients of children´s homes who had experienced some type of online attack did not tell anyone. Approximately one third of the clients informed their parents of the attack, and 15.73% informed their caregivers.

Table: Methods of dealing with an attack by the clients of children´s homes

Method of dealing	Relative frequency (%)
None, I did not tell anyone.	37.08%
I told my parents.	26.97%
I told my caregivers (aunts/uncles) in the children´s home.	15.73%
I told another child in the children´s home.	12.36%
I told the teachers.	6.74%
I called the childline.	2.25%
I called the police.	2.25%
I wrote to an online counselling service.	0.00%

(n=89)

5.4 Have the children experienced the attack because they live in a children´s home?

76.65% of clients said that they did not experience an attack because they are from a children´s home. 17.77% of the clients confirmed that they experienced an unpleasant attack because they were from a children´s home.

The most common forms of an attack were verbal attacks at school (13.71%), verbal attacks humiliation and insults on the internet (7.11%), disseminating a humiliating photo on the internet (3.55%), verbal attacks in the children´s home (2.03%) etc.

## 6. Results C – Communication with strangers on the internet

At the outset it needs to be said that communication with strangers online is quite common and belongs to everyday online activities of internet users—in the online environment the children and adolescents establish virtual friendships and friendships, share their experiences, exchange experiences, have fun with peers etc. Strangers thus may not be only "dangerous" adults, but also peers=other children.

35.53% of clients of children´s homes confirmed that they chat with strangers online whom they do not know personally. 64.47% then strictly refused to talk to strangers on the internet. Communication with strangers is accompanied by a number of specifics which we will focus on in a separate section of this text.

6.1 Adding a stranger from the internet as a "friend"

Common social interactions that occur in the online environment include users adding each other as virtual friends (e.g. on social networks or instant messengers), who then have access to more information than the public—e.g. photo galleries. More than 62% of clients of children´s homes confirmed that they would add a stranger from the internet as a friend.

Graph: Would you add a stranger to your social media friends if they approached you?

1.02%

| 12.18% | 10.66% | 29.95% | 39.09% | 7.11% |

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ No answer
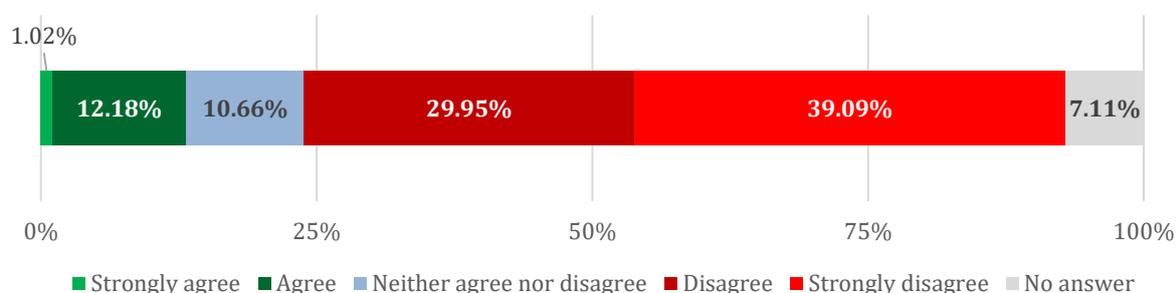
(n=197)

6.2 Keeping communication secret

In the next part of the research we focused on whether the clients on children´s homes were asked by their internet friend to keep their communication secret. Trying to keep the communication secret may be a concomitant of a number of risky phenomena (cyber grooming), therefore it is good to think about why someone would want us to keep communication secret. **18.27% of clients confirmed that they had received this request from their internet friend**.

6.3 Meeting with internet acquaintances

In the context of risky behaviour, we were also interested in whether the children´s home clients would be willing to go to a meeting with their internet friend (that they do not know from a real world) if asked. As already mentioned, an internet acquaintance may not automatically be an internet predator, children of course also meet peers. **14.21% of the clients would be willing to go the meetings, 63.96% would refuse such an offer**.

Table: Who the clients would tell about the meeting proposal

Who they would tell about	Relative frequency (%)
Caregivers (aunt/uncle) in the children´s home	64.47
Parents	30.96
Friends or siblings under 18 years of age	17.77
Children in the children´s home	14.21
NOBODY	11.17
Teachers	10.15
Other adults	7.11

(n=197)

We were obviously also interested in knowing whether the clients of children´s homes actually received an invitation to a meeting from an online friend. **19.80% of the clients received an invitation to a meeting, 16.75% of the clients also confirmed that they actually went to the meeting**.

As already mentioned, children meet both their peers and adult users in an online environment. An indicator of how the meeting went may be the emotions experienced by the children at the meeting. Therefore we asked the children what emotions they experienced at the meeting.

Chart: What emotions the children had from the meeting?
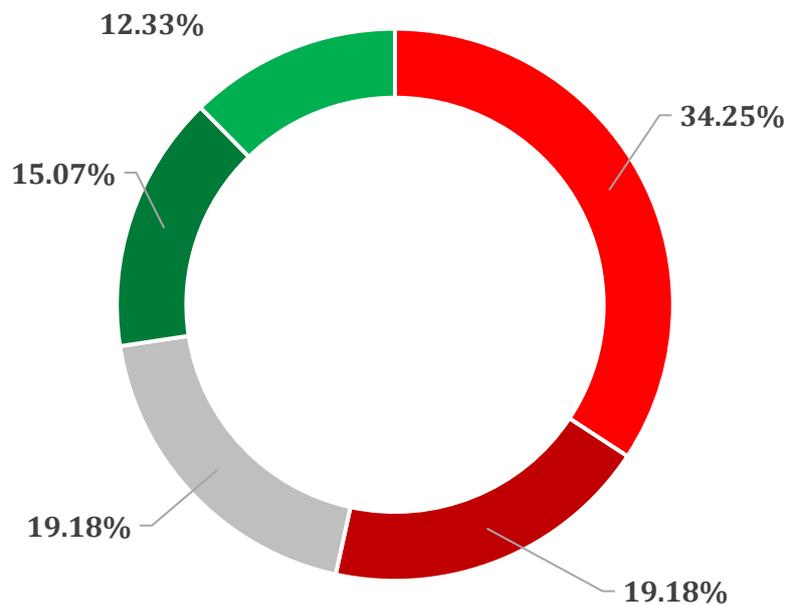
■ Strongly unpleasant ■ Unpleasant ■ Neither pleasant nor unpleasant ■ Pleasant ■ Strongly pleasant

(n=73)

It is interesting to note that twice as many child clients responded to the question related to emotions experienced at the meeting than children who confirmed that they actually attended the meeting. This may be due to the fact that the children were honest when answering this question and were not afraid of e.g. misuse of this information.

When the meeting did take place, in most cases it was with the children´s peers attended it. **10.9% of children (8 out of 73) stated that an adult person they not known previously came to the meeting**.

6.4 Communicating with strangers via webcam

Communicating via webcam is one of the popular ways of communication—mobile phones, laptops, tablets and desktop computers are equipped with webcams and during the pandemic, webcam communication was even one of the key elements of synchronous forms of e-learning. However, we were interested in whether the clients of children´s homes use webcams to communicate with strangers (=people they do not know in the real world).

18.27% of clients of children´s homes confirmed that they communicate with strangers online via webcams. 26.4% of clients also confirmed that they were asked by a stranger on the internet to switch on the webcam.

23.86% of the clients visit video chat rooms like Omegle, Ome.tv, or Chatroulette. **16.24% of the clients confirmed that they had encountered sexual content** (pornography) in these video chat rooms, 14.21% also confirmed, that they had communicated with someone in this environment.

Similarly we were interested in knowing whether the clients would be willing to communicate via webcam with an attractive girl or boy who would show themselves on the camera. **13.20% of the clients responded that yes,** 69.04% said that they would refuse to communicate with this person.

Chart: Willingness to communicate with an unknown but attractive person via webcam

1.02%

| 12.18% | 10.66% | 29.95% | 39.09% | 7.11% |

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ No answer
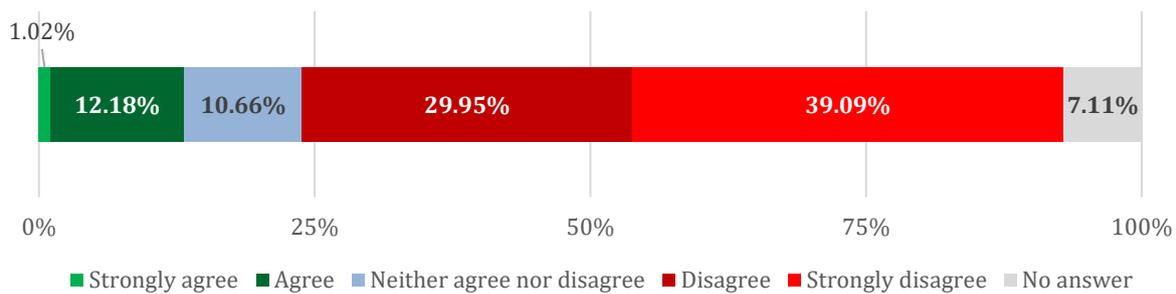
(n=197)

7. Results D – Children´s home clients and sexuality

At the outset it should be said that discovering one´s own sexuality is a natural part of growing up. In this part the research therefore focused on whether and how children in children´s homes acquire information about human sexuality and whether they also use the internet to explore and experiment in this area.

7.1 Learning about sex

77.66% of clients confirmed that they had been instructed about sex. The following chart summarises the dominant sources of information about sex.

Chart: Sources of instruction about sex
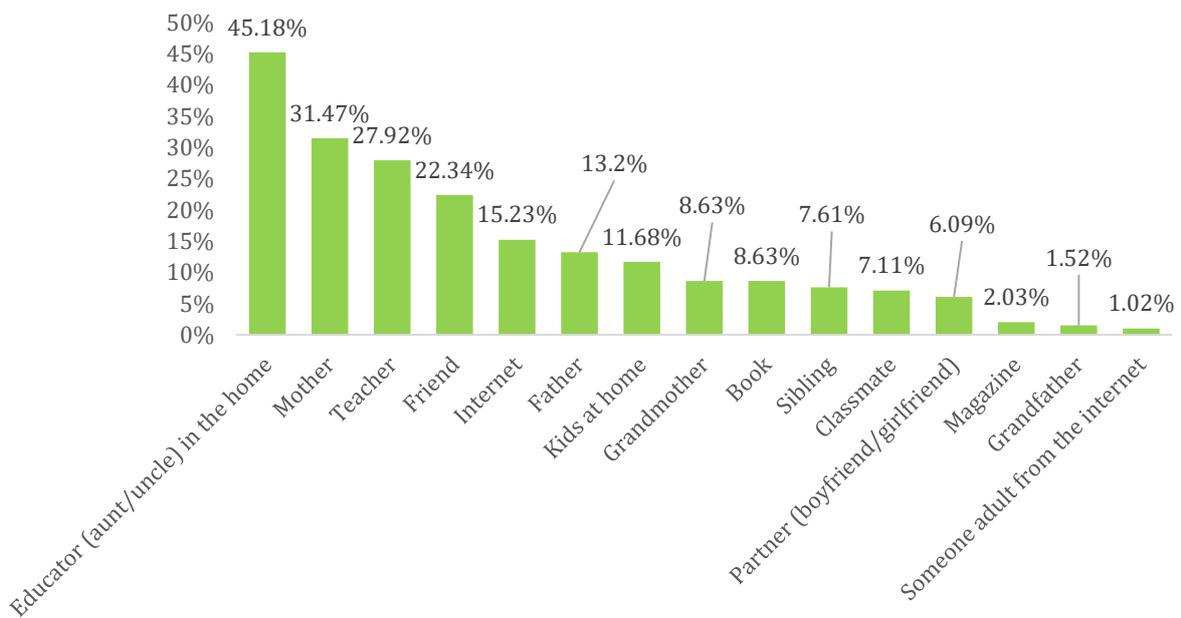
(n=197)

7.2 Sexting among children´s home clients

The term sexting refers to sharing of one´s own intimate material (photographs, videos, etc.) with others (e.g. in an online environment), which may be voluntary or involuntary. Sexting is increasingly becoming a part of sexual maturation, it is becoming prominent in partner relationships and its impact can be positive (e.g. in partner communication). At the same time it is a potentially risky phenomenon—intimate material that is shared with each other can leak out into the public domain and those caught may become the target of various forms of attack. Sexting also becomes part of targeted manipulation in high risk phenomena, whether it is sextortion or cyber grooming.

Our research also focused on whether the children´s homes clients had sent a provocative erotic photo or video of themselves naked to someone online. **7.11% of the clients responded that they sexted and sent an intimate photo of themselves to someone from time to time, 12.18% claimed to have done it once**. 70.56% stated that they have never sent anything like this to anyone.

Most often they send these materials to an ex-boyfriend or girlfriend (39.47%), to a current boyfriend or girlfriend (26.32%), or to a person they know online (18.42%). This is followed by a short acquaintance (15.79%), and a person they like and they would like to date (15.79%).

The most common reasons they sent these materials were: it was a gift for their girlfriend or boyfriend (42.11%), they wanted to get an award (28.95%), it was in response to a sexy photo sent (21.05%) etc. **18.42% of sexting clients said they were forced to sext.**

15.74% (31 out of 197) of clients of children´s homes confirmed they received an offer to provide their intimate materials in exchange for finances or gifts. 2% of clients agreed to this offer.

The children mostly used the Facebook social network, Facebook Messenger, Instagram or Snapchat to sext.

52.28% of clients have never received a photo or video with sexual connotations in which somebody is naked. The rest of the clients receive intimate photos from other people (both from strangers and acquaintances). The frequency with which the clients of children´s homes receive these materials is shown in the following chart.

Chart: How often do clients of children´s homes receive sexting materials?

Legend: ■ I'm still getting them ■ Very often ■ Often ■ Rarely ■ Only once

Values shown: 8.06%, 16.13%, 12.90%, 37.10%, 25.81%
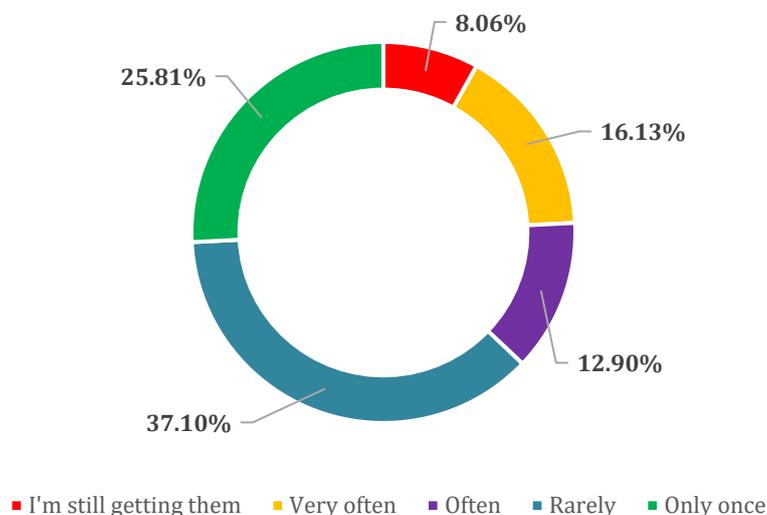
(n=62)

7.3 Sexting and webcams

3% of clients of children´s homes confirmed that they had exposed themselves to somebody via a webcam. In most cases it was in front of former friends, mostly on Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, Omegle, or TikTok.

8. Results E – Preventive measures implemented by children´s homes

Children´s homes implement a wide range of preventive measures aimed at reducing the possibility of a risk situation or minimising the impact of an existing incident on a child the predominant preventive measure is a conversation with a child, where the educator teaches the child how to behave safely in the online environment (89.16%). Another popular form of prevention is again talking, but this time in reverse—the child teaches the educator and the educator responds (52.41%). More than a half of the respondents also use watching a prevention-oriented film (57.23%), and almost a half actively organises lectures on preventing risky behaviour on the internet (47.59%).

Table: Preventive measures implemented in children´s homes

Preventive measures implemented	Frequency	Relative frequency
A dialogue with a child about dangers on the internet (**educator teaches the child**).	148	89.16
A dialogue with a child about dangers on the internet (**the child teaches the educator** and the educator reacts to the information e.g.	87	52.41

the child tells the educator what s/he did online, what youtubers s/he watched etc.).		
Watching a prevention-oriented film.	95	57.23
Visiting a **website** aimed at risk prevention on the internet.	29	17.47
Organizing lectures aimed at risk prevention on the internet.	79	47.59
Reading a **book** aimed at risk prevention on the internet.	3	1.81
Game (simulation of a risky situation).	20	12.05
We **do not deal with prevention** in the children´s home, it is the task of a school or other institution.	1	0.60
Risk prevention on the internet **has not been dealt with yet** in the children´s home.	0	0.00

(n=166)

Which topics do children´s homes address as part of prevention?

Children´s homes address a variety of topics in the context of prevention–the most common ones are communication with strangers (89.16%), protection of personal data on the internet (86.75%), dating in the online environment (84.34%), aggression on the internet–mainly cyberbullying or threats (76.51%), risky sexual behaviour on the internet (72.29%) etc. The following table provides a detailed overview.

Table: Topics addressed by children´s homes as part of prevention

Category	Frequency	Relative frequency
Communication with strangers.	148	89.16
Personal data protection (photos, name and surname, contacts etc.).	144	86.75
Online dating.	140	84.34
Aggression on the internet (cyberbullying, threats etc.).	127	76.51
Risky sexual behaviour on the internet (sexting etc.).	120	72.29
Sexuality (pornography etc.).	117	70.48
False information on the internet (fake news).	87	52.41
Illegal content on the internet (films, audio content, programmes and games) and software piracy.	74	44.58
Self-harm.	73	43.98
Influencers (on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram).	56	33.73
Scams related to shopping and auctions.	51	30.72
Eating disorders.	38	22.89

Risky sports and risky behaviour in transport (parkour etc.).	38	22.89
Fraud associated with online games.	34	20.48
Hatred of ethnic minorities in the online environment.	34	20.48
Negative influence of sects.	32	19.28
Copyright.	25	15.06
We do not discuss any topics with children.	3	1.81

(n=166)

64.47% of clients of the children´s homes confirmed that they had attended a discussion on the dangers of the internet in the children´s home, 68.53% confirmed that they had attended a similar discussion at school.

9. Contact

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