

Belgium

With regard to online use and activities, the living room is still the most popular location for internet use; private access in the bedroom is less common in Belgian families. More initiatives on the use of internet at school would be welcome in Belgium given the relatively low figure on internet use at school, and the lower percentage of children using the internet for schoolwork). More attention to digital literacy is highly recommended, especially in primary education, Since “digital literacy” in secondary schools has only recently been implemented from a cross-curricular perspective (i.e. not as a separate subject), it is important to monitor how schools and teachers implement it in their classes. More guidelines and practical tools to support schools and teachers need to be developed. Creative internet use is higher in Belgium compared to the EU average. The use of webcams, filesharing-sites and blogs are all more popular in Belgium. Children in Belgium rank about average taking into account all types of internet activities.

Although Belgian stakeholders believe that Belgian parents mainly mediate their children's internet use in a restrictive way, the survey results show that also less restrictive forms of mediation and communication are common practice in Belgian households. Given the importance of teachers and peers in the development of digital skills and their potential positive impact on the development of children's adequate coping strategies (resilience), policy makers should encourage teacher and peer mediation.

In addition, Belgian stakeholders emphasise the importance of:

- surveying/monitoring the child's perception of online risks, opportunities and mediation from parents, peers and teachers in order to have a better view on how initiatives on safer internet use have an impact on the child's behaviour and perceptions;
- taking cultural and political differences into account when developing initiatives on awareness raising, digital literacy and internet safety, given Belgium's two main language communities;
- equipping important stakeholders (other than parents and teachers) working in the area of youth services (social workers, youth movements, etc.) with the necessary skills; often their ICT skills are insufficient and they feel insecure about how to guide children in the online world.