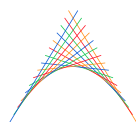


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GAMING, DEVICES AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Advice for preventing online
child sexual exploitation



Australian
Centre to Counter
Child Exploitation



AFP
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

PARENTS & CARERS,

This resource has been created for you when it comes to choosing and setting up new devices for your family.

Our experience is that many parents and carers feel overwhelmed when it comes to their child's online activities, with many devices available and many different safety options to be across – it can be hard to know exactly what to do to keep your child safe.

Market research commissioned by the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE), indicates that just **three per cent** of parents and carers listed online grooming as a concern. More than half did not know what they could do to keep children safe from online child sexual exploitation.

This resource aims to provide information on popular devices, safety considerations and options available for you to manage your child's online activities.

It is always recommended you undertake your own research in deciding whether a device, app or game is suitable for your child.

Many people think that apps, games and sites specifically aimed at children are 'safer', which is not necessarily the case. Apps, games and sites that are marketed towards children may still have interactive online functions.

Having an understanding of the features of devices, apps and games your children are using, particularly whether there is an internet connection and the ability to connect with other users, is important for keeping them safe.

For further information on preventing online child sexual exploitation, visit thinkuknow.org.au.

CONTENTS

Gaming	2
Xbox	3
Playstation.....	4
Nintendo Switch.....	5
Smart devices	6
Smartphones.....	7
Tablets	9
Safety contract	11
Tips	12

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To report online child sexual exploitation

Report child online sexual exploitation via the **Report Abuse Button** on the [ACCCE](#), [AFP](#) or [ThinkUKnow](#) websites:

Report abuse 

All reports are assessed by the AFP-led ACCCE Child Protection Triage Unit.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact Triple Zero (000).

For non-emergency situations that still require a timely response, contact your local police station or call 131 444.

Child sexual abuse material or other offensive and illegal content can be reported to the eSafety Commissioner who will work to remove it. Report online at esafety.gov.au/report.



GAMING

There are many positive aspects to online gaming. Your child may play games to pass time, for escapism, to be creative, problem solve and socialise.

Games can be played on numerous devices such as consoles, computers, tablets and phones. Games can also have augmented or virtual reality capabilities.

Many games have the ability to play single player, however online multiplayer gaming is a popular activity for young people.

Local multiplayer usually means that your child needs to be connected to the same local area network, for example a network within the same home.

Online multiplayer mode allows your child to connect with their friends remotely, as well as the ability to connect with gamers from all over the world and of any age.

Further information and advice on keeping your child safe while gaming can be found at thinkuknow.org.au.



SPOTLIGHT

Apps for communicating during gameplay

Many gamers use separate apps to communicate with other players. These apps can run in the background or on separate devices (such as phones) and allow your child to use voice and video chat, even if you have enabled parental controls on the game itself.

For this reason, it is important you know what apps your children use and how they use them when looking to secure your child's device.

Discord is a popular example used by gamers.

Many reports to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation start with an offender targeting children during an online game.

Additional resources

- ▶ [ThinkUKnow family activity: Learning about safer gaming and smart usernames](#)
- ▶ [ThinkUKnow fact sheet: Online gaming](#)
- ▶ [ThinkUKnow fact sheet: Instant messaging](#)

XBOX



- Xbox is a popular gaming console made by Microsoft.
The latest models are **Xbox Series S** and **Xbox Series X**. **Xbox One** is also still popular.
- ✓ **Internet connectivity:** Yes

— What you need to know

- Xbox has direct messaging features, voice chat with other players during multiplayer games, web browser capabilities as well as access to online streaming apps.
- Xbox has a complementary **smartphone app** where you can interact with friends online through direct message friends and voice chat.
- Players are able to voice chat within the game when playing multiplayer games. This can be done with a microphone or using the Xbox smartphone app.
- As with any direct messaging online interactivity, there is the risk of **inappropriate contact and online grooming**.
- Young people who are playing multiplayer games could be playing with people they don't know, and could be a lot older than they are.
- Children and young people should be aware of the information they are sharing with others while chatting in-game.
- When signing up for games, young people may be asked to create a profile and username. Choose profiles or usernames that don't give away information including your child's name, age or location.

Ways to prevent inappropriate contact

🔒 Parental controls

Xbox Series S and Xbox Series X come with family settings built in to manage safety. These include:

- Filtering content to ensure age-appropriate content
- Privacy options
- Tools to manage inappropriate contact and abuse

👤 Xbox family settings app

The Xbox family settings app allows parents and carers to manage their children's console gaming activities, including:

- Creating a family account
- Approving incoming requests (including reviewing and responding to 'new friend' requests)
- Managing online interactions (allowing your child to 'ask a parent' to add a friend or remove friends).

▶ More information on the Xbox family settings app can be found [here](#).

🔗 Step-by-step parental controls

▶ **Xbox set up**

Popular games

- Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II
- Minecraft
- Grand Theft Auto 5
- Fortnite
- Elden Ring
- Assassins Creed
- FIFA
- Battlefield
- Overwatch

In some cases games also come with their own settings.

Check that the parental control settings that you have applied to the console also apply to any in-game features, most importantly in-game chat.

PLAYSTATION



→ PlayStation is a popular gaming console made by Sony.

PlayStation 5 (PS5) is the current release of the console which has similar operating system and features as its predecessor **PS4**.

✓ **Internet connectivity:** Yes

— What you need to know

- PlayStation has a complementary smartphone app to interact with friends online, including direct message and voice chat, as well as sharing images/videos/ attachments.
- The PS5 controller has a built in microphone to allow for voice chat when playing multiplayer games.
- As with any direct messaging or online interactivity, there is the risk of inappropriate contact and online grooming.
- Young people who are playing multiplayer games could be playing with people they don't know, and could be a lot older than they are.
- Children and young people should be aware of the information they are sharing with others.
- When signing up for games, young people may be asked to create a profile and username. Choose profiles or usernames that don't give away information including your child's name, age or location.

Ways to prevent inappropriate contact

🔒 Parental controls

PlayStation 4 and PlayStation 5 come with parental control options built in to manage safety. These include:

- Restricting communications, disabling chat, messaging content and sharing
- Restricting child access to web browsers
- Family management and parental controls

👤 PlayStation family management

PlayStation family management can help parents and carers manage their children's console gaming activities, including:

- Setting up a family account
- Managing access to games, videos and applications
- Disabling text, video and voice chat messages
- Blocking user-generated video, streams and pictures.

▶ More information on PlayStation family management can be found [here](#).

🔗 Step-by-step parental controls

▶ **PlayStation 4**

▶ **PlayStation 5**

▶ PlayStation also includes advice on pre-set parental controls on PlayStation 5 **for children, early teens and late teens.**

Popular games

- Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II
- Minecraft
- Grand Theft Auto 5
- Fortnite
- Spider-Man
- Assassin's Creed
- FIFA

In some cases games also come with their own settings.

Check that the parental control settings that you have applied to the console also apply to any in-game features, most importantly in-game chat.

NINTENDO SWITCH



- Nintendo Switch is a gaming console created by **Nintendo**. It can be used a home gaming console and is easily portable.
- ✓ **Internet connectivity:** Yes

— What you need to know

- Nintendo offer an online subscription service called Nintendo Switch Online. It includes online multiplayer, cloud saving, voice chat via the **smartphone app**.
- Voice chat capabilities are not limited to the Nintendo Switch Online smartphone app and there are some games that offer voice chat functionally. Nintendo Switch does not have a built in microphone so users will need headphones with a built in microphone to enable this feature.
- Nintendo switch has limited web browser capabilities, which are limited to certain functions such as opening hyperlinks.

Ways to prevent inappropriate contact

🔒 Parental controls

The **Nintendo Switch parental controls smart device app** allows for parents and carers to monitor their children's activities, including:

- Monitoring what your child is playing through daily and monthly reports
- Restricting access to certain games
- Restricting communication with other users
- Restricting the ability of posting screenshots to social network services

Parents and carers must have a Nintendo Account in order to use the Nintendo Switch parental controls smart device app.

Communication restrictions can also be set for individual games and there is also the ability to set certain restrictions on Nintendo Switch directly.

For frequently asked questions about Nintendo Switch parental controls visit [here](#).

🔗 Step-by-step parental controls

▶ Nintendo Switch set up

Popular games

- Animal Crossing: New Horizon
- Mario
- Pokémon
- The Legend of Zelda
- Ring Fit Adventure

In some cases games also come with their own settings.

Check that the parental control settings that you have applied to the console also apply to any in-game features, most importantly in-game chat.



SMART DEVICES

Technology plays an important role for all ages in our everyday lives. It helps children and young people interact with their peers, express themselves, learn about the world and feel connected.

Children may use smart devices such as tablets for learning, watching videos or playing games.

Young people can readily access the internet and technology in public places, schools and at home. They may use their phones for social media, watching videos and sharing photos or videos.

Additional resources

- ▶ [ThinkUKnow fact sheet: Social networking meeting people](#)
- ▶ [ThinkUKnow fact sheet: Live streaming](#)
- ▶ [ThinkUKnow fact sheet: Instant messaging](#)
- ▶ [ThinkUKnow family activity: Learning about personal information and image sharing](#)
- ▶ [ThinkUKnow family activity: Learning about safer online interactions and online grooming](#)

SMARTPHONES



Smartphones are typically internet connected devices, able to connect outside of Wi-Fi depending on the phone plan. They are also typically touchscreen, providing greater accessibility, and have camera (image and video taking) as well as call and SMS capabilities.

Many young people may use a smartphone for networking with friends, exploring social media and accessing the internet more readily.

Smartphones are usually smaller than tablets.



Internet connection: Yes

— What you need to know


- If a smartphone is connected to the internet it can do a range of functions, depending on the apps that have been installed.
- Social networking apps on smartphones allow for young people to interact with other users in a variety of different ways.
- Smartphones allow for a variety of direct/private messaging apps for users to message privately with others. There are also specific messaging apps that have varying text, video and voice call options.
- Smartphones, similar to tablets, are a popular mechanism for playing online games. These can be downloaded or installed, and are often played online and have in-game chat features.
- If your child is using social media they may have 'friends' or 'followers' on their accounts they have only met and spoken to online. Unfortunately it can be **easy for someone to lie about their online identity** and it can be difficult to prove someone is who they say they are.
- Smartphone cameras make it easier for children and young people to take images of themselves at any time. Depending on the circumstance, it may be referred to as personal image sharing, sexting, sending a 'selfie', or sending a 'pic'.
- The camera function of a smartphone, along with social networking capability means that young people are readily able to share photos and videos they take with others online, this may also include live streaming.
- Content depicting a person under the age of 18 can be considered **child sexual exploitation or abuse material**, and it can be considered an offence to produce, store or distribute under Commonwealth legislation.
- As with any direct messaging or online interactivity, there is the risk of **inappropriate contact and online grooming**.


Ways to prevent online child sexual exploitation

Parental controls

Apple has a range of parental controls that can be enabled on iPhone devices, including:

- Setting content and privacy restrictions
- Preventing explicit content and content ratings
- Preventing web content and restrict Siri web search
- Restricting game centre
- Allowing changes to privacy settings

 Further details on tools available for parents and carers can be found [here](#).

 To enable parental controls for Samsung and Google devices, you will be required to download the **Google family link app** from the Google PlayStore.

Google's Family Link app is a tool designed to help parents and carers manage their child's online activities, including:

- Viewing app activity
- Managing apps
- Setting content restrictions

Availability of these can vary depending on your child's device. A list of compatible devices can be found [here](#). Once the Family link app is installed, parents and carers will need to also download the app on their own device and link the accounts.

Parents and carers can also use Family link to create a Google Account for their child under 13. Once complete, children can sign-in to their device with their new account.

Additional information about the Family link app, including limitations, can be found [here](#).

Frequently asked questions about Family link app can be found [here](#).

Samsung also has a feature called **Samsung kids** which is available on phone or tablet. It also allows parents and carers to set a time limit, control permissions, and see usage reports. For advice on set up visit [here](#).

Parental controls are also **available on Google Play**, allowing parents and carers to restrict what content can be downloaded or purchased based on maturity level.

Step-by-step parental controls

 [Apple](#)

 [Samsung](#)

 [Google](#) and [Parent guide to Google Play](#)

Popular apps

- TikTok
- Instagram
- Snapchat

In some cases apps also come with their own settings and default settings that may need to be changed to 'private.'

Check that the parental control settings that you have applied to your child's smartphone also apply to any apps, most importantly the ability to direct message or 'chat'.

TABLETS



Tablets are portable devices that allow users to stream movies and TV shows, play games, interact with others online, read books and even create and share artwork.

Tablets are typically internet connected devices, providing access to anything and everything online. They usually also have camera (image and video taking) capabilities.

There are many tablets on the market, including Apple iPads, as well as Android, including Samsung and Microsoft tablets, among others.

Tablets are typically larger than a mobile phone and are touchscreen, making them an easier and accessible option to connect to the internet.



Internet connection: Yes

What you need to know


- Tablets allow for connection to the internet through a range of functions.
- Watching and streaming content, including videos, is a very popular activity for children. There are many apps or platforms designed specifically for viewing uploaded and livestreamed content.
- Tablets are also a popular mechanism for playing games. These can be downloaded or installed onto a device, and are often played online and have in-game chat features.
- Social networking is another popular activity, with many different apps on tablets allowing for young people to interact other users, in a variety of different ways.
- As with any video or streaming service, there is the potential for exposure to inappropriate content. Children who come across this content may become distressed or uncomfortable.
- Direct messaging or online interactivity also creates the risk of **inappropriate contact and online grooming**.
- With any internet browsing children may also come across 'pop-ups', suggesting they click for an array of reasons. It could be an advertisement, contact request, friend request, scam or link to a different or inappropriate website.


Ways to prevent inappropriate contact

Parental controls

Apple's parental control options cover a range of Apple devices. Similar to the options for iPhone, parental controls can be enabled on iPads, including:

- Setting content and privacy restrictions
- Preventing explicit content and content ratings
- Preventing web content and restrict Siri web search
- Restricting game centre
- Allowing changes to privacy settings

 Further details on tools available for parents and carers can be found [here](#).

 For Android devices (including Samsung), parents and carers can restrict app usage by setting up Parental controls through [Google family link app](#) available from the Google PlayStore.

Google's Family Link app is a tool designed to help parents and carers manage their child's online activities, including:

- Viewing app activity
- Managing apps
- Setting content restrictions


Samsung also has a feature called **Samsung kids** which is available on phone or tablet. It also allows parents and carers to set a time limit, control permissions, and see usage reports. For advice on set up visit [here](#).


Parental controls are also [available on Google Play](#), allowing parents and carers to restrict what content can be downloaded or purchased based on maturity level.

Google has a feature called **Kids space** which includes 'kids mode' content and is available on select Android tablets.

Step-by-step parental controls

 **Apple**

 **Samsung**

 **Google** and [Parent guide to Google Play](#)

Popular apps

- Roblox
- Netflix
- YouTube
- YouTube Kids
- Minecraft
- Procreate

In some cases apps also come with their own settings and default settings that may need to be changed to 'private.'

Check that the parental control settings that you have applied to your child's smartphone also apply to any apps, most importantly the ability to direct message or 'chat'.



SPOTLIGHT

Shared devices in the family

Some families may choose to share a device which includes the apps that children use, as well as parent/carer social media accounts. It is recommended that social media accounts are logged out if children are accessing the device to prevent accidental access.



THINKUKNOW TIPS



Supervision is essential

This means knowing what your children are doing online, who they are interacting with and what platforms, apps or games they are using.



Have open conversations, often

The most important tip we can give any parent or carer is to start talking to your child about their online activities. According to research commissioned by the ACCCE, only 52 per cent of parents or carers talk to their children about online safety.



Check privacy settings

We recommend parents and carers research and understand app settings, including privacy settings. This could include turning off location settings, setting profiles to private, or turning off chat functions.



Be approachable if your child needs help

Coming forward isn't always easy, and children may feel reluctant to tell you about online issues if they believe they will be punished or have their devices taken away.



Know how to report

If something goes wrong online, it is critical your child is supported. Parents and carers need to know how to take action.