Your child and online gaming

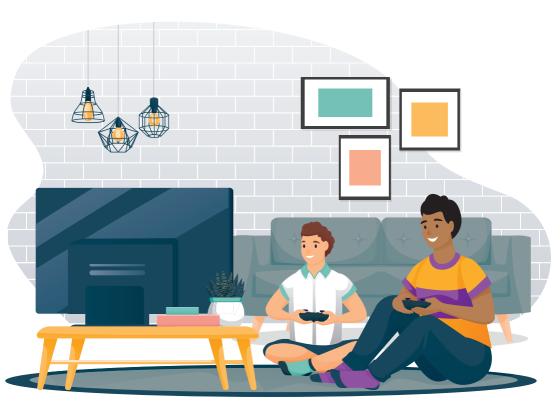

GAMING 4GOOD

GET SAFE ONLINE.org

Community VISION | ERVAS VANL

GAMING 4 GOOD

Your child and online gaming

One of the most popular online pastimes for children, online gaming has both positive and negative aspects. The benefits of gaming can include:

- Developing qualities such as strategic thinking, rationalising, problem solving and persistence
- Supporting development of a wide range of cognitive and motor skills
- Encouraging creativity
- Teaching both teamwork and competitiveness, in the case of many multi-player games
- Teaching competitiveness, again in the case of multiplayer games
- Socialising with friends
- Learning the value of money and spending it wisely.

All of these are qualities are vital not only in gaming, but also in equipping our young people for life ahead of them.

Gaming can also equip children to understand and embrace the latest technology and its benefits.

There's much more information about researching the online games your child does and could play — including content, features, benefits, negatives and age ratings — on the Family Gaming Database at **www.familydatingdatabase.com**

You could also pick up a copy of *Taming Gaming*, a book by gaming expert Andy Robertson who has been helping families get more from video games for 15 years.

#gaming4good

Working with your child

The Ofcom survey of children's internet usage in 2023* revealed these key findings:

- Around **9 in 10** children aged **3-17** played games online
- **25%** of children aged **8-17** played games online with people they don't know, and **22%** chatted to people they don't know when gaming.

It is very important that you understand and support your child's interest in online gaming. Like many parents, you may have little or no interest in it yourself, but there are things you can do to both encourage them to find the best games as well as helping them avoid the negative aspects mentioned above. You may even start gaming yourself and find a new hobby. But remember, always set a good example to your children.

* Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2023, Ofcom

The risks

Risks to children who play games online arise largely from the vast number of people both in the UK and abroad who are also playing, the minimal restrictions and the fact that they are not playing face-to-face.

- Playing games with an inappropriate age rating, potentially exposing them to violent, sexual or other unsuitable content.
- Playing games which either reference gambling, or involve gambling to, for example, predict results or win money.
- Running up bills (for example, on in-game properties/in-app purchases), perhaps on your credit card.
- Spending excessive time gaming, to the exclusion of social contact, exercise and schoolwork, and potential health risks.
- Stranger danger - either grooming or manipulation into negative or harmful activities
- Financial or identity theft to you if your child overshares personal family information online..
- Cybercriminals using gaming platforms and forums to recruit young people for malware coding and/or money muling.
- Some radicalisation also begins on gaming platforms.

Keep your child's online gaming safe

- **Work with your child** to find the best games for their age, interests and personality.
- Check PEGI (Pan European Game Information) **age ratings of games** to ensure your children aren't accessing inappropriate content.
- **Join your child** in online gaming from time to time and randomly. This will give you an idea of the games they're playing and who they connect with.
- **Have open and honest conversations** with your child about their online gaming and the risks involved including stranger danger, bullying and oversharing. Tell them that not everybody they meet on gaming platforms and forums is who they claim to be.
- **Set and monitor limits** for the amount of daily or weekly time your children spend online gaming.
- You could pre-load some spending money on to their game, but be clear that **when it's gone, it's gone**, and stick to it.
- **Don't give your child access to your payment card details** as extras can be very costly.
- Impress upon your child that **they can come to you or another responsible adult** with any concerns. Depending on their age, you could also discuss **how to report issues** to the gaming platform and/or the police.

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to **Action Fraud** at **actionfraud.police.uk** or by calling **0300 123 2040**. If you are in Scotland, contact **Police Scotland** on **101**.

Safe Internet Use

The internet has revolutionised the way we live our lives — enabling us to read the news, enjoy entertainment, carry out research, book our holidays, buy and sell, shop, network, learn, bank and carry out many other everyday tasks. However, there are a number of risks associated with going online. These result from either visiting malicious websites or inadvertent disclosure of personal information.

GET SAFE ONLINE.org

Community VISION | ERVAS | VANL

www.getsafeonline.org