



ABOUT WILD ME

We create wilderness programmes for children - wild and natural places where children can play - in European countries.

The increasing shift of children's activities to indoor spaces is due to many factors, however one of the most prominent is the presence and overuse of technologies from a very young age.

The World Mobile Free Day is an essential opportunity to learn and share how to manage these technologies and to remind children and families about the importance of socialising and spending time outdoors.

SHOULD PARENTS BE WORRIED ABOUT MOBILES?

Yes, definitely. Mobile devices are suitable tools for mature minds, but the regular use of these before time has terrible effects on the development of vital skills such as concentration, creativity, empathy and socialising; and moreover reduces motor skills, which means growing up less agile, having a lack of self-confidence, and being over-energetic and over-stimulated in a very reduced area of their senses, mainly their eyes looking at a screen. How can you compare this development programme to one so simple, but nowadays rare, of going down a dirt road, stopping to look at insects or collecting stones while talking to your parent or friend, or just contemplating in silence?

FACT:

- Over 70% of pre-teens admit to hiding online activities!

FACT:

- 1/3 of teens say they feel more accepted online than in the real world.



WORLD MOBILE FREE DAY



IS THERE A RISK CHILDREN ARE LOSING SOCIAL SKILLS?

The loss of social skills has been proven and can be observed everyday, not only in children. If you just analyse the tables around you in a café or restaurant you will realise that we do not socialise as much as before mobile phones. Some teenagers meet online instead of going out, and if this occurs from young, it can have an irreversible effect on the development of social skills, which are naturally acquired by real and regular interaction during early childhood.



HOW DO YOU APPROACH MOBILE TECH WITH YOUR PROGRAMS?

Wild Me's programmes are 'back to the basics' and nearly 100% outdoors in wild spaces. We are not anti mobile, however we don't allow children to use mobile devices during the activities unless expressly needed. The fact is, there may be some resistance at the start, but after a few sessions, we would be surprised if any child was interested in carrying around a mobile phone or wanting to go inside. Nevertheless we are prepared to integrate the use of some technologies (such as camera traps and portable camera devices) into our programmes, if they feel interested.

INTERESTING:

- 48% of parents monitor their children's location using mobiles.
- 62% use the removal of mobiles as a punishment.

STATISTICS



46% of children aged 9-16 in Europe own a phone.



In South Korea, 72% of 11-12 yr olds own phones.



81% of time online is spent texting.

WORLD MOBILE FREE DAY

HOW ARE YOU TAKING THE LEARNINGS FROM WORLD MOBILE FREE DAY, AND APPLYING THEM TO THE REAL WORLD?

We will aim to create wilderness activities adaptable to school curriculum, for example teaching simple games and activities that children can take home and show their parents and siblings, and therefore create wider awareness.



HOW CAN PARENTS ADAPT, WHEN THERE IS SO MUCH PRESSURE TO USE MOBILES?

Parents should set aside more time for real play and communication with their children, and set an example at home e.g. Not use the phone during meals, make a specific wi-fi spot at home where phones can be used, and therefore not carry phone around at all times, etc. They should also encourage them to have live moments with their friends, not only over the mobile phone and the internet!



”OVER 50% OF CHILDREN HAVE POSTED SOMETHING ONLINE WHICH THEY LATER REGRETTED”

WORLD MOBILE FREE DAY



PERSONALLY, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PARENTS USING MOBILES AS LEARNING TOOLS

If only they were used as learning tools! Unfortunately many parents generally use these devices to distract or entertain their children while travelling or having meals, instead of socialising and educating them in the real world. The excitement and richness of staring out of the car window and asking questions while travelling to far-away places is rapidly disappearing. It frightens me to encounter children who, for example, know about an endangered species from the other side of the world, but don't even know how to name the animals found in their surrounding.

WHAT CAN FAMILY'S DO AT HOME TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF TECHNOLOGY USAGE AND PERHAPS REDUCE THEIR AMOUNT OF SCREENTIME?

Good advice provided by experts is to put all computers and laptops in communal areas of the house, and monitor their use. I think that's a good base, plus a lot of effort has to be put into: encouraging outdoor play and social activities, providing good books, board games and toys, encouraging children to have interests and hobbies and spend time actively pursuing them and setting rules about screen time.

THANKS GLOUDINA & WILDME!