



A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education

News from Czech Republic

"Don't text your crush when you're mad"—

just one of the priceless tips Czech students gave us while talking about their online lives.

Behind the jokes, though, are serious questions:

How do kids feel about social media? Who do they turn to when something goes wrong?

And what can schools, parents, and teachers do to help—without taking over?

The Czech team of the ASAP project listened closely. Here's what we learned and how we responded.



Preadolescents in Czechia are highly connected – over 90% own smartphones and spend 2–4 hours online on school days. Most use YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram. While many online moments are lighthearted, serious issues also exist: one in six children encountered distressing content, and several described receiving unwanted messages or inappropriate photos. Despite this, most would not approach an adult.

As one student said: *"Mum would make a huge deal out of it – I'd rather solve it myself."*



The findings revealed a strong desire for autonomy among children and a reluctance to confide in adults. Reasons ranged from fear of being judged or punished to simply not wanting a "lecture." One child noted, "You do 99 things right, and they still talk only about the one mistake."

Teachers confirmed that when problems arise, it's often "three months after the fact" and that students prefer sharing with peers or school psychologists over parents. Parents, on the other hand, admitted: *"Sometimes I'm not patient enough when my kids want to talk."*

[Read here the research report](#)

Pilots: how Learning Units (LUs) are working

The Czech team tested all 6 LUs – *Emotions, Communication, Onlife, Role Models, Authenticity, and Power of Questions* – across several classes.

In **Emotions**, children explored feelings deeply, going beyond emojis. One reflection stood out: *"Words are like clothes we put on others – we should choose them with care."*

Role Models triggered meaningful discussions, with students naming people like "my grandma" or "a classmate who helped me when I cried" – showing the value of everyday kindness.

In **Onlife**, mapping personal digital habits sparked laughter and self-awareness: "It's crazy how much I'm online without realising."

Teachers appreciated the ready-made, well-paced format. One said: *"These are activities I can use right away without over-preparing, and they actually make students think."*



Rather than creating a new LU, ProEduca provided complete activity plans for all six LUs, carefully adapted to Czech school settings. Each plan includes:

- step-by-step instructions,
- suggested timings,
- and simplified alternatives for time-pressed teachers.

This approach was shaped by teachers' feedback: *"We don't need more theory – we need something we can just pick up and do."*



National events: highlights from Czechia

ICOLLE 2024, Brno – At this international conference, ProEduca presented ASAP at its early stages, just after completing our desk research. The session triggered strong interest in the topic of digital well-being and child autonomy online.

Mid-term hybrid conference, České Budějovice (April 2024) – Over 200 participants joined ProEduca and ASAP team in person and online. The event featured partial research results and 5 keynote speakers from Czech NGOs and universities.



A fun moment during ASAP

During an Emotions workshop, kids created worksheets with “life wisdom.” Some gems:

“Never eat dishwasher tablets.”

“Always carry toilet paper.”

“Don't text your crush when you're mad.”

Their honesty and humor reminded us that even digital education is better when it's human, real, and a little silly.

ProEduca findings in Czech Republic made one thing clear: children don't need more control, they need better understanding. As we bring ASAP into classrooms, we invite schools and families to join us in building a culture of openness, safety, and shared responsibility—because digital wellbeing is not a one-person job.

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