

MOM'S PHONE

Kaitlin was seven. She wore little cat ears to school and always had on sports shoes. She loved climbing, trying it out on trees, at the jungle gym, quite frankly, anywhere. Kaitlin's family had recently relocated to Frankfurt, and she loved Germany. Her new school was big, kids came from all around the world, and it was exciting to be there. There was a big park close to her house, and she went there almost daily after school, meeting with her friends and the local children. German kids were so free at the parks, and they had the coolest playgrounds.

Kaitlin's mom Jen hollered, "Not that one Kaitlin. I think it is too dangerous." Jen was sitting on the bench with her girlfriends. She looked over at her new best friend Sophia, "I can't believe they allow this? It is so dangerous." "I know but at the same time look how much fun they are having." One of her German friends Petra laughed, "You Americans are too careful. Let them climb."

Every day when Kaitlin got home from the playground, she wanted to google the German words she had heard. She had a little notebook and had other kids write in it, and she also wrote down the new words she learned. She was like a little detective in search of new words and this new language. Jen thought this was cute and had a whole stack of small notebooks from Ikea, keeping one in her handbag just in case.

On Friday Kaitlin had to leave the park early with her mom. They were going to her big sister's piano recital. It was a bit further away at a theater, and Kaitlin was bored in the car. "Can I have your phone Mama? I want to look up my new German words." Her mom smiled back at her, "Oh honey, you are going to be speaking German in no time. You are so much better than I am." At the next stoplight Jen fished her phone out of her handbag, unlocked it and handed it to Kaitlin.

The back of the car was silent as Kaitlin started to search for words. Then all of the sudden there was noise and it sounded like porn. Kaitlin screeched, "Mama,

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there is something wrong with your phone.”

Jen immediately pulled over and took the phone. Kaitlin was on a porn site! “What were you searching?” She handed her Mom the booklet.

Vielleicht von heute an kann ich immer kommen. Ich frage mal meine Mama. *
“Mom look I just searched those first two words.” This was true but as a seven-year-old, she didn’t always spell words correctly. There is a porn star called Velicity Von and she landed on her videos. Jen was horrified when she realized what had happened and had to sit down and talk to Kaitlin. She didn’t know what to say, so she just said, “There is bad stuff online. I am sorry you saw that. Just forget about that crazy lady who posted those images.”

*I can come every day from now on. I’ll ask my mom.

Guiding Questions for Parents:

- It is so tempting to hand our kids our phones. Many advise against it and yet most parents do this. How can you tackle the issue of your child coming across inappropriate content, maybe even porn?
- Has anything similar happened to any of you and would you be willing to share your experience?
- How many of you put safety filters on the devices your children use? You can’t hide everything by using them, but which ones are you happy with?
- Did Jen do a good job dealing with this situation? What approach could she have taken?
- What is media balance? Do you balance your media use?

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Guiding Questions for Students:

- Even if you are sure you are googling a word that is normal this kind of thing can happen. What should you do if this happens?
- What should you do if you hear words and you want to know what they mean but you don't want to find this kind of thing online?
- What is media balance? Do you balance your media use?

Topic: Digital Literacy

Age: Primary School and Parent Session