



## How (not) to advertise with children! Joint recommendation of the ÖRT and Hintalovon Foundation

# THREATS

### Digital footprint

Images depicting children and texts about them increase children's "digital footprint," which means they become part of their online presence and influence the development of their online personality. This can be considered as an objective threat, with the child's informed consent and the reluctance to engage a child under the age of 14 in advertising on social media. The internet will not forget!

### Harassment and abuse

The publicity increases the risk of contemporary harassment and misuse of personal data. The risk of this type of child abuse is particularly high if it is included in advertising on a social media interface. Informing children, preparing them in advance and discussing the possibilities of assistance can provide support for them not only in connection with the advertising process, but also beyond that.

### Self-image and body image

Involvement of children in advertising will put their self-confidence on fragile external reinforcement. A child's desire for compliance and recognition may even lead to the abandonment of self-identical, natural behavior, which, in more severe cases, may result in disruption of self-image and body image, or sexualize the child.

### World view and values

Involvement in advertising can influence children's perception of reality, overestimating the role of appearances. Since advertising is a constructed reality, with specific laws and peculiarities, understanding it (especially for young children) imposes a special responsibility on adults.

### Uncertainty

In the case of content produced by Influencer, the use of the accompanying child as an advertising tool unobtrusively discolours the parent-child relationship. If the child involved by the influencer parent is not yet able to assess exactly what is happening, he or she can easily misinterpret the parent's behaviour — for example, he or she doesn't understand what his or her reaction is actually about or why what is allowed another time. You should be prepared with the parent on how to reduce this risk.

### Intimacy is injured

Excessive desire to share content can distract parent and child from experiencing the present and hinder them from spending quality family time. The demand for involvement of the child can create excessive expectations in the parent, increasing dishonest behaviour, destroying trust and unconditional acceptance, which can also affect the child's other human relationships. Advertising content can therefore, in the long run, call into question the authenticity of shared memories in a child and affect the relationship with the parent.

### Digital awareness

Advertising-related online activities (posting, image sharing, engaging consumers in such activities through the use of hashtags and rewarding them) increase the number of images of minors on social media, thereby increasing their digital footprint; respectively. in many cases, they act against safe internet use (e.g. bathing, lulling to sleep, using or sharing devices around intimate moments) and may contribute to the sexualization of children.



## What to consider before using a child for advertising

Do you need a child actor?

What does advertising have to do with children?

Would it be just biodiversity?

Do you know what you add your face to?

Is the dignity of the child respected in the advertisement?

What age child should be involved in the advertisement?

## MINIMUM STANDARDS

### 1. Informed substantive consent from the child appearing in the advertisement.

*Every child in advertising has the right to be informed in a way that he or she can understand before the start of the advertising process about what product he or she is going to advertise; why there is a need for a child actor in the advertisement, how the product relates to children, life of families raising children, what abilities, skills or life situation characteristics of the child and how it will be presented and what content elements the contract for his or her involvement has. The information provided for the child and the parent should also cover the means, how and for how long the advertising will be available. The information shall draw the child's attention to the fact that he or she may reasonably withdraw his or her consent to participate at any time during the production process. It is also recommended to prove the exercise of the child's right to information over the age of 12 by signing the certificate of the information in addition to the parent's signature.*

### 2. Respect for the human dignity of the child.

*Accordingly, a child should not be portrayed in a humiliating, vulnerable, extremely ridiculous (e.g., crying, smeared, defiant, injured, quarreling, unconscious) situation and should not be used to set a bad example.*

*Violation of a child's human dignity can include, for example, a nude, half-naked photograph, portrait or other image of him or her, or any depiction when the child is in an intimate situation.*

### 3. Protection of child's privacy.

*In order to protect the right to privacy, sharing the child's name, any personal data, or personal status with the public at any point in the advertising process is not recommended unless it is in the best interests of the child and the child has given his or her express consent.*

*The protection of the child's privacy must be taken into account, in particular, in advertising activities where the child appears in his or her own family, with his or her parents, friends or in situations closely connected with family life.*

### 4. Protection of the child from violence.

*At all points in the advertising process, it should be kept in mind that legislation in Hungary provides for zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse. Children must not be subjected to physical or emotional abuse, verbal abuse, online harassment or sexual abuse during the advertising process. In addition, it is forbidden to place a child in a humiliating, demeaning, vulnerable or shameful situation during the advertising process. The protection of the child must also be ensured in the period after the publication of the advertisement and information appropriate to his or her age must be given as to whom to turn to and ask for help in case of physical and mental violence caused by the advertisement.*

### 5. Protection of the child from exploitation.

*It is considered exploitation of a child if the legal regulations concerning the employment of persons under the age of eighteen are violated during the production of the advertisement. (child labour) The risk of exploitation can be significantly reduced by informing and preparing the child in advance, in a manner adequate to his/her age, for the entire duration of advertising.*

### 6. Predominance of the best interests of the child.

*The responsibility of adults who decide to involve a child in connection with an advertisement (client, advertiser, principal) basically covers three areas. To decide whether it is necessary to involve the child in advertising, how to involve him or her, how it will affect the child his or her family and the community in which he or she lives and what message it carries for society.*

**Compliance with and explanation of the minimum standards as well as the preparation of the child are of high importance.**