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Children's Online Activities and their Parents' Knowledge and Perception about Online Opportunities and Risks

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Children's online activities: parents' knowledge and perception about online opportunities and risks

EU Kids Online, October 2010

Brian O'Neill

Main Questions



- Range of activities undertaken on the internet by the children (risks and possibilities)
- Parents perception of risks online
- Risky activities undertaken

Multiple opportunities

- Average 7 of 17 activities in past month
- Schoolwork tops the list
- Then content produced by others
- Also communication – IM, SNS, email
- Webcams popular among teens
- Chat rooms less common overall
- Creating content less common
- Few gender differences except games
- Age differences are substantial

	9-12 year old		13-16 year old		
% who have...	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	All
Used the internet for school work	77	82	87	90	84
Watched video clips	69	59	76	51	83
Played internet games on your own or against the computer	66	62	86	83	74
Used instant messaging	42	46	75	74	61
Visited a social networking profile	38	40	79	77	60
Sent/received email	42	43	72	72	59
Read/watched the news on the internet	37	35	59	57	48
Played games with other people online	46	32	62	31	44
Downloaded music or films	26	23	59	55	42
Put or posted photos, videos or music to share with others	22	22	53	52	38
Put or posted a message on a website	24	24	37	37	31
Used a webcam	17	17	42	37	29
Visited a chatroom	14	12	34	27	22
Created a character, pet or avatar	19	18	20	13	18
Used file sharing sites	10	8	27	20	17
Spent time in a virtual world	16	14	22	13	17
Written a blog or online diary	5	6	13	16	10
Average number of activities	5.7	5.4	9.0	8.1	7.1

Concerns and awareness about online risks (Eurobarometer)

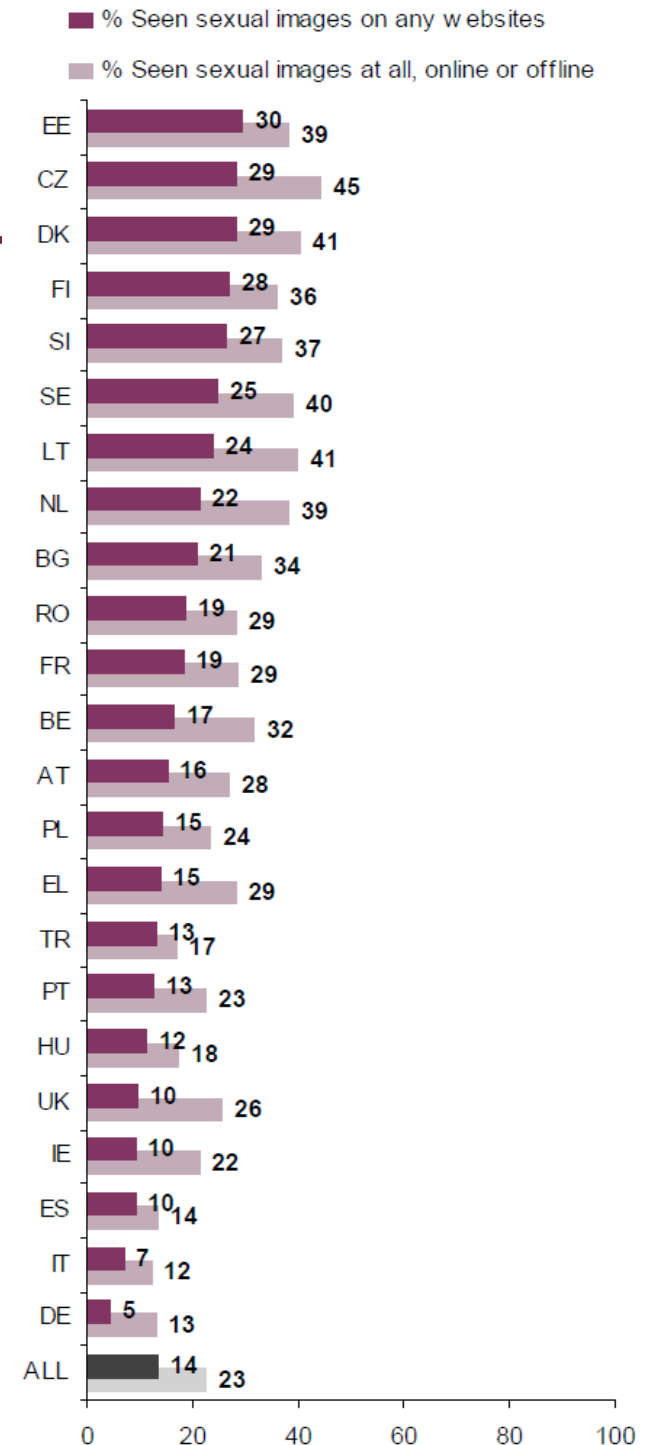


- The biggest risk in parents' eyes (65%) was that their child might see sexually or violently explicit images on the Internet: 45% were *very worried*.
- parents were most worried that their child could become a victim of online grooming (60%); other concerns were that their child could be bullied online by other children (54%) or bullied by others over a mobile phone link (49%).
- Parents were the least worried that their child might reveal personal or private information when using the Internet: only a quarter said they were *very worried* and 21% were *rather worried*.
- Parents who did not use the Internet themselves, but who said that their child did use it, most frequently answered that they were *very worried about the risks faced by their child when using the Internet and mobile phones*.
[Eurobarometer 2008]

Sexual images off/online

“In the past year, you will have seen lots of different images – pictures, photos, videos. Sometimes, these might be obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or having sex. Have you seen anything of this kind?”

- 23% have seen sexual images online or offline
- More older than younger children
- 14% saw these online, 12% on television/film/video, 7% in magazines
- Teenage boys 13-16 most likely to see sexual images online – 23%
- Most often seen via accidental pop-ups
- 12% - nudity, 8% - someone having sex, 3% - violent sex



Parental awareness



- Parents and children report similar levels of exposure to online sexual images – since both report low figures
- 15% parents whose child says ‘no’ think child has seen this

Child has seen sexual images on the internet?	Child's answer	
	Yes	No
% Parent answer:		
Yes	35	15
No	41	66
Don't know	24	19
	100	100

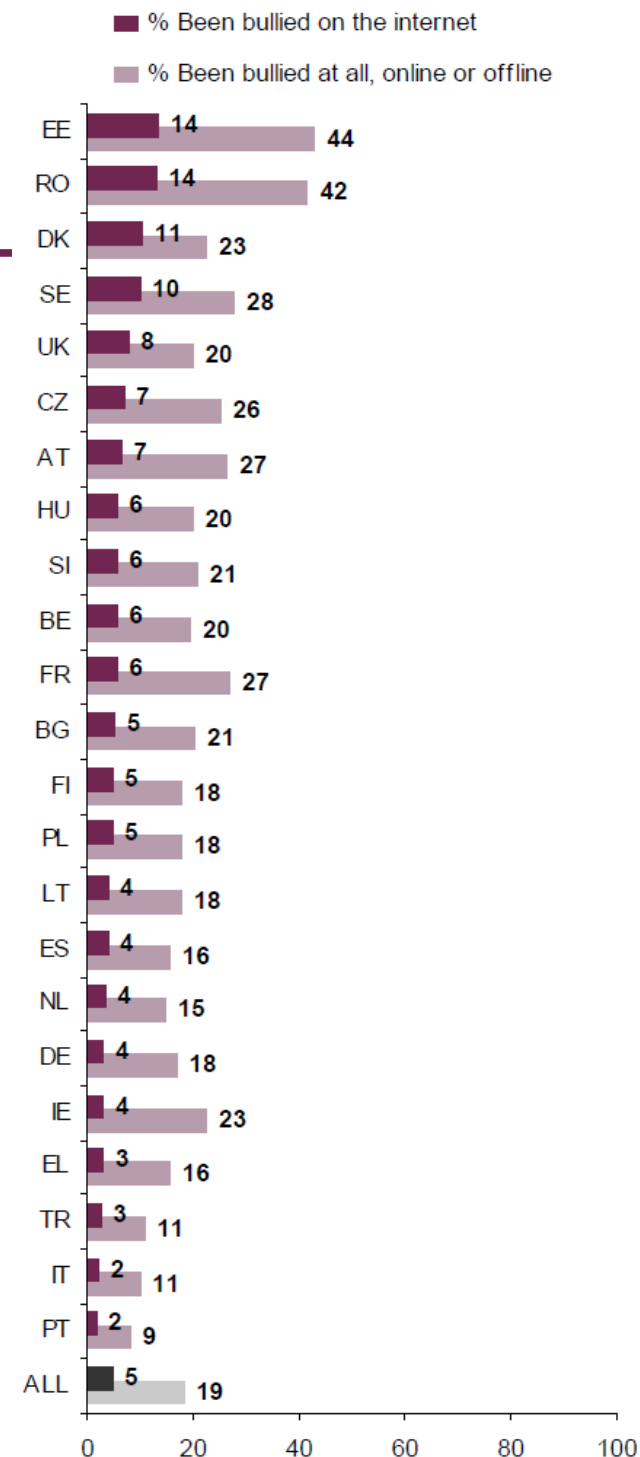
- 41% of parents whose child says ‘yes’ are not aware of this; 24% say they don’t know
- Parents are least aware when child has seen sexual images online for daughters (47%) and 9-10 year olds (56%)
- Parents are also least aware in PT, IT, AT
- They are most aware of when this has happened in CZ, FI, DK, EE, SL

Bullying off/online

“Sometimes children or teenagers say or do hurtful or nasty things to someone and this can often be quite a few times on different days over a period of time. It can include teasing someone in a way the person does not like; hitting, kicking or pushing someone around; leaving someone out of things.

Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months?/ Have you been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet?”

- 19% have had someone act in this way, online or offline
- Few differences by age, gender or social class
- 13% had this happen in person face to face, 5% had this happen online, 3% by mobile phone calls/texts
- Teenage girls 13-16 most experience this online – 7%
- Most often happens online via SNS or IM
- 4% - nasty/hurtful messages, 2% - such messages passed around about them, 1% threatened online
- 12% have sent such messages to others online



Parental awareness



- Parents and children report similar levels of online bullying – since both report low figures

- 7% parents whose child says ‘no’ think this has happened to child

Child has been sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet?	Child's answer:	
	Yes	No
% Parent answer:		
Yes	30	7
No	56	83
Don't know	14	10
	100	100

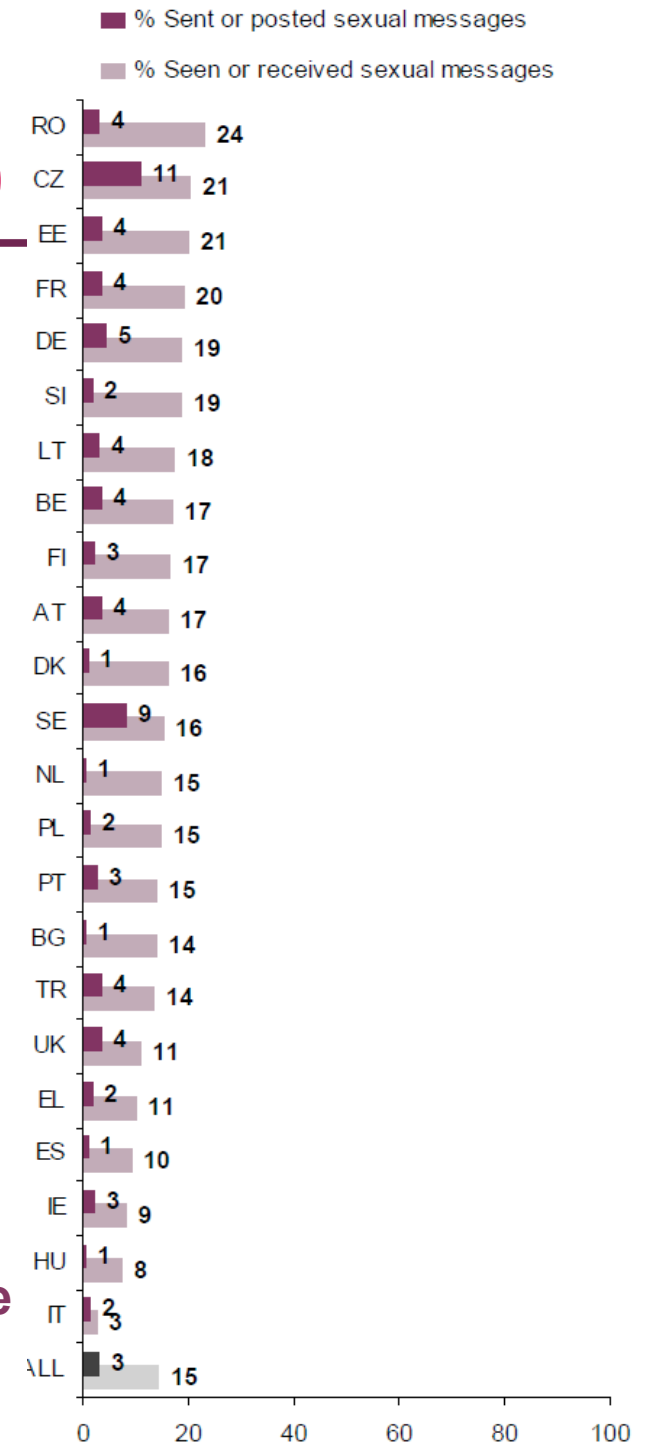
- 56% of parents whose child says ‘yes’ are not aware of this; 14% say they don’t know
- Parents are less aware in cases involving 9-10 year olds (64%)
- Parents are also least aware in HU, EL, RO
- They are most aware of when this has happened in FI, UK, NL, DK

Sending/receiving sexual messages online (11+yrs)

“People do all kinds of things on the internet. Sometimes they may send sexual messages or images. By this, we mean talk about having sex or images of people naked or having sex.

Have you seen/sent/received/posted a sexual message (words, pictures or video) of any kind on the internet?”

- 15% have seen/received sexual messages online
- 3% have sent/posted sexual messages online
- More older (21%) than younger teens
- Occurs more by ‘pop up’, IM or SNS
- 5% have seen other people perform sexual acts
- 2% have been asked to talk about sexual acts online
- 2% have been asked for photo/video of genitals



Parental awareness



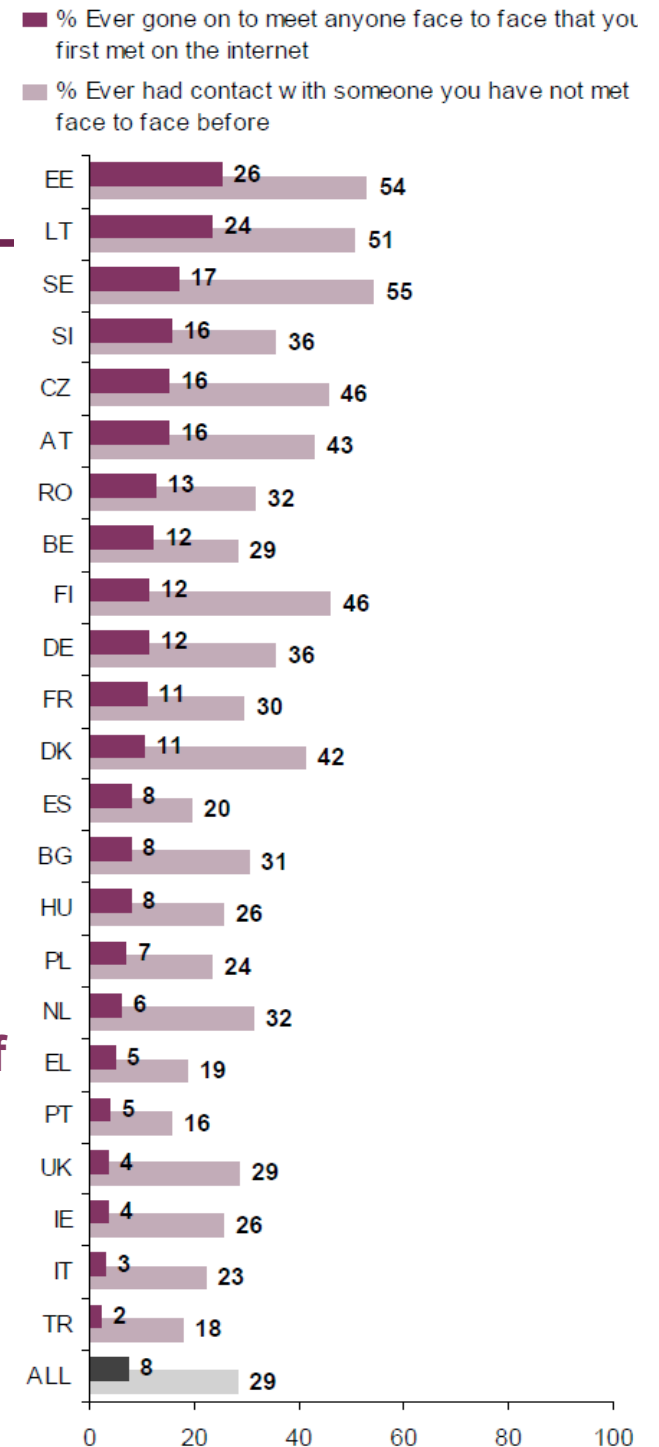
- Parents underestimate (7%) sexual messages reported by children (15%)
- 52% of parents whose child says 'yes' are not aware of this; 26% say they don't know, 22% say they know
- Parents are least aware in DE, IE, HU
- They are most aware of when this has happened in UK, BG, IT
- Parents of boys, and in lower SES homes, are most likely to say they don't know
- Parents of younger children, and in higher SES homes, tend to underestimate

Seen or been sent sexual images on the internet?	Child's answer	
	Yes	No
% Parent answer:		
Yes	22	5
No	52	82
Don't know	26	13
	100	100

Meeting new people

*“Have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face to face before?
Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face to face that you first met on the internet in this way?”*

- 29% have contact(s) they met online
12% of 9-10 year olds up to 44% of 15-16 year olds
- 8% have met an online contact offline
2% of 9-10 year olds up to 15% of 15-16 year olds
- More online contacts - more offline meetings
- Among those who have gone to offline meetings, half met just one or two people this way; 24% met 5+
- Among those who went to offline meetings, 56% met friend of a friend/family; 43% met a new person
- Contact first made usually via SNS or IM



Parental awareness



- Parents underestimate (4%) whether child has met an online contact offline (8%)

- 61% of parents whose child says 'yes' are not aware of this; 28% say they know; 11% say they don't know

Met someone face to face that first met on the internet?	Child's answer	
	Yes	No
% Parent answer:		
Yes	28	4
No	61	89
Don't know	11	7
	100	100

- Parents of younger children, of boys, and in higher SES homes, are less aware (i.e. more likely to say 'no') when their child has met an online contact offline

Other risks



In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss.../ have any of these things happened to you?

%	Age				All
	11-13 years		14-16 years		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals	8	5	18	17	12
Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic)	5	9	9	20	11
Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves	6	5	11	10	8
Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs	4	4	10	11	7
Ways of committing suicide	3	4	7	6	5
Has seen such material at all on any websites	14	16	26	32	22

%	Age				All
	11-13 years		14-16 years		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Somebody used my password to access my information or to pretend to be me	5	5	7	10	7
Somebody used my personal information in a way I didn't like	4	3	5	7	5
I lost money by being cheated on the internet	1	2	3	2	2
Has experienced personal data misuse of any kind	7	7	10	13	9



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How do parents balance between protection and empowerment?

EU Kids Online, October 2010

Brian O'Neill

Sources of social support and mediation



- Active mediation of the child's *internet use*
- Active mediation of the child's *internet safety*
- Restrictive mediation
- Monitoring
- Technical mediation

Active mediation *internet use*



- Parents talking to children about what they do on the internet (70%) the most popular way
- Strategy of staying nearby (57%)
- Other strategies adopted by substantial minority of parents (over four in ten)
- Overall, a fair amount of general positive mediation taking place

% who say that their parent does...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Talk to you about what you do on the internet	72	76	64	68	70
Stay nearby when you use the internet	66	69	55	51	57
Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own	47	51	44	42	46
Sit with you while you use the internet	51	54	33	37	44
Do shared activities together with you on the internet	48	50	34	35	42
One or more of these	88	89	82	83	85

Active mediation

Child-parent agreement



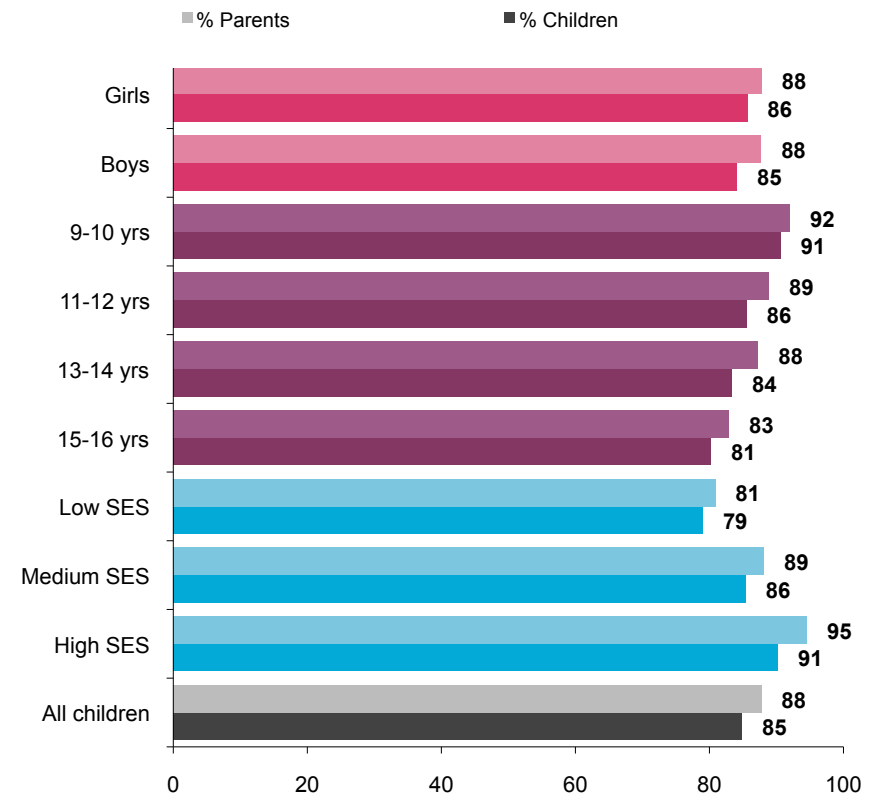
- A 'social desirability effect' to be expected (see Column 3)
- A quarter of parents and children disagree about whether these different forms of mediation are taking place
- In the vast majority of cases they agree

% who say that their parents sometimes...	Child no parent no	Child yes parent no	Child no parent yes	Child yes parent yes
Talk to you about what you do on the internet	13	8	17	63
Stay nearby when you use the internet	32	11	11	46
Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own	36	11	18	35
Sit with you while you use the internet	42	10	14	34
Do shared activities together with you on the internet	44	10	15	32

Active mediation Demographics



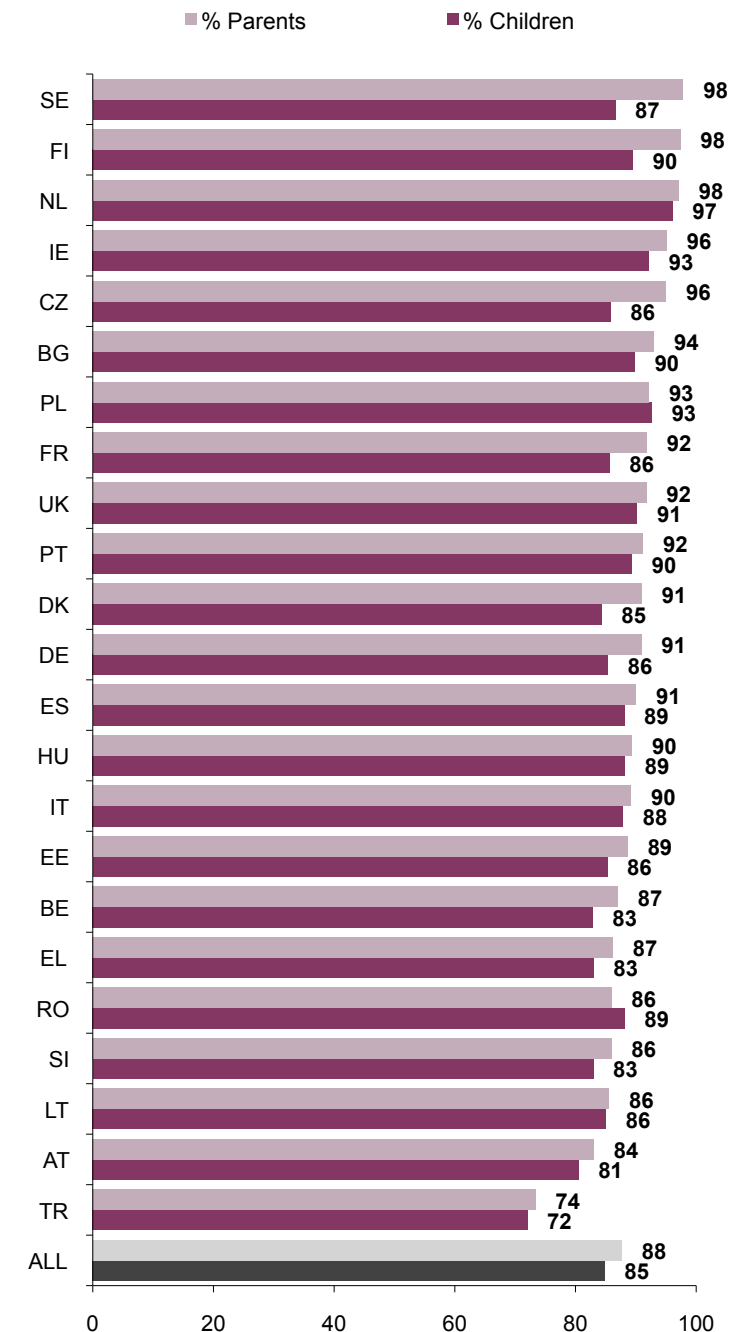
- Steady decrease as children grow older: 91% for 9-10 year olds, according to the children, dropping to 81% for 15-16 year olds
- Vast majority of parents are still pursuing some form of active mediation even in the case of older teenagers
- More active mediation the higher the SES level



Active mediation

Country differences

- Range from 93% in Poland and Ireland to 72% in Turkey
- Otherwise country differences less than 10%
- Most disagreement between children and parents in Sweden (11%), the Czech Republic (10%) and Finland (8%).



Active mediation

internet safety



- Explaining why websites are good or bad (67%) and helping when something is difficult to do or find (65%) are the most common strategies
- Suggesting how to use the internet safely (62%)
- Over a half - suggesting how to behave towards others online (55%) and talking about things that bothered the children (51%)
- Over a third have helped their child when something arose in the past (35%)
- Gender differences are small, apart from talking to 13-16 year olds about something that bothered them, and tend to involve slightly more mediation of girls' safety online.

% who say that their parent does...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Explained why some websites are good or bad	72	71	62	62	67
Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet	70	74	58	57	65
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	66	67	58	59	62
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	57	59	52	54	55
Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you	52	55	46	51	51
Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet	36	37	32	36	35
One or more of these	86	86	80	81	83

Active mediation *internet safety*

Child-parent agreement



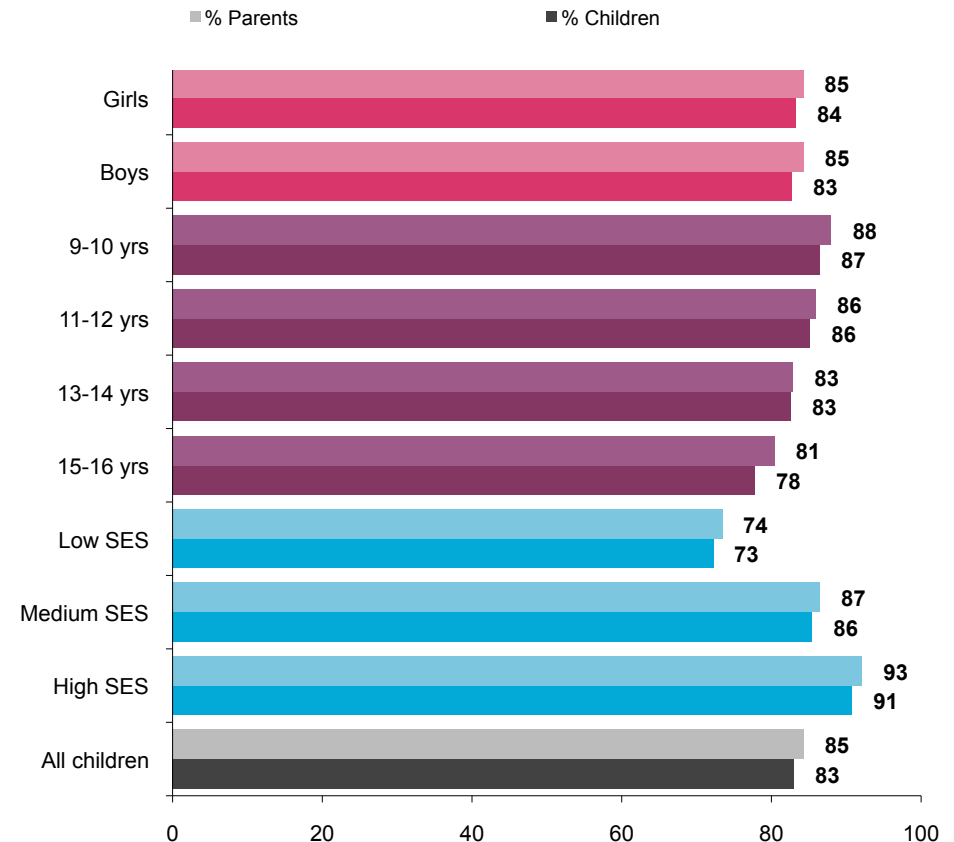
- Pattern and level of child-parent agreement similar to active mediation of internet use
- Parents and children disagree about a quarter of the time

% who say that their parents sometimes...	Child no parent no	Child yes parent no	Child no parent yes	Child yes parent yes
Explained why some websites are good or bad	19	9	14	58
Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet	26	11	9	54
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	23	11	14	52
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	26	10	18	46
Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you	31	10	17	42
Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet	50	11	14	24

Active mediation internet safety Demographics



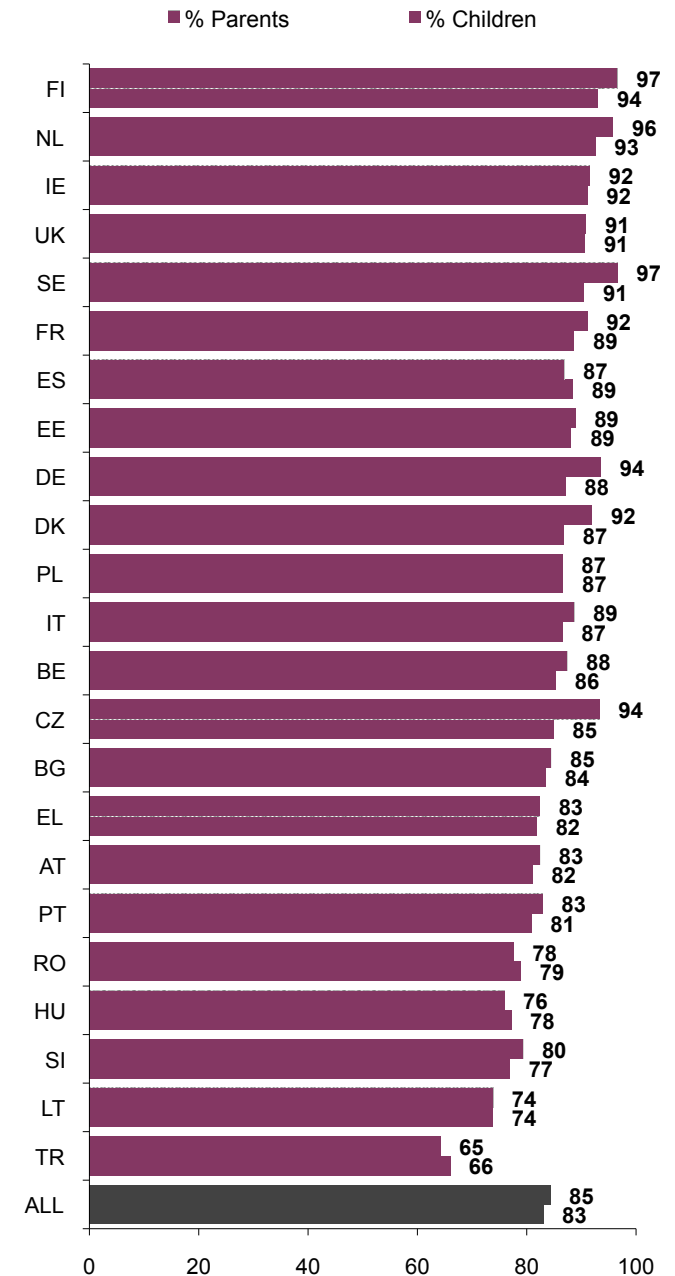
- Socio-demographic pattern is similar to active mediation of internet use
- Few gender differences
- Small but steady decline in mediation with the age of the child
- More mediation the higher the SES – the gap being slightly larger than for ‘internet use’



Internet safety

Country differences

- Finland the highest (94%) and Turkey, the lowest (66%)
- National differences reveals a wider range – up to 20% excluding Turkey
- Once again, parents and children disagree in some countries more than others – disagreeing more in the Czech Republic (9% disagreement) Sweden (6%) and Denmark (5%).



Restrictive Mediation



- Rules in giving out personal information (85%)
- Uploading material (64%)
- Downloading (57%)
- Roughly half (49%) are restricted in their use of social networking sites
- For 40% rules about watching video clips and 39% in the use of instant messaging
- Stronger gender differences for 13-16 year olds; girls more restricted than boys

% who say that rules apply about...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Give out personal information to others on the internet	94	94	74	79	85
Upload photos, videos or music to share with others	80	83	44	51	64
Download music or films on the internet	75	77	38	42	57
Have your own social networking profile	70	70	26	31	49
Watch video clips on the internet	58	60	20	25	40
Use instant messaging	59	58	21	23	39
One or more of these	91	91	73	79	83

Restrictive Mediation

Child-parent agreement



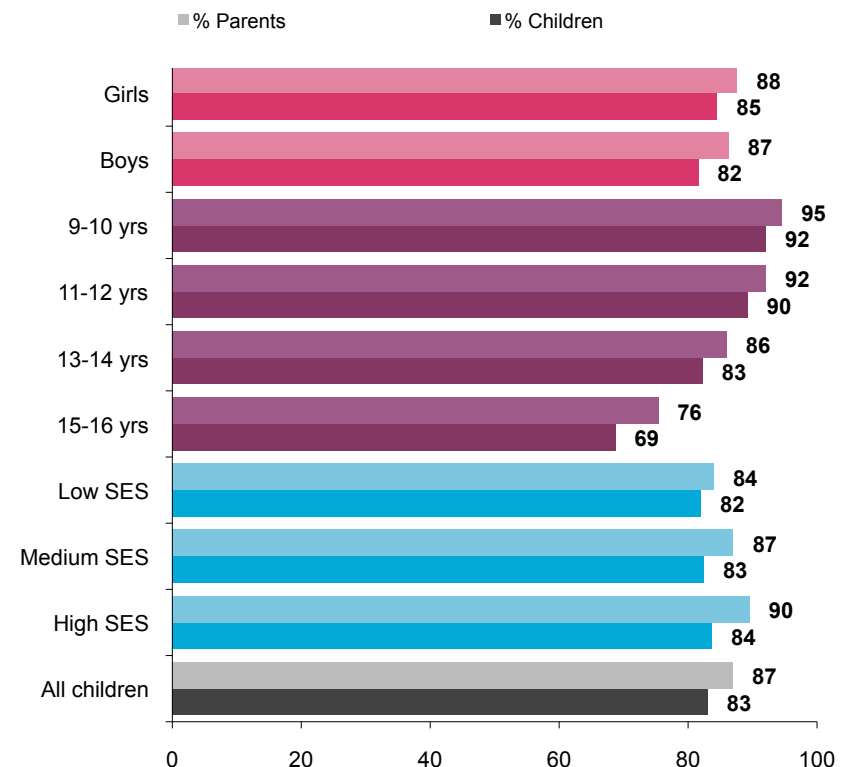
- Most agreement about whether rules exist – 89% rules related to giving out personal information
- Dropping to 83% in the case of watching video clips online

% who say that their parents sometimes...	Child no parent no	Child yes parent no	Child no parent yes	Child yes parent yes
Give out personal information to others on the internet	7	4	7	82
Upload photos, videos or music to share with others	24	6	11	59
Download music or films on the internet	32	6	10	52
Have your own social networking profile	41	6	10	43
Watch video clips on the internet	49	6	11	34
Use instant messaging	50	5	10	35

Restrictive mediation Demographics



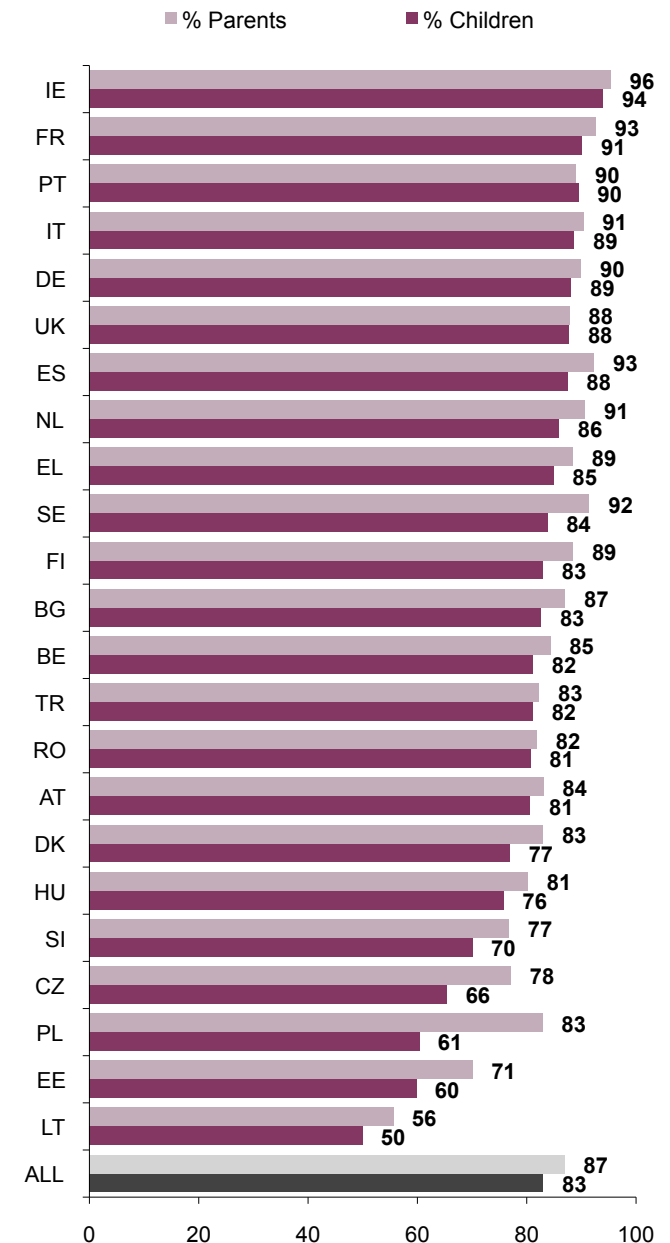
- Decline in restrictive mediation with age is more dramatic
- Falls from 92% for 9-10 year olds to 69% for 15-15 year olds – although most teenagers have to follow rules when using the internet.
- Girls are slightly more restricted than boys, but the difference is only 3%
- There is very little difference by SES.



Restrictive mediation

Country differences

- Country differences in restrictive mediation substantial
- From 91% (France) to 50% (Lithuania)
- Major differences between countries on whether rules exist, especially in Poland (22% disagreement), the Czech Republic (12%) and Estonia (11%)



Monitoring internet use



- About half / usually fewer parents adopt forms of monitoring
- Checking which websites children visited the most common form (47%)
- Checking social network profiles (40%) and the friends who are added to those profiles (36%) more common
- Both younger and older girls experienced more monitoring of their social network site profile and which friends were added

% who say parents check...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Which websites you visited	61	58	35	38	47
Your profile on a social network or online community	53	61	29	34	40
Which friends or contacts you add to social networking profile	50	56	25	30	36
The messages in your email or instant messaging account	39	40	16	20	25
One or more of these	68	64	44	47	55

Monitoring internet use

Child-parent agreement



- Particular disagreement over monitoring of websites visited – less than half (47%) agreed
- 15% of parents said they monitored websites, whereas their children said they did not
- Substantially more children say this monitoring is taking place when the parents deny it (38%)
- 17% of the children also said parents monitored their communication when parents denied it

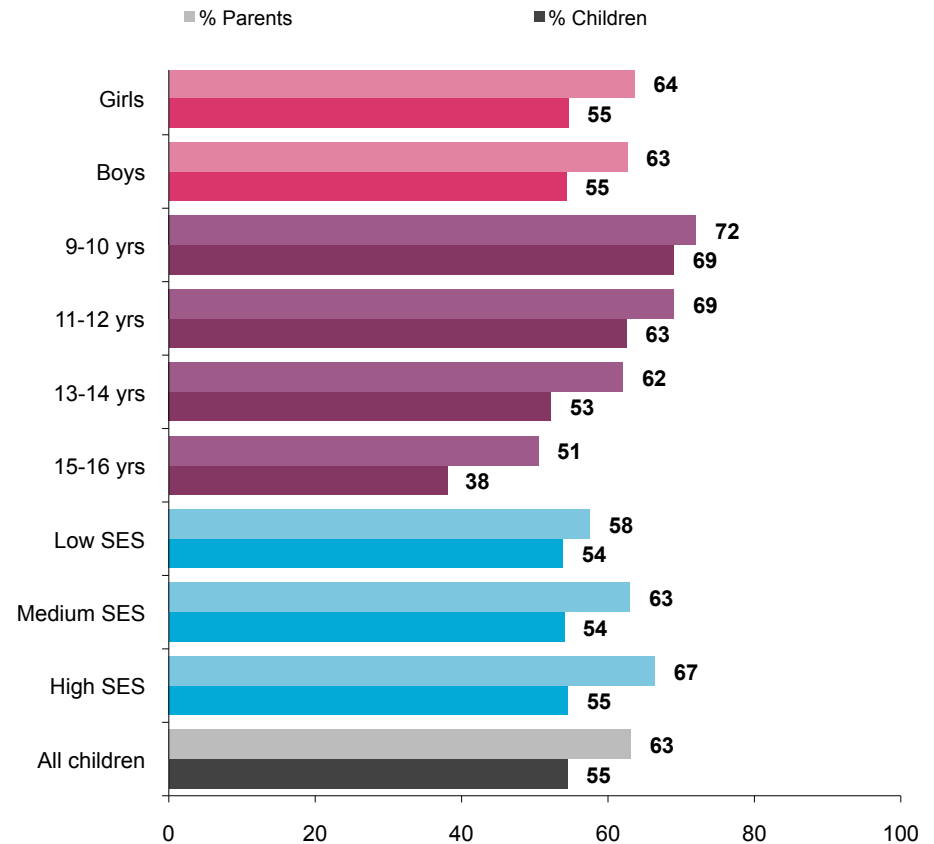
% who say parents check...	Child no parent no	Child yes parent no	Child no parent yes	Child yes parent yes
Which websites you visited	38	38	15	9
Your profile on a social network or online community	46	9	15	30
Which friends or contacts you add to social networking profile	48	8	15	28
The messages in your email or instant messaging account	62	17	13	7

Monitoring internet use

Demographics



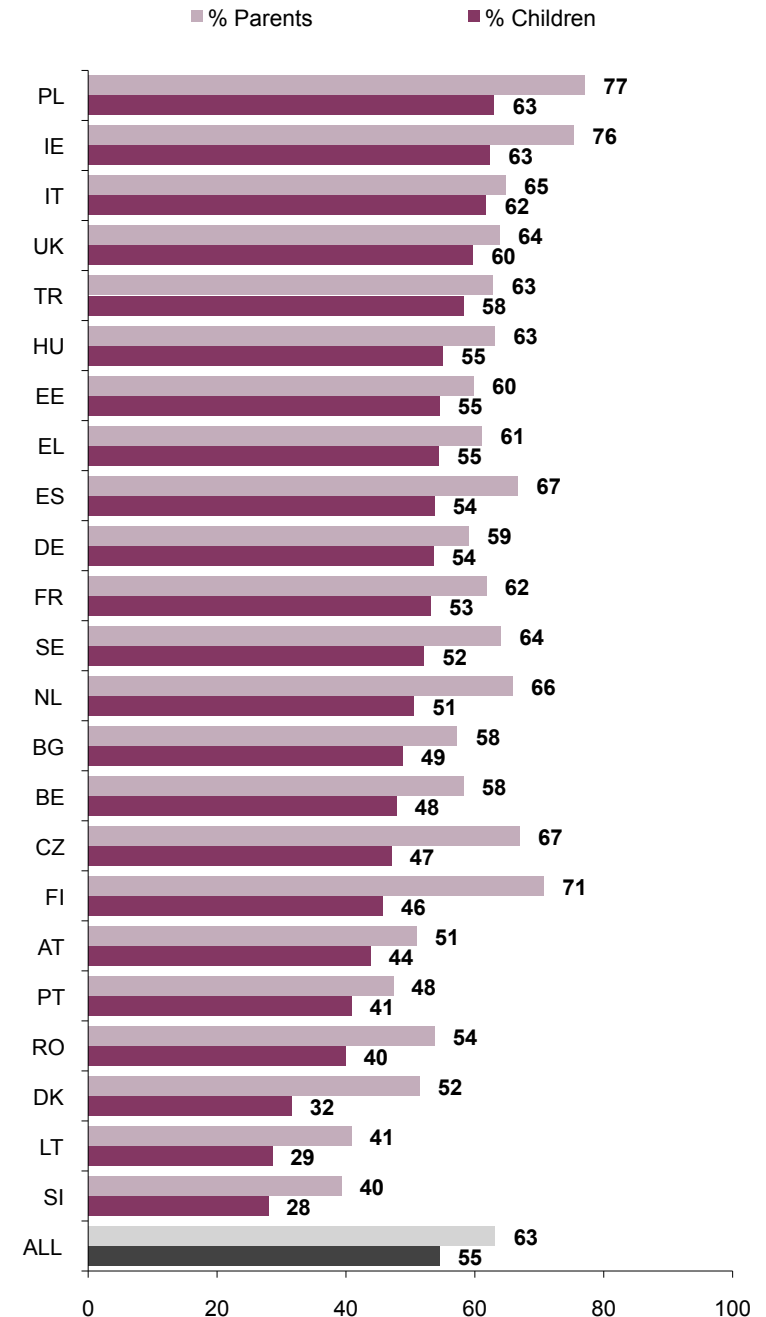
- No gender differences
- A substantial decline in monitoring as children grow older (69% for 9-10 year olds, but only 38% for 15-16 year olds)
- There is virtually no difference by SES.



Monitoring internet use

Country Differences

- Country differences are substantial
- Range from 63% (Ireland and Poland) to 28% (Slovenia)
- Also substantial are the disagreements between children and parents over whether monitoring is taking place
- Most disagreements in Finland (25% disagreement), Cyprus (22%) and Denmark and the Czech Republic (both 20%)
- Lesser, but still striking, degrees of disagreement exist in a number of other countries



Technical mediation



- 73% to control spam and viruses and not internet safety
- Other technical mediation less common than other mediation strategies
- Nearly a third (30%) block or filter websites and roughly a quarter (24%) track the websites visited by the children.
- More for younger boys than girls, especially when parents keep track of websites and limit time the child can spend online

% who say parents check...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Software to prevent spam/junk mail or viruses	73	71	73	72	73
Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website	38	36	25	28	30
Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites you visit	35	29	21	21	24
A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet	18	12	13	11	13
One or more of these	76	73	76	75	75

Technical Mediation

Child-parent agreement



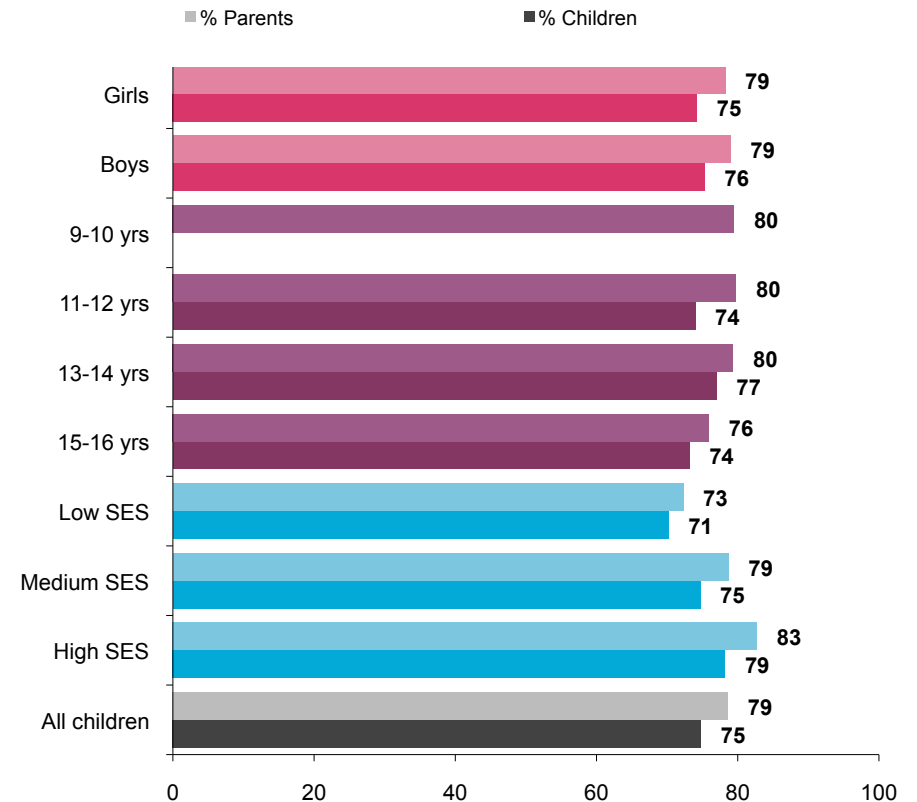
- A relatively high degree of agreement between parents and children about how much technical mediation is taking place.

% who say parents check...	Child no parent no	Child yes parent no	Child no parent yes	Child yes parent yes
Software to prevent spam/junk mail or viruses	17	8	9	65
Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website	61	8	9	21
Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites you visit	67	8	9	16
A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet	81	6	6	7

Technical mediation Demographics



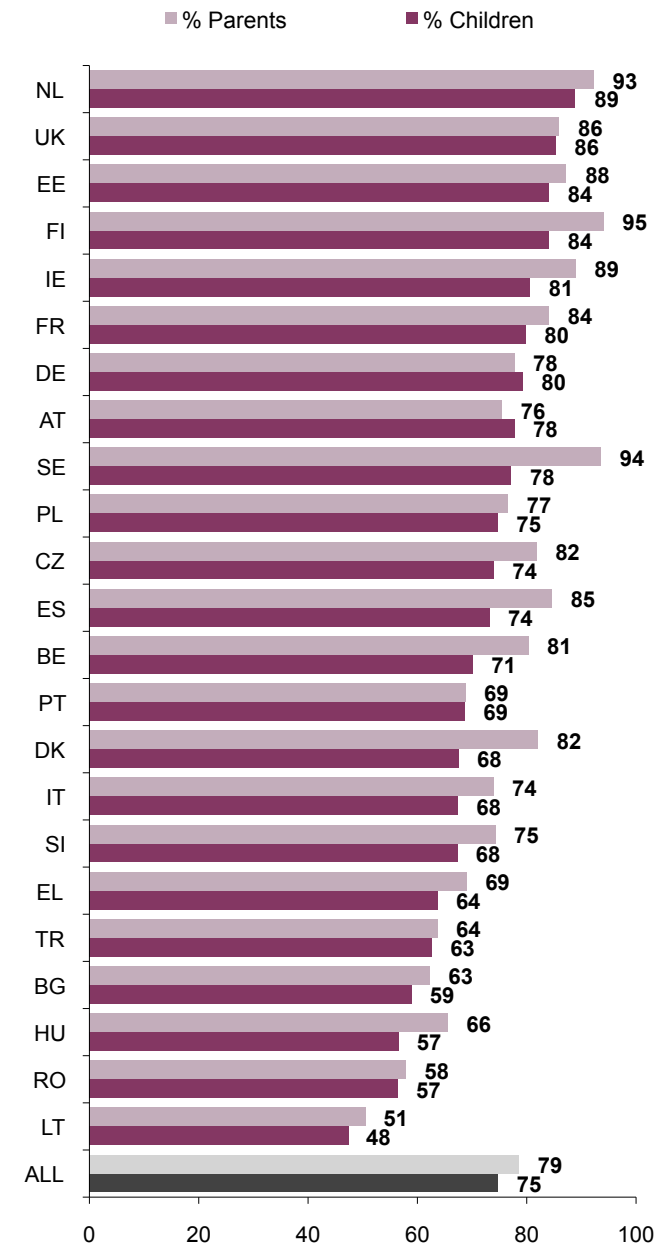
- Little difference between the experience of boys and girls
- Relatively little difference by age either
- Main difference, not huge, is by SES, ranging from, 71% of technical mediation in lower SES households to 79% in higher ones



Technical mediation

Country differences

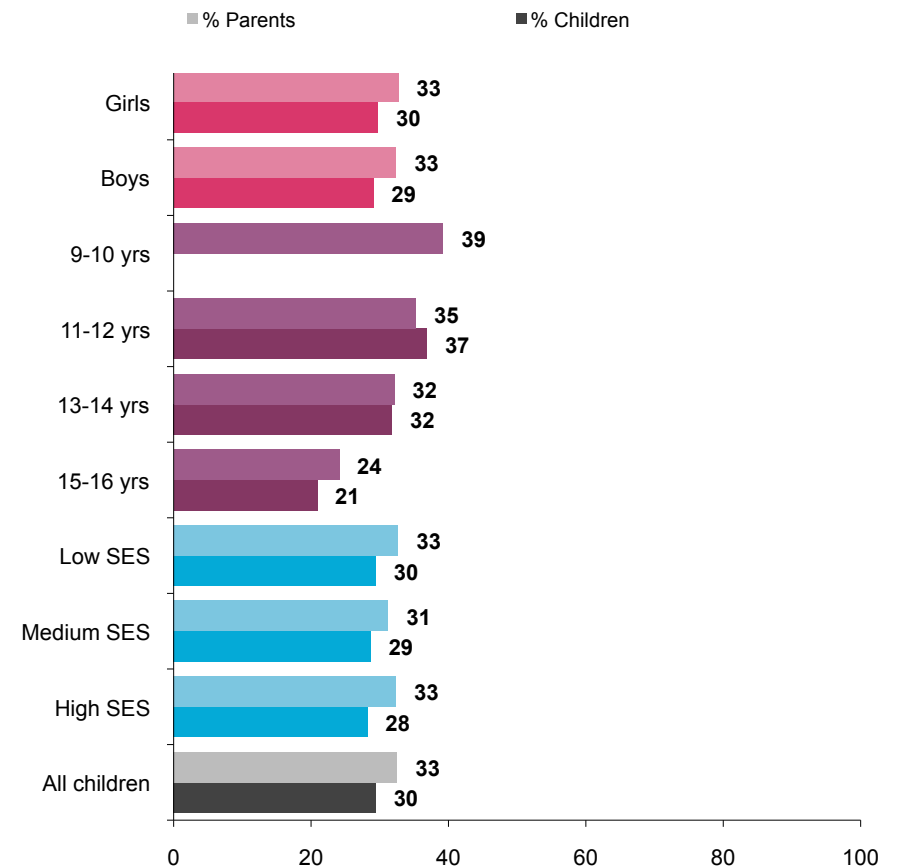
- A huge range by country
- 86% of UK children claiming this mediation takes place compared to 48% in Lithuania
- Noticeable disagreements about whether this mediation is taking place in some countries
- Sweden (16% disagreement), Denmark (14%) and Finland and Estonia (both 11%)
- Overall there seems to be more disagreement in the Nordic countries and the Czech Republic



Parental controls



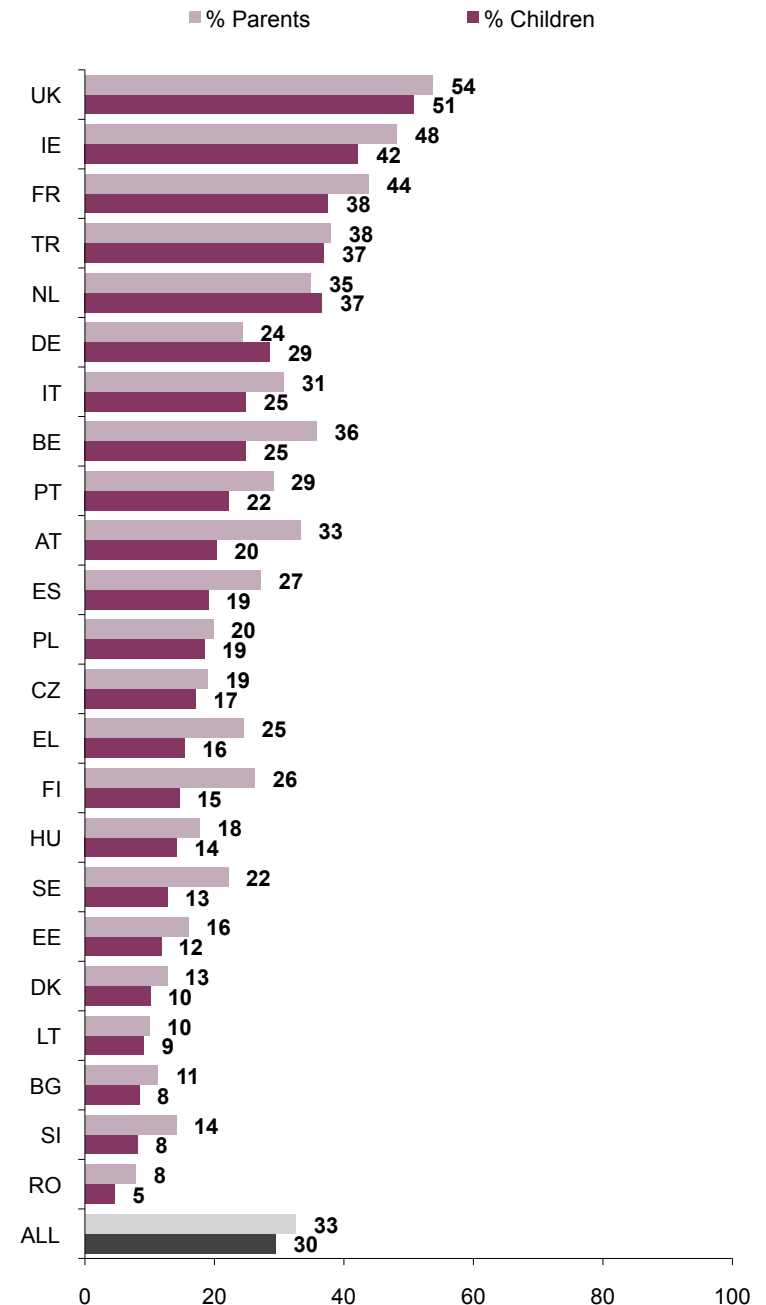
- Parents claim to use these slightly more than children (33% vs/ 30%)
- There is little difference by gender and SES, but controls are less used the older the child, only being used by about a fifth (21%) of parents of 15-16 year olds,



Parental controls

Country differences

- Huge variation by country
- Ranging from 54% in the UK to 8% in Romania (according to parents)
- In general they are less used in many of the Eastern European countries and most used in the English speaking ones
- Apart from Germany parents always claim to use controls more than the children say they do, markedly so in a few countries (Austria, Finland, Sweden, Belgium, Greece).





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Raising the awareness of parents: Sources of information on safe use of the internet

EU Kids Online, October 2010

Brian O'Neill

Parents' actual sources of information



- Parents get internet safety advice from family and friends (46%), then traditional media (32%), the child's school (27%), internet service providers (22%) and websites (20%).
- Those with younger children (9-12 years) are a little more likely to get advice from their child's school.
- 12% say they have received safety information from their own child.
- One in seven parents reports getting no advice from any of these sources.

%	Age of child				All
	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	
Family and friends	48	47	47	44	46
Television, radio, newspapers or magazines	31	31	34	33	32
Your child's school	29	31	24	24	27
Internet service providers	24	20	22	21	22
Websites with safety information	21	18	21	19	20
From my child	8	12	14	16	12
Manufacturers and retailers selling the products	10	10	9	9	9
Government, local authorities	7	7	8	6	7
Children's welfare organisations/charities	5	4	5	3	4
Other sources	11	8	8	9	9
None, I don't get any information about this	14	13	14	17	14

Parents' desired sources of information



- The child's school is the most popular choice at 42%, while friends and family drop to third place at 28%.
- Online sources are not unpopular – one quarter would like to receive safety information from their internet service provider or from websites, and one in five would like such information from government (compared with only 7% who report this as an actual source of information).
- Around one in ten say that they don't want further information on internet safety.

%	Age of child				All
	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	
Your child's school	45	46	42	35	42
Television, radio, newspapers or magazines	29	30	33	32	31
Family and friends	29	29	26	28	28
Internet service providers	26	24	25	22	24
Websites with safety information	23	23	23	22	23
Government, local authorities	19	20	20	17	19
Manufacturers and retailers selling the products	16	16	14	13	15
Children's welfare organisations/charities	12	12	12	11	12
From my child	8	10	13	13	11
Other sources	8	6	6	7	7
None, I don't want more information about this	9	8	8	10	9