هيئــة أبوظــي للطفــولة المبكـــرة
Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority

Efforts to protect young children online & promote healthy use of technology

Presentation for ITU Committee

January 26th, 2021

Brief about ECA

Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority
هيئـــة أبوظـــبي للطفــولة المبكــرة

Our Vision

Every young child is **healthy**, **confident**, **curious**, able to learn and develop **strong** values in a safe, family-friendly Abu Dhabi

Our Objectives

All children have the necessary personal foundations for healthy physical and social-emotional **development** and early **learning**

All children live in a **stable** and **secure** environment and are **protected** from harm and danger

Parents are **confident** and have the capabilities to **support** their children's holistic development and well-being

Our Targets

Health & nutrition

Children Ages 0–8

Parents, Caregivers & Families

Family support

Community

Policymakers & Government Entities

Child protection

Practitioners & Professionals

Private & Third Sector Entities
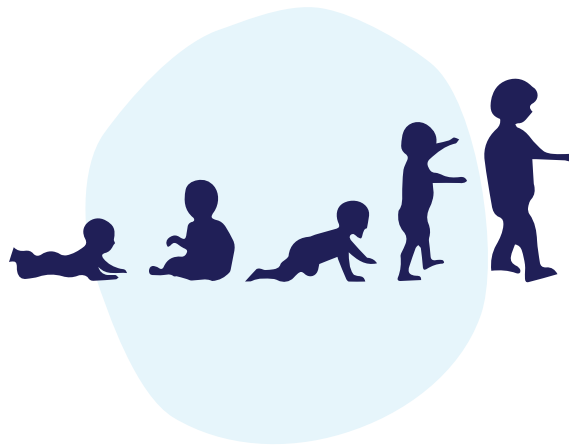
Early care & education

Higher & Applied Education Entities

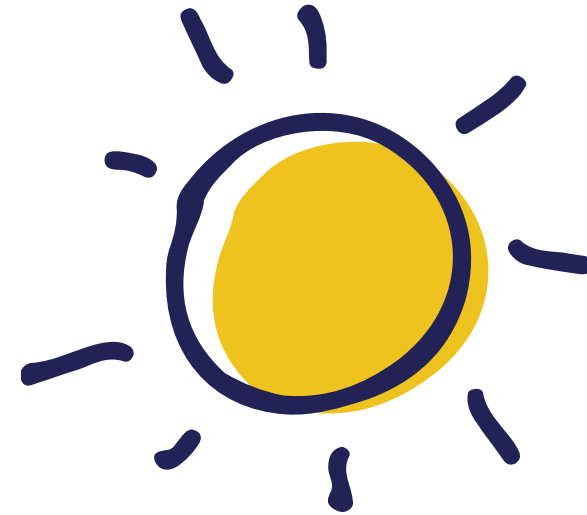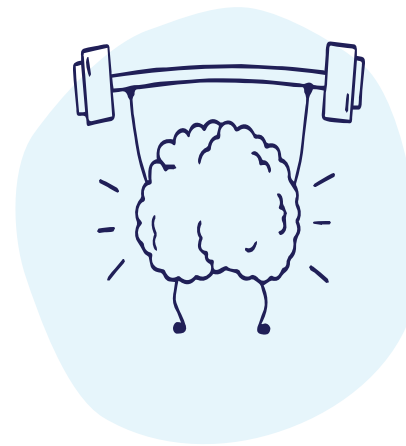# Early childhood development – the importance of this age group

Early childhood development influences lifelong health

The years between **0-5** are considered crucial for brain development as the brain develops most between these years

These years are forming the foundation to the child's thinking, behavior, emotional wellbeing, regulatory skills

The importance of raising the topic of online protection with parents and this age group

The early years is the **crucial time** to introduce **online safety**

For Children

Very young children have access to smart devices with limited or no parental settings

The age of children being targeted online by sexual predators is sadly getting younger and younger
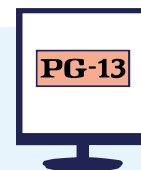
With Parents

For parents to educate their children about online risks at a young age to instill healthy digital habits

Encourage parents to lead by example and be aware of the increased risks as children get older, when they seek more independence and online privacy

To prepare parents for the next online milestones and consider balancing the benefits and risks by installing privacy features, parental controls and supervising young children online
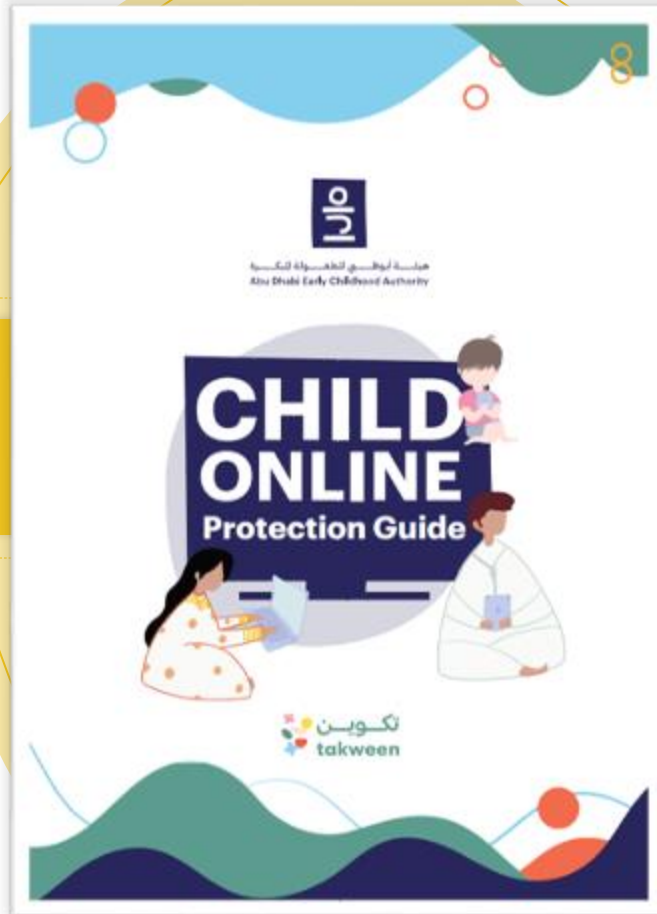
Inform parents that younger children can be exposed to inappropriate content by other members of the household and family contracts and agreements can be introduced as a preventative tool

PG-13

Guides developed by the ECA

First comprehensive guide of this nature developed in the region

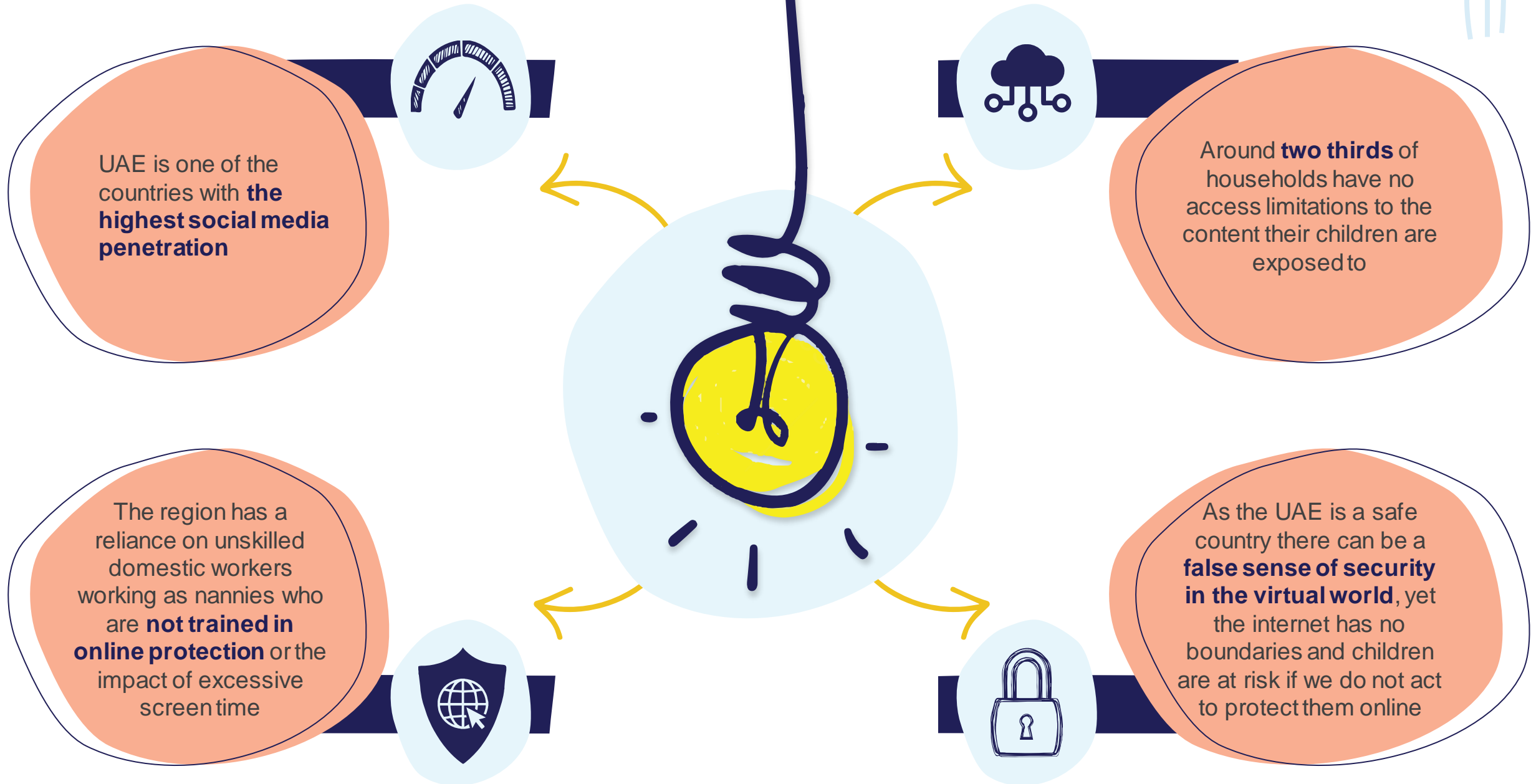**Child Online Protection Guide for parents with children in the Early Years**

Healthy Use of Technology Guidelines for parents with children in the Early Years

Available in English and Arabic

Our motivation to launch the guides in Abu Dhabi

UAE is one of the countries with **the highest social media penetration**

Around **two thirds** of households have no access limitations to the content their children are exposed to

The region has a reliance on unskilled domestic workers working as nannies who are **not trained in online protection** or the impact of excessive screen time

As the UAE is a safe country there can be a **false sense of security in the virtual world**, yet the internet has no boundaries and children are at risk if we do not act to protect them online

Summary of the guides' content
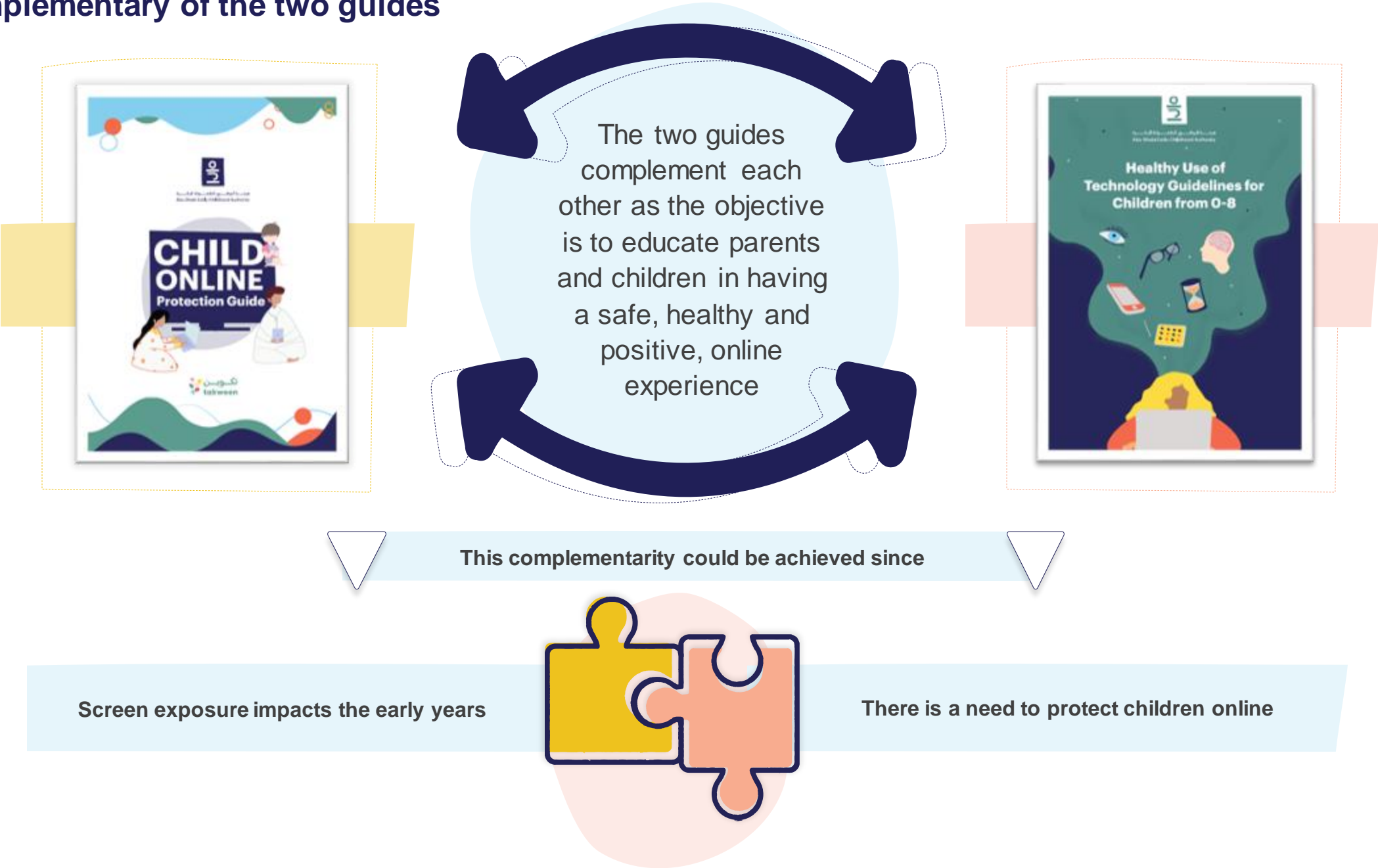
Child Online Protection Guide

- Benefits of the internet
- Risks in online activity
- Guidance for parents and home help
- Information and tools to prepare for the next milestone and social media
- Gaming, live streaming and associated risks
- Downloadable tools and information on healthy digital habits
- Parental settings and family digital contracts
- Using technology to protect
- What to do if you are concerned about your child
- Reporting in the UAE
- A multitude of resources for parents and children in the early years

Healthy Use of Technology Guidelines for Children from 0 – 8

- Facts about screen exposure and recommended screen time
- Harms of excessive screen time
- Tips for parents to manage screen time
- Typical personas of Abu Dhabi parents to relate to
- Step by step guide to limit screen time
- Ergonomics

Complementary of the two guides

CHILD ONLINE Protection Guide

The two guides complement each other as the objective is to educate parents and children in having a safe, healthy and positive, online experience

Healthy Use of Technology Guidelines for Children from 0-8

This complementarity could be achieved since

Screen exposure impacts the early years

There is a need to protect children online

Guides promotion channels

Takween Summer Programme

- Number of Webinar : 210
- Number of attendees : 35,310
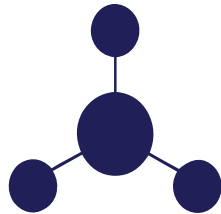
Parents Platform

هيئـــــة أبوظـــــي للطفــــــولة المبكــــرة
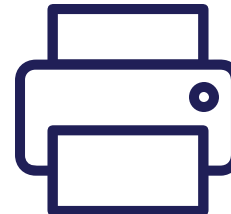**Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority**

- Parent's Platform Visitors: 131,625
- Total Number of Resources in the Parent's Platform: 202
- Total Number of guides downloaded: 2,617

ECA social media

- Total Number of Posts in all Platforms: 1,246
- Number of followers in all Platforms : 11,865
- Total impressions in total platform : 10,823,678
- Total Number of Engagement in all platform : 231,045

Print Channels

- Number of Activity boxes Printed (Arabic): 1,000
- Number of Activity boxes Printed (English): 1,000

Current Efforts

Promotion through education agencies

Promotion through animated videos 77 animated video

Next steps for the ECA

Online safety of children is a key factor as we develop the holistic child protection system for Abu Dhabi

1 **Include child online protection within the Abu Dhabi Safe Schools prevention program**

In collaboration with our partners ADEK and the Ministry of Education by embedding child protection key topics into the school curriculum

2 **Include child online protection initiatives**

Within the Abu Dhabi child protection awareness-raising strategy

3 **Use advanced technology applications to educate children/ parents/ professionals**

On protecting children online with immersive experiences to change attitudes and online behaviors

4 **Introduce an *Early Years Online Safety Program***

To nursery schools across Abu Dhabi

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للطفــولة
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Abu Dhabi
Early
Childhood
Authority

Thank You