



**Effect on behaviour:** Constant use of a device and features like auto-play on platforms can be habit forming and encourage children to spend longer using screens.



**Effect on sleep:** Blue light from screens can trick the brain into thinking it's daylight, making it more difficult to get to sleep.



**Effect on the brain:** Screens can have a drug-like effect on children's brains which can make them more anxious.



**How to recognise when screen time is 'too much'** Often a sign that a child is spending too much time on screens is if they start to feel anxious or stressed if they are disconnected or separated from their phone or device.

Lack of sleep and exercise and unwilling to play with toys, engage in crafts, play outside or visit friends may be a sign they need to take a break from their device



## Further information and useful resources:

**BBC Bite Size—Keeping Safe Online.** Watch the clip of Pip and Declan talking about keeping safe online and who to talk to if they are not sure

of something. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zfcvnbk/articles/zkcj92p>

**NSPCC—** Online safety information

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

**Internet matters -** Expert support and age specific practical tips and video clip from [www.internetmatters.org.uk](http://www.internetmatters.org.uk)

**Family Agreement** You can find the Childnet Family Agreement at [www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation](http://www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation).

**Think you Know** is the educational platform by NCA—CEOP which protects children off and online. They have a range of resources for families of young children. Including a series three animated clips, 'Jessie and Friends' along with home learning activities.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

[Jessie & Friends \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/jessie-and-friends/)

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/support-tools/home-activity-worksheets>.

# A Safer Internet for young users



## A guide for families





- **The use of technology in the home has become part of everyday life for many families. Young children are becoming more and more used to using devices to play games and watch videos.**
- **Technology gives families and children a wealth of information to build knowledge**
- **It takes away physical barriers to social connections to make children feel less isolated**
- **It can enhance children's learning and development**
- **Online games and activities can encourage teamwork and creativity.**



**Children regularly use different webs and apps from their parents, and it can be hard to keep up in this ever changing digital world.**

### **How are children using screens?**

69% children use tablets to go online

36% Play games online for nearly 6 hours a week

8-10 of 3-4 year olds who use Youtube watch cartoons and funny videos

52% are online almost 9 hours a week!

## **Keeping Younger Children Safe Online**

### **How can I protect my child?**

**The things that keep children safe online are often similar to those that keep them safe offline.**

1. **Enjoy using the internet and online games 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.
2. **Be a good role model** ∴ Set a good example by your own internet and smart phone use.
3. **Supervise your child's use of online apps and the internet.** Children can soon come across inappropriate content that may have a negative impact on their digital wellbeing. It can be very easy to leave games and websites by clicking on links in adverts etc.
4. **Set up devices safely.** Make use of 'parental tools' on your broadband and devices to prevent children seeing things they shouldn't., 'on devices or within online games and apps, for example disallow location settings so that children don't accidentally share their location with others. Set up passwords to disable in-app purchasing so children don't run up big bills.
5. **Start the conversation early!** It can be hard to know how to talk to your child about staying safe **online**. But, just as you would with other risks and potential danger, It's important to begin the conversation about staying safe as early as possible to establish positive behaviour and routines. The age that you should begin speaking to your child will differ between families, but as they start engaging with technology and the internet these conversations can and should begin.

- 7 **Choose age and development level appropriate games and apps:** Do some research around the types of online games and apps that are available for your child. If online games are too difficult they may become frustrated and angry, particularly for children with SEND. Keep them engaged and learning by using a varied diet of educational games to more fun games featuring favourite TV characters. Some online gaming sites have PEGI ratings in the same way as films. These can be helpful when making appropriate choices. Avoid games which involve playing with others online.
- 8 **Establish clear boundaries in the same way you do for other areas of your children's lives.** This might be an agreement of how much time spent online, where and when. It is important to monitor your child's screen time. Long periods of passive screen time could have a physical effect on their development (eyes, brain, speech, sleep cycle and behaviour!) Ensure that they have opportunities to engage and communicate in the real world especially outdoors and engage in physical activities. Young children may not understand the concept of what the internet is and how it works so find it hard to differentiate between what is real and what is fake! It is important to establish a screen free bed time routine and switch off all devices least half an hour before! Encourage the whole family to switch off and create screen free times and zones!
- 9 **Give your child strategies** early on that they can use if they see something that worries or upsets them. These could include: switching the screen off, close the laptop, exit the website, or turn the iPad or phone over and come ask for help.
- 10 **Know where to report any concerns.** Reports can be made to websites through their help centres. If you are worried about someone who contacts your child you can report to CEOP ([www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk).)