

# KEEPING UNDER FIVES SAFE ONLINE

**8 top tips** that you can put in place at home, to help keep your youngest children safe online.

## Enjoy going online together

The best way to keep your family safe online, and to understand your child's internet use, is to use technology and the internet together. Get to know how a game or device works by exploring it as a family and finding where the main settings and safety features are.

## Establish clear boundaries

In the same way that you set boundaries for most areas of your children's lives, establish your expectations with technology use and online activities. Creating a family agreement is a useful step, which might include time spent online, where and when devices can be used and what to do if they see something upsetting. You can find the Childnet Family Agreement at [www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation](http://www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation).

## Supervise your child's use

We recommend that you always supervise a young child when they are online as they may stumble across something which could worry, upset or confuse them. Since the internet can be accessed from a number of devices and many of these are portable, we would advise you to keep family and child devices in a busy part of your home e.g. the living room or kitchen. This makes it easier for you to be involved in their technology use and you are right there to answer any questions and help them.

## Consider the quality and quantity of online activities

Young children can be enthusiastic users of technology but try to encourage a healthy mix of online and offline activities. There are some strategies that can be used to help manage the time your child spends online, such as setting time limits or using time limiting tools, designating weekly times to use the internet together, or removing portable devices from your child's bedroom at night to avoid tiredness.

## Make use of parental tools

Make use of **parental controls and filters** which can be used on your home internet, devices, phone networks and online services such as Netflix and YouTube.

Visit the Parents' Guide to Technology on the UK Safer Internet Centre website to find out how to set up controls on a device [www.saferinternet.org.uk/parent-tech](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/parent-tech).

Visit [www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls](http://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls) to find out how you can set up controls on your home internet, phone network and online services such as Netflix.

Parental controls will work best in combination with supervision and engagement to help your child understand how to stay safe online. As your child grows and develops, so do their online needs, therefore you may want to periodically review your parental controls to accommodate this.

Always remember to choose a strong password and do not share it with your child.





## Start the conversation early

It's important to begin the conversation about staying safe online as early as possible in order to establish positive behaviour and routines early in a child's life. The age that you should begin speaking to your child will differ between families but essentially as they start engaging with technology and the internet these conversations can and should begin. Try using the conversations below to help you with this.

You can also give your child strategies early on that they can use if something ever worries or upsets them online. These could include: switch the screen off, close the laptop, exit the website, or turn the iPad or phone over and come ask for help.



## Choose age appropriate apps and games

Gaming may be the very first way that your child encounters life online and there are lots of fantastic online games and apps to support their learning and development. When choosing a new game or app for your child the first thing to be aware of is the age rating. Much like films, games have age ratings too and these are determined by the game's content. PEGI ([pegi.info](http://pegi.info)) set these ratings along with content descriptors which indicate if a game contains things like violence, in app purchases or scenes of a sexual nature. Google Play and Windows Store apps are also rated by PEGI and the App Store has age ratings too.

You can also proactively find great age appropriate apps and games for young children to use by filtering by age at [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org). Common Sense Media is a website which provides reviews and lots of useful information on games but they also cover films, apps, TV shows, websites, books, and music too. Reading online reviews of games from other parents' experiences is a really useful way to highlight potential safety issues like whether the game features inappropriate adverts or bad language.

Many games also offer in-app purchases which means spending real money on in-game features. You can turn off in-app purchases and protect them with a password. To find more information about how to do this visit [www.childnet.com/in-app-purchases](http://www.childnet.com/in-app-purchases).



## Know where to report

Reports can be made to websites through their safety/help centres and moderation services. If you are worried or suspicious about someone who contacts your child online report them to CEOP ([www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)). For more information regarding reporting, visit our Need Help page in the parents and carers section of the Childnet website [www.childnet.com/parents-help](http://www.childnet.com/parents-help).

## Conversation starters for under 5s



- Q - What is your favourite thing to do on the iPad/tablet/my phone etc?
- Q - What is your favourite game/app and why do you like it?
- Q - Where do we use the iPad/tablet/games console and when can we use it?
- Q - What can you do if something online upsets you?
- Q - Who can help you with your favourite games and apps?
- Q - If a message appears on the screen, what should you do?
- Q - Who can go online? Do we know everyone online?