

A guide for  
parents & carers

# Young children and screen time

– a good start





# What is most important?

1. Use digital devices together with your child
2. Think through the rules you want to set for media and technology use at home
3. Learn more about services, content, technology and age ratings
4. Teach children good internet habits early on – you are their most important role model!





## 2. What rules do you want to set for media and technology use at home?

Clear family rules can help your child have a positive start to their digital life and get the most out of being online. Ask your child to help create some family rules.

### HELP YOUR CHILD ACCESS APPROPRIATE CONTENT

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your child use them.
- Create shortcuts and install appropriate apps on devices used by your child.

- Agree positive family rules together with your child.  
Include which fun, interesting and engaging activities s/he is allowed to do online. How do adults spend time on devices? Can the family agree screen-free times e.g. meal times? Consider reducing media use before bedtime and overnight. Are some areas of the home easier to supervise your child?
- Which online services is your child allowed to use?  
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and videos that are age-appropriate. Create shortcuts or links for your child to use. Install appropriate apps on mobile devices used by your child. Do you want your child to download games and apps themselves? How much money can they spend?
- Will the same rules apply when your child is visiting friends or relatives?  
Can older siblings act as good digital role models? What advice would they give to their younger siblings? Tell family and friends about your family rules and parental controls. Share ideas for family-friendly websites,  
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- What options do the devices/services your child will be using have?

Will your child have his/her own device, use your device or is there a shared family device?

Is there an option to adapt the device/service to your child's needs?

Check if your child's device allows you to lock parts of the screen – so they can stick to one activity.

Some websites, apps and services have a

## Purchases in games and apps

In many games and apps, you can progress faster in the game if you spend money. Some games allow players to gamble or trade as part of the game. This could be real money or it could be virtual money, stars, gold bars, useful items in the game, or other things you earn by playing.

Free games, apps and services may get income from showing adverts. They may sell personal information to advertisers. They may also encourage users to buy new games or apps.

Children may not understand the difference between virtual and real money in games. Many games are so intuitive that children spend money in the game without the help of an adult. They could spend real money without realising it or their parents/carers being aware.

You can restrict the ability to spend money on most mobile devices e.g. by setting a password. Here are some tips:

- The app store will usually state if you

## 4. Teach your child responsible internet use early on

Both adults and children enjoy sharing moments with family and friends through online images and videos. Taking photos and recording video with mobile devices is fun for young people. There have been cases of young people sharing images online without realising and without parents/carers being aware.

### ASK BEFORE SHARING

Always ask permission before sharing or tagging a photo of someone else (adult or child) online.

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As soon as you post anything online, others can share or download it. Here are some tips to consider:

- Should your child be able to share information, photos and videos (with whom)? Should s/he have access to shared photos family and friends?
- Consider the websites, games, apps and other services that your child uses. Could they enable your child to communicate with strangers? Could this be anonymous?
- What information is your child asked to provide when s/he starts using a game, app or website?
- Does your child have access to your contacts? This could be through social media or apps, games and other services.
- Is there an email account on the device your child uses, so they can send emails from it?
- How does the mobile device connect to the internet? Parental controls for blocking content can vary.

There are many options for sharing photos with just a few people of your own choosing. This could be through social media or using a photo album



# Useful links

## Guidance and tools for families

Advice for parents from the UK Safer Internet Centre:

[www.saferinternet.org.uk/parents](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/parents)

Advice on screen time from Common Sense Media:

[www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time)

Family agreement from Childnet:

[www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement](http://www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement)

Digital 5-a-day campaign from the Children's Commissioner for England:

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2017/08/06/digital-5-a-day](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2017/08/06/digital-5-a-day)

Advice for parents from Internet Matters:

[www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls](http://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls)

Device Free Dinner initiative from Comment Sense Media:

[www.commonsensemedia.org/device-free-dinner](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/device-free-dinner)

## Apps and social media

Guides to social media platforms from the UK Safer Internet Centre:

[www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides)

Advice on apps from Internet Matters:

[www.internetmatters.org/advice/apps-guide](http://www.internetmatters.org/advice/apps-guide)

## Games

Advice on games and how to check if they are appropriate for your child:

[www.askaboutgames.com](http://www.askaboutgames.com)

[www.pegi.info/en/index](http://www.pegi.info/en/index)

[www.commonsensemedia.org/reviews](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/reviews)



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