

That
looks fun!

'Got a gaming kid in your family?'

Discussion Starters

Have a relaxed chat with your child

Use these discussion starters to get a chat going about staying safe online. If you do this fairly often in a relaxed and natural way, it will be easy. Your child will also get used to it and not see it as something weird or unusual.

What are your aims here?

1. To help your child enjoy gaming and all the internet has to offer, while being alert to online safety.
2. To convince your child he or she can come to you if there is ever anything to worry about.

Here are some ways to start a chat...

- You are so fast at that - show me how you do it?
- I don't know if I could play as well as you do but I'd love to try, can you show me how the game works?
- What do you do if someone joins the game and bothers you while you're gaming?
- How much do you let people know about you while gaming?
- What kinds of people do you game with?
- Do you feel safe while you are gaming online?
- Do some people say mean things to other players?

Then...

- Do people try to get into your game group that you don't know?
- How do you know that they are who they say they are?
- Can you block someone from the game?
- Would you know how to report a problem?

Recognise the 5 disguises. There are ways that some players try to make friends: **Promisers** offer to show you ways to get something you need or clever cheats in a game. **Protectors** tell you they will protect you and care for you. **Providers** will offer you some sort of gift or even a mobile so they can keep in touch with you. **Pretenders** are not who they say they are. **Punishers** will threaten to do something to you if you don't do what they want.

Help children game safely

Your involvement can really make a difference when it comes to helping children game more safely. Show an interest in the games that your child plays and wants to buy. Check that they are for your child's age group. This can be easier than you think, you can check on games' ratings and content on www.esrb.org. This website is maintained by the Entertainment Software Rating Board which rates thousands of games each year. Spend a few moments finding out what the rating symbols represent on www.pegi.info/en/index/ and it will be easy and quick to check the ratings on games from now on.

- Find out which safety features are available on the gaming equipment that your child uses—a headset may have voice-masking features, for example.
- If you can, and your child is still young enough, try to keep gaming consoles where supervision is easy and talk to other parents about places where your child may be accessing games at friend's homes.
- Tell your child never to give out personal information while gaming, or agree to meet anyone outside of the game.
- Teach your child not to respond to anyone who is being rude or bullying while playing the game.
- Set rules about how long your child may play, what types of games are appropriate, and who else may participate. Parental controls now offer ways of doing this for each individual family member – see Windows 10 for example. Consider [Home Halo](#) or other parental control software.
- Have your child check with you before using a credit or debit card online. You don't want your card details left 'open' in a game so that other charges can be made to it. (Set the app store to notify you each time an app is purchased.)
- Check to see if the games your child plays have reporting features or moderators. Is there a 'Report Abuse' button visible?

Above all don't drive your child to secrecy! If he or she ends up playing against your wishes in secrecy, it is so much harder for them to turn to you if something goes wrong. That is when your child may need you more than ever. If a problem does arise, stay calm and work out how to deal with it. No banning of gaming or confiscating mobile phones will help!