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Four to eight, and still open

Why Uggadugu names a stage, recommends an age range and locks no one out.

The reasoning drawn from Lehrplan 21, the screen-time recommendations and special needs practice. With the wording used consistently across every text in the app.



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Uggadugu

THE DECISION

One phrasing, everywhere the same

Uggadugu is built for children in cycle 1: kindergarten to grade 2, usually four to eight years. This wording appears in the app, on the website, in the guide and in every document. It is a recommendation and never a condition.

The stage carries the weight

Lehrplan 21 defines its cycles by school years, not by birth years. “Kindergarten to grade 2” therefore also covers the child who is already nine while in grade 2.

The age gives orientation

Four to eight says in half a sentence what this is about. It appears where stage names are of no use: in search results, in app directories, in a conversation at a parents’ evening.

Nothing is locked

The app never asks for an age, never stores one and never infers one. There is no line of code that depends on an age.

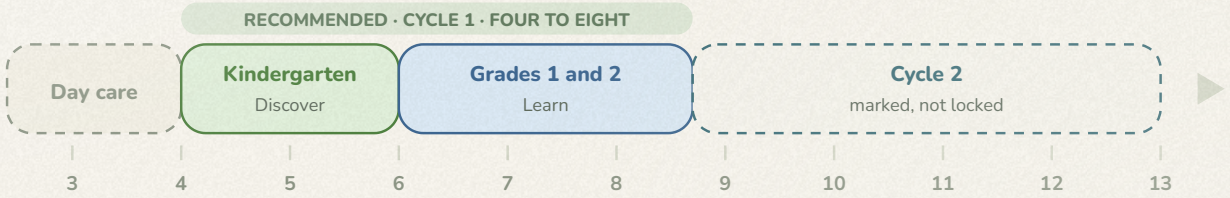
IN ONE LINE

For children from four to eight years, kindergarten to grade 2.

IN THREE LINES

Uggadugu is built for cycle 1: kindergarten to grade 2, usually four to eight years. What counts is the stage, not the date of birth. You can release any activity at any time, even outside this range.

AGE IN YEARS



The track runs straight through. The green marking is the recommendation, not a barrier. Whatever goes beyond cycle 1 in content carries the “cycle 2” label and can still be released with a single tap.

Three sentences everything comes back to

- **What counts is the stage, not the date of birth.** A child who started school a year later belongs to the same class and works toward the same goals.
- **The recommendation applies to the content, not the child.** It says what the tasks are built for. It does not say who is allowed to use them.
- **The adult decides.** Parents, teachers and specialists release any activity whenever they want, with no detour and no lecture.

✦ THE LOWER BOUND

1 Why the children's offer starts at four

Not because younger children are not capable. Because the professional literature recommends something other than a screen course of their own for the years before, and because the app's tasks are built around learning goals that do not exist before kindergarten.

Screen time under five. The WHO recommends in its 2019 guidelines no more than one hour of sedentary screen time per day for children aged two to four, "less is better", and none at all under two. Pro Juventute gives five to ten minutes a day as the benchmark for two to four years, with the full hour as the exception.

And from four on. The same Pro Juventute recommendation sets thirty to at most sixty minutes a day for **four to eight years**. That is exactly the range Uggadugu is built for, and the reason the app's daily limit is set to thirty minutes out of the box.

For day care, Switzerland follows the framework for early childhood education, care and upbringing. The MEKiSmini study by FHNW, MMI and BFF Bern on digital media in Swiss day-care centres reaches the same conclusion as practice does: media belong in a supervised setting, not in the hands of a single child.

What that means for the years before kindergarten

Day care from about three	Supervised play with printed cards, audio clips and the cuddly toy. The professional leads; the child does not sit alone in front of the device.
No course of its own	For children under four, the app has no learning path, no stage and no recommendation of its own.
Still open	Anyone who wants to let a younger child watch along can. The app stops no one and asks no questions.

The limit of this statement. Screen-time recommendations are benchmarks, not measurements. They do not distinguish between looking at a picture book together and a video that keeps playing on its own. Uggadugu derives a default setting from this, not a truth.

STARTING SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND

The cantons of the HarmoS Concordat harmonised the minimum age for entering kindergarten at the completed fourth year of age, with a cutoff date of 31 July. Four is therefore also the number the school system itself starts from.

EDK, HarmoS Concordat

WHY THE DAILY LIMIT IS THIRTY MINUTES

Because that is the lower value of the recommendation for exactly this age group. It can be changed, upward too.

THE UPPER BOUND

2 Why the recommendation ends at eight, and the content does not

Number range, letter progression, joined-up writing and the clock are built around cycle 1 competences. Whatever goes beyond that is built, marked and freely accessible. It simply does not carry the recommendation.

Cycle 1 ends with grade 2. After that, Lehrplan 21 moves on to different competence levels: the number range grows past a hundred, multiplication and division begin, handwriting becomes joined-up, and orientation leaves the child's own everyday experience. Uggadugu does not cover these areas as a full curriculum, but it offers individual building blocks that connect to them.

OPEN UPWARD, OPEN DOWNWARD TOO

Cycle 1 activities remain fully visible to older children and carry no note about age. Nothing in the app calls a child too young or too old.

WHAT THE LABEL IS NOT

Not an age rating and not a judgement. It describes the content, not the child in front of it.

What is marked as cycle 2

BUILDING BLOCK	WHAT IT DOES	ROUGHLY FOR
Clock: minutes and timetable	Five-minute steps on the dial, spans of time, reading a departure time.	8 to 12 years
Earth: continents and countries	Naming continents, locating countries, comparing sizes and distances.	8 to 12 years
Arithmetic: multiplying and dividing	Rows as repeated addition, dividing as sharing out.	8 to 10 years

The label is a small line of text next to the activity's name. No lock, no greyed-out state, no extra tap. It tells the adult where they stand and leaves the decision to them.

Why this matters for special needs education. A ten-year-old child with a cognitive impairment may well be working toward exactly the goals of cycle 1. An app that locks them out because of their age is useless for school-based special needs education. Conversely, a six-year-old who reads early needs material that goes further. Both paths stay open, without anyone having to enter a number.

> **What matters is the need for support, not the diagnosis.**
>
> Principle of the EDK's Standardised Assessment Procedure

The same sentence, taken one step further: what matters is what the child is working on. Not how old they are while doing it.

HOW IT LOOKS IN THE APP

3 Stage instead of date of birth

The decision not to build an age check is the most consequential one in this paper. It changes how the adult area works, what the app stores, and what it can know about a child at all.

Seven decisions

No age check	No field for date of birth, age or grade. Nowhere, not even as an option, not even on first launch.
Entry by scope	Three buttons: “Small start” with numbers, capital letters and memory, “Full start” with every cycle 1 activity, “Show everything” with all twenty-six.
One line of plain text	“Recommended for kindergarten to grade 2. You can release everything at any time.” Nothing more is said there.
Label instead of lock	Cycle 2 building blocks carry a note next to the name and otherwise behave like any other activity.
One notice, never repeated	Anyone who chooses “Show everything” reads one sentence once, with two buttons: “Understood” and “Do not show again”. It never comes back after that.
Daily limit kept separate	It is its own setting and has nothing to do with age.
Not one word about the child	The app never says “too young” or “too old”. It describes activities, not children.

What this prevents from ever existing. Without an age field there is no date of birth on the device, no inference from learning progress, and no age figure that could travel along when a portfolio is exported. That is the shortest route to data minimisation: the value that was never collected.

The trade-off, stated plainly. Without an age, the app cannot suggest anything tailored to the individual child on first launch. Instead it asks the adult two questions: how much should be visible, and what support does the child need. That is one more tap and one fewer assumption.

THE LINE UNDER THE BUTTONS

Recommended for kindergarten to grade 2. You can release everything at any time.

Wording in the app

THE NOTICE AT “SHOW EVERYTHING”

Every activity is now visible. Some are meant for cycle 2 and may be hard for younger children.

Wording in the app

HOW IT IS WORDED EVERYWHERE

4 One phrasing, nine languages

The number stays the same in every language. What changes is the name of the stage, because “kindergarten to grade 2” does not hold everywhere.

NINE LANGUAGES

German, French, Italian, English, Portuguese, Albanian, Serbian, Swahili and Luganda, each with its own audio clips.

WHAT IS NEVER TRANSLATED

The numbers. Four and eight stay four and eight, even where school systems count differently.

WHERE	WORDING
Short form	for children from 4 to 8 years (kindergarten to grade 2)
Long form in the adult area	Uggadugu is built for cycle 1: kindergarten to grade 2, usually 4 to 8 years. What counts is the stage, not the date of birth. You can release any activity at any time, even outside this range.
Description for search and directories	Learning app for children from 4 to 8 (kindergarten to grade 2): tracing numbers and letters, arithmetic, listening and reading. No account, no advertising, data stays on the device.
Cycle 2 building blocks	marked as cycle 2, roughly for 8 to 12 years in content
Day care and playgroup	under four years, supervised play with cards and audio, no screen course of its own for the child

The stage name by language region

German	Kindergarten bis 2. Klasse
French	de l’école enfantine à la 2e année (1H to 4H)
Italian	dalla scuola dell’infanzia alla 2ª elementare
English	kindergarten to grade 2
Other languages	Portuguese, Albanian, Serbian, Swahili and Luganda name the age. The stage name appears only where the local equivalent has been checked.

Why the wording is fixed, not only the number. Someone who reads one figure on the website and finds a different one in the app does not doubt the number, they doubt the care behind it. For a product built on data minimisation and openly stated limits, a wavering age figure would cost more than it looks like it would.

✦ CHECKING AND SOURCES

What can be verified

1 The home screen states the same range in every one of the nine languages.

2 The description in search engines and directories states the same range as the app.

3 In the adult area, every activity can be released with a single tap, and the notice never appears a second time after that.

4 No screen in the app asks for an age, a date of birth or a grade.

5 No activity is locked, greyed out or hidden behind an extra tap.

Sources

SWISS FRAMEWORK

Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education of German-speaking Switzerland (D-EDK): Lehrplan 21, structure and cycles. Cycle 1 comprises two years of kindergarten and the first two years of primary school. The definition itself does not mention ages.

EDK: Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (HarmoS Concordat), minimum age for kindergarten entry and the cutoff date of 31 July.

EDK: Standardised Assessment Procedure, the principle that need for support governs, not diagnosis.

Swiss Child Care Network (Netzwerk Kinderbetreuung Schweiz) and the Marie Meierhofer Institute: Framework for early childhood education, care and upbringing in Switzerland.

SCREEN TIME

World Health Organization 2019: Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age. No more than one hour of sedentary screen time per day for two to four years, less is better.

Pro Juventute: Screen time, benchmarks by age. Two to four years, five to ten minutes a day; four to eight years, thirty to at most sixty minutes.

School of Social Work FHNW, Marie Meierhofer Institute and BFF Bern, 2023: MEKiSmini, digital media in day-care centres in Switzerland.

FOR CONTEXT

The recommendations cited concern screen time in general and are not tailored to learning applications. They are used here as orientation, not as proof of an effect of Uggadugu.

No efficacy study exists for Uggadugu itself. This paper justifies an age recommendation; it does not claim an effect.



✦ AGE RECOMMENDATION AND STAGE

Where this recommendation does not fit your everyday reality

If a class, a group or a single child falls outside this range and the app gets in the way because of it, that feedback is what counts. The recommendation should guide, and never hold back.

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