

Dear parents,

We are very happy that your child is participating in the fourth year of the Klasse2000 programme. This programme wants to advance your child's healthy development. Your child already learned a lot about how he or she can contribute to his or her own health and well being.

This year the children will find out how their brain works and how studying can be made easy. They will also look into the effects of frequent TV consumption and computer use on the brain.

Yet another major topic for this year is rejecting tobacco and alcohol. Children of primary school age should under no circumstances smoke or drink alcohol, because of the enormous damage this can cause to their still growing organisms. They stand a much higher risk of becoming addicted than adults. Our recommendation: It is best to never start smoking and not to drink alcohol before the age of 16 or 18. But still - your child will experience situations where others will provoke him or her to smoke or drink. Many children experience such situations already when they are between 10 and 13. Klasse2000 prepares your child for such situations, enabling him or her to argue against it with self-confidence.

Of course, you - as parents - are the most important role models for dealing with tobacco and alcohol. It is obvious that it would be best, if you did not smoke and consume alcohol only moderately. But nobody is perfect. So, if you happen to smoke discuss it with your child openly. Explain that smoking can become an addiction which is very hard to escape from. This is much better than trying to pretend that smoking is something altogether normal and harmless.

Sincerely yours

Thomas Duprée
Manager

Subjects covered by Klasse2000 in the fourth grade:

My brain - better than any computer!

The children will explore their body's control centre - the brain, by finding out how it works, how studying works and how they can help the process. They get guidance from KLARO's homework tips and hints which are easy to follow and will lay a sound basis for successful studying:

- o **Food for energy!** (Eat three large and two small meals every day. Fresh fruit is the best afternoon snack. Drink lots of water!)
- o **Fresh air for fresh energy!** (You feel tired and can't remember anything? That's when you need a fresh supply of oxygen! Open the window and air the room.)

- o **No distractions!** (Turn everything off - computer, music, TV...- and remove everything from your desk that might distract you from your homework.)
- o **Rocking to wake up!** (If all else fails, take a break to release some energy. Do something like dancing to your favourite song and you will certainly feel much better afterwards.)
- o **No stress!** (Are you cross with anybody, are there any problems that get you down? Try to talk to somebody about it and to solve the problem. You will see how much easier studying will be afterwards.)

No thanks to alcohol and tobacco!

What do alcohol and cigarettes do to my body? Is smoking and drinking a steady feature of being an adult? The children will hold a survey and form their own opinions about the issue. At the end of this unit the children decide how they personally want to handle alcohol and nicotine.

Real friends - false friends

How can you tell a really good friend? There will be a critical discussion of the concept of "friendship". We recognize peer pressure for what it is. In role plays the children learn to face such pressure and to be able to say 'no' with confidence.

Background information on the "The Brain":

Electronic media are conquering the nurseries and are a steady companion for many children every day. Their experience with these media is certainly not only that of educational software, but more frequently of violent computer or internet games. Even afternoon TV shows show violence - either physical or verbal.

What will children learn from this?

Recent results from brain research indicate that a person's brain structure is altered by what he or she sees, hears or does. The rule that frequent repetition has a learning effect does not only apply to school subjects, but also to violent computer games and TV shows. They change the way of thinking! People get used to violence when they watch it on TV or in computer games very often. It becomes something normal, part of every day life.

This does not necessarily mean that they commit violent crimes - but it certainly enhances the willingness to tolerate or even resort to violence to solve problems.

Children watching lots of TV have no time for other things, like talking to people, reading, playing, being physically active, interacting with others.... . Research has shown that the length of TV and computer consumption negatively affects performance at school.

Sitting in front of the TV means less physical activity, eating more and in the long run - getting fat.

Electronic media like TV and computers also have a downside. Therefore one must carefully observe how intensively the children are using these media, what shows they are watching and which games they are playing.

What you can do at home:

At school the children will critically examine the question: What is best for the development of my brain - doing things with my friends or family or sitting in front of the TV by myself?

That is the basis on which you can build as parents, it will help you to convince your child why TV and computer times have to be strictly limited and observed carefully. Because, no matter what we do at school, ultimately this responsibility rests with you - the parents!

- **Get involved!**

Watch shows or play the games together with your child sometimes and discuss them afterwards. Don't leave the child alone with its emotions and experience. Ask the child why he or she finds these games/shows so fascinating and look for alternatives together. Prohibit watching certain shows and playing certain games, always giving the reasons for your decision.

- **Set a time limit!**

Limit the time for TV or computer use by the child. Children of elementary school age should spend no more than *45 to 60 minutes* in front of the TV or computer every day. See to it that your child spends much more time with other activities such as reading, playing with friends, sports or just playing outdoors.

- **TV and computers are no 'babysitters'!**

Many children end up before the screen out of sheer boredom. Offer to do something together with the child as an alternative. Avoid using the computer as a 'babysitter'.

- **TV and computers are no education tools!**

Do not use time spent in front of the computer or TV as rewards or penalties, because that would give them too much importance.

Further information on this topic is available at:

www.klicksafe.de/service/familie/alle-klicksafe-tipps/computerspiele
www.flimmo.de

Spitzer, M.: *Vorsicht Bildschirm*. Dtv (2006)

Additional information is also available from the school or from Programm
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