



Your Child's Digital World: Games, Apps & Language Explained

Online safety parent workshop

Overview

1. How children's online lives change from KS1 to KS2
What's different for Years 1–3 and Years 4–6
2. What the data tells us about what children actually do online
Games, apps, videos and time spent
3. Online lingo and language children use
What it means, where it comes from, what to notice
4. A closer look at popular games, apps and websites
 1. What they are & how they work
 2. What's positive about them
 3. What the risks can be
 4. Age ratings & parental controls
 5. How to start conversations without confrontation
5. Time with your child at the end
Activities to explore what these platforms look like together

Digital Coming of Age

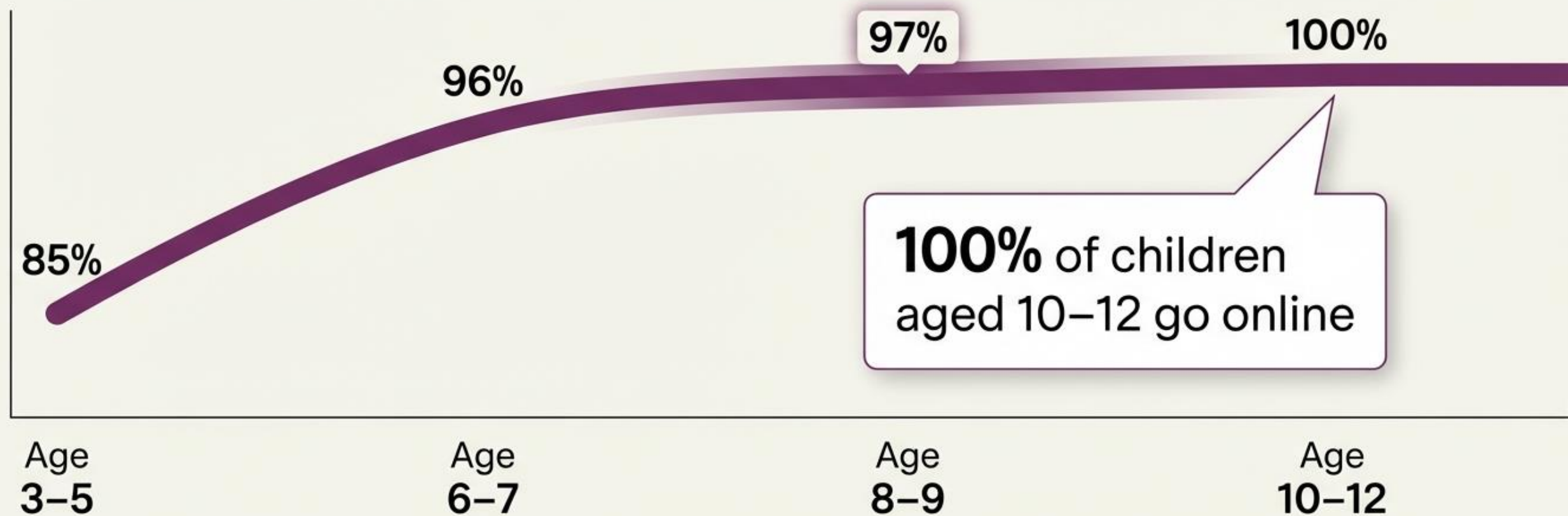
Navigating the Shift: A Comparative Guide to Years 1–3 vs. Years 4–6



Trends and data from the 2025 Children's Media Literacy Report

The Digital Default

By the time children leave primary school, the online world is as central to their lives as the playground.



The Vessel

Years 1–3



The Tablet Era

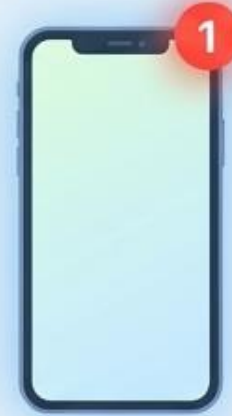
75% use tablets

- **The Wi-Fi Tether:** Shared devices kept in family spaces.



The Hardware Upgrade

Years 4–6



The Mobile Shift

91% own a phone by age 11

- **The Data Roamer:** Personal, pocket-sized, and private.

The Playground

Years 1–3



Curated Catalogues

66%



watch cartoons
& animations

Intentional Selection.
Watching a specific
story (e.g., Bluey).

The
Attention
Shift

Years 4–6



The Infinite
Feed

75%



of teens watch
funny clips/pranks

Passive Scrolling.
The Algorithm serves
content loops.

The Social Circle

Years 1–3



Family Connection

Facilitated by parents.
Saying hello to Grandma.

The
Peer
Pressure
Spike

Years 4–6



The Group Chat

Peer-to-peer. FOMO,
inclusion/exclusion dynamics.

WhatsApp usage doubles from age 6 to 12

The Game

Years 1–3



Creative Building

46% preference for building games

Solo play.
Construction and exploration.

The Lobby

Years 4–6



Social Status

Shift to **Multiplayer & Competitive**

Hanging out in lobbies.
Showing off skins.
Strategic voice chat.

The Crowd: Who are they playing with?

Years 1–3



Incidental Exposure

14–25% play with strangers

Non-verbal interactions
in open worlds.

The
Strategy
Trap

Years 4–6



Active Collaboration

32% play with strangers

"I need to talk to them to win."
Strategy disguises stranger contact.

The Guardrails: Parenting Styles



Years 1–3

Hovering

75% use 'Being Nearby'

Direct supervision.
Physical control of the device.

The Privacy Paradox



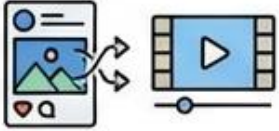
Years 4–6

Trusting

70% use "Asking what they are doing"

Verbal check-ins. Reliance on
child's self-reporting.

The Transition Matrix

	Years 1–3 (The Tablet Era)	Years 4–6 (The Mobile Shift)
Device	 Family Tablet / Wi-Fi	 Personal Phone / Mobile Data
Content	 Cartoons & Stories	 Algorithms & Short Clips
Social	 Family & Cousins	 Class Groups & Strangers
Safety	 I'm watching you	 I'm asking you



What the data tells us about what children actually do online

Games, apps, videos and time spent

Where this data comes from

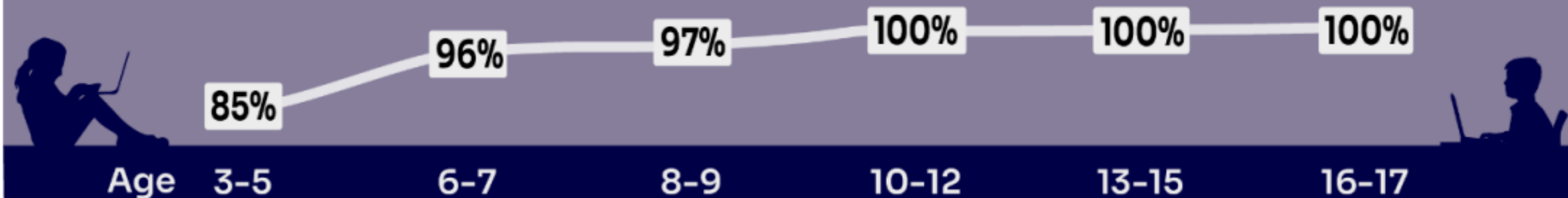
- The information you're about to see comes from Ofcom, the UK's communications regulator.
- They carry out large, regular studies into how children in the UK actually use the internet, apps, games and devices at home. This includes:
 - surveys with children and parents, and
 - research based on real patterns of use (not just what people think they do).
- The purpose of this data isn't to judge families or tell people what they "should" be doing — it's to give us a realistic picture of what children's digital lives look like across the UK.

Information Overload

- This next part is a bit of information-heavy.
- I've pulled together lots of graphs and infographics from a few different Ofcom reports.
- We won't go through every slide in detail today.
- The full PowerPoint will be available on the school website, so you can look back at anything that's useful to you.
- This is to save you having to read long reports yourselves.
- I'll just highlight the key patterns and things that are most useful for parents to know.

Almost all children age 3-17 (96%) went online in 2024, highlighting the centrality of the internet in children's lives.

Proportion who go online, by age



3-5



19% have their own mobile phone

85% use any device to go online.

To go online: **69%** use a tablet, **34%** use a mobile phone, and **12%** use a laptop

56% use messaging sites/apps

91% use video sharing platforms

49% use live streaming sites/apps

37% use social media and **60%** have their own social media profile

Across these categories the top 3 sites/apps used by this age group are Youtube (**85%**), WhatsApp (**31%**) and Snapchat (**23%**)

31% play games online

76% watch TV or films on any type of device other than a TV set (**77%** on a TV set)

32% watch live TV | **77%** watch SVoD (Such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney+)

6-7



30% have their own mobile phone

96% use any device to go online.

To go online: **80%** use a tablet, **48%** use a mobile phone, and **26%** use a laptop

57% use messaging sites/apps

94% use video sharing platforms

48% use live streaming sites/apps

36% use social media and **63%** have their own social media profile

Across these categories the top 3 sites/apps used by this age group are Youtube (**91%**), WhatsApp (**33%**) and TikTok(**30%**)

43% play games online

78% watch TV or films on any type of device other than a TV set (**83%** on a TV set)

38% watch live TV | **76%** watch SVoD (Such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney+)

8-9



42% have their own mobile phone

97% use any device to go online.

To go online: **73%** use a tablet, **51%** use a mobile phone, and **37%** use a laptop

74% use messaging sites/apps

96% use video sharing platforms

61% use live streaming sites/apps

57% use social media and **69%** have their own social media profile

Across these categories the top 3 sites/apps used by this age group are Youtube (**93%**), WhatsApp (**46%**) and TikTok (**42%**)

65% play games online

80% watch TV or films on any type of device other than a TV set (**85%** on a TV set)

41% watch live TV | **74%** watch SVoD (Such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney+)

10-12



82% have their own mobile phone

100% use any device to go online.

To go online: **81%** use a mobile phone, **68%** use a tablet, and **48%** use a laptop

94% use messaging sites/apps

99% use video sharing platforms

73% use live streaming sites/apps

81% use social media and **86%** have their own social media profile

Across these categories the top 3 sites/apps used by this age group are Youtube (**90%**), WhatsApp (**71%**) and TikTok (**63%**)

77% play games online

79% watch TV or films on any type of device other than a TV set (**87%** on a TV set)

41% watch live TV | **77%** watch SVoD (Such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney+)

13-15



97% have their own mobile phone

100% use any device to go online.

To go online: **96%** use a mobile phone, **47%** use a tablet, and **56%** use a laptop

99% use messaging sites/apps

98% use video sharing platforms

82% use live streaming sites/apps

95% use social media and **96%** have their own social media profile

Across these categories the top 3 sites/apps used by this age group are Youtube (**87%**), WhatsApp (**82%**) and TikTok (**80%**)

84% play games online

79% watch TV or films on any type of device other than a TV set (**84%** on a TV set)

39% watch live TV | **75%** watch SVoD (Such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney+)

16-17



99% have their own mobile phone

100% use any device to go online.

To go online: **98%** use a mobile phone, **44%** use a tablet, and **59%** use a laptop

99% use messaging sites/apps

99% use video sharing platforms

82% use live streaming apps/sites

98% use social media and **98%** have their own social media profile

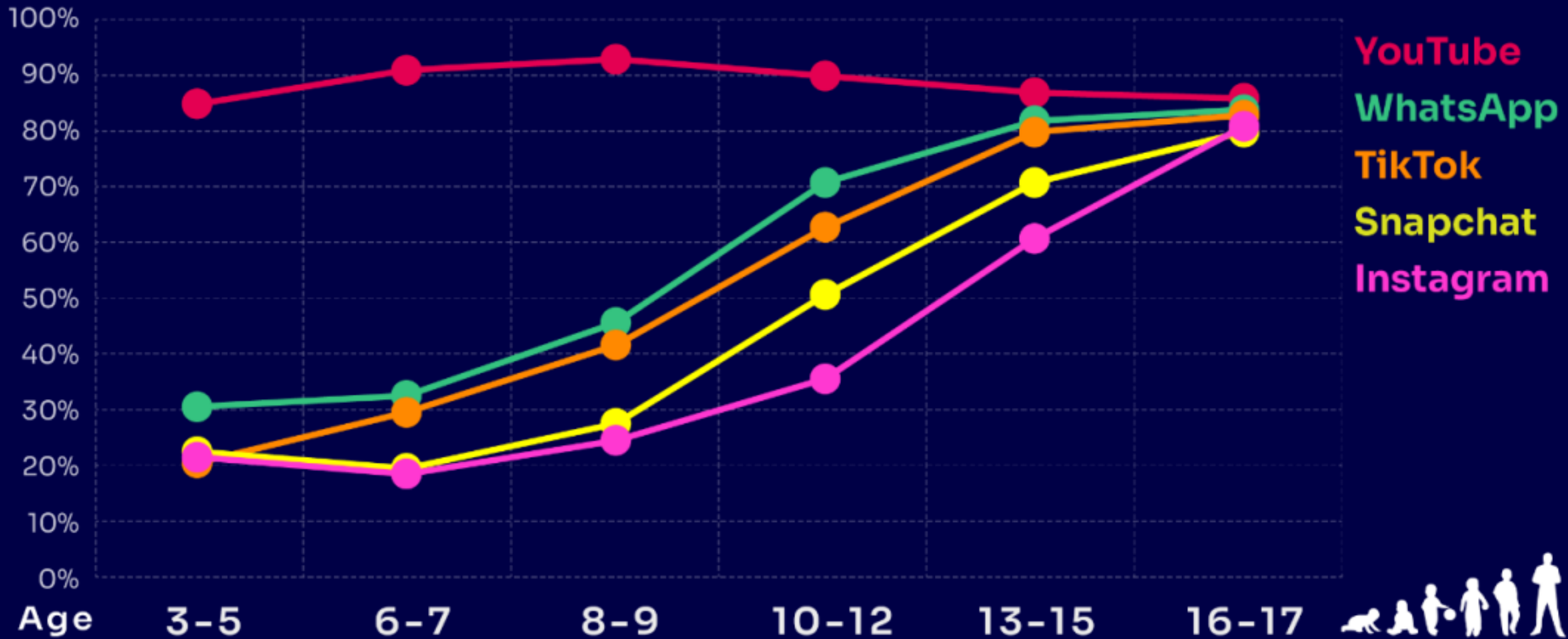
Across these categories the top 3 sites/apps used by this age group are Youtube (**86%**), WhatsApp (**84%**) and TikTok (**83%**)

83% play games online

86% watch TV or films on any type of device other than a TV set (**83%** on a TV set)

33% watch live TV | **81%** watch SVoD (Such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney+)

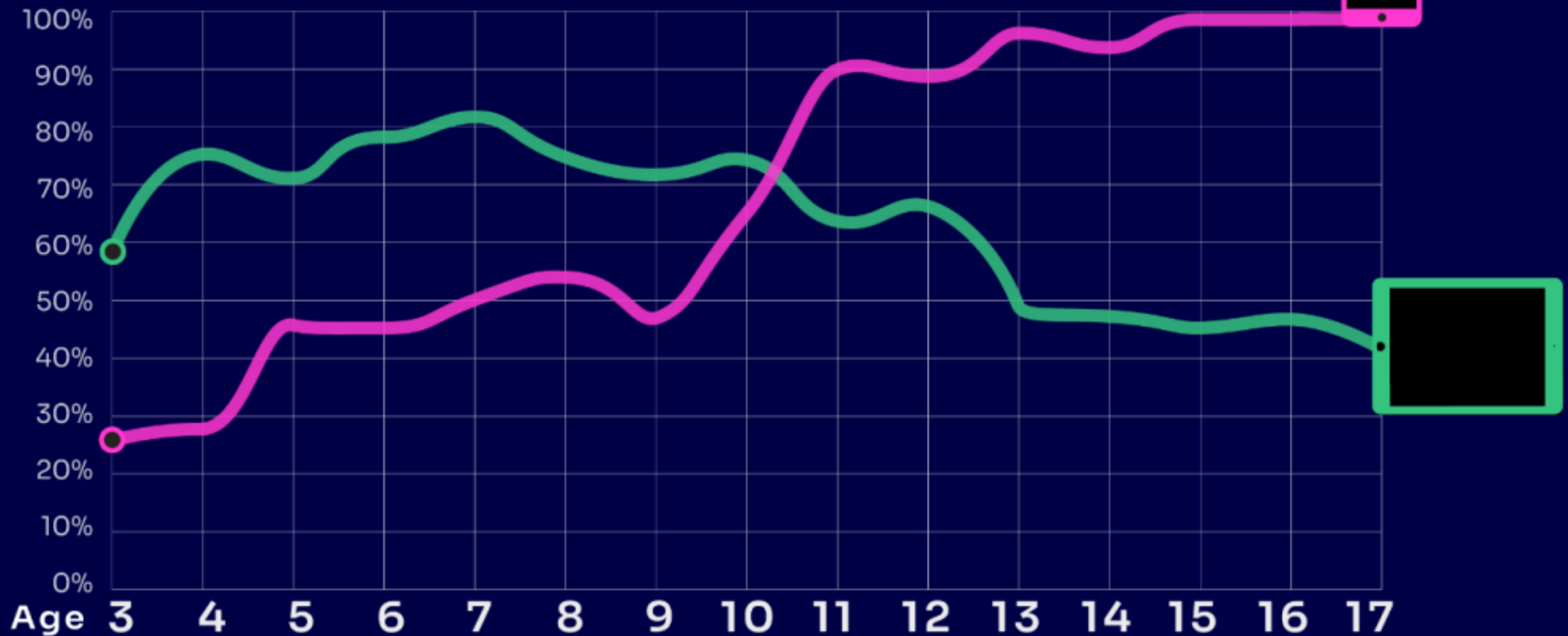
Top 5 online communication apps/sites used - by age group



- YouTube is by far the most popular platform for children of all ages. Around 88% of 3–17-year-olds use YouTube, and this has stayed consistent over recent years. Children use it for schoolwork, short clips (YouTube Shorts) and longer videos, and its popularity increases with age, alongside other social media platforms.

- Over half of 3–7-year-olds use apps to message or make calls.
Around 56–57% of children aged 3–7 use apps to send messages or make voice/video calls.
- The most common apps used by this age group are:
 - WhatsApp – used by around 3 in 10 children aged 3–7
 - Snapchat – used by around 2 in 10 children aged 3–7
- A small but growing number of very young children are also using platforms like Telegram and Discord to message or call others.

Use of **mobile phone** or **tablet** to go online: by age



Nearly all older children go online using a mobile phone.
Around 97% of 13–17-year-olds use a mobile to access the internet.

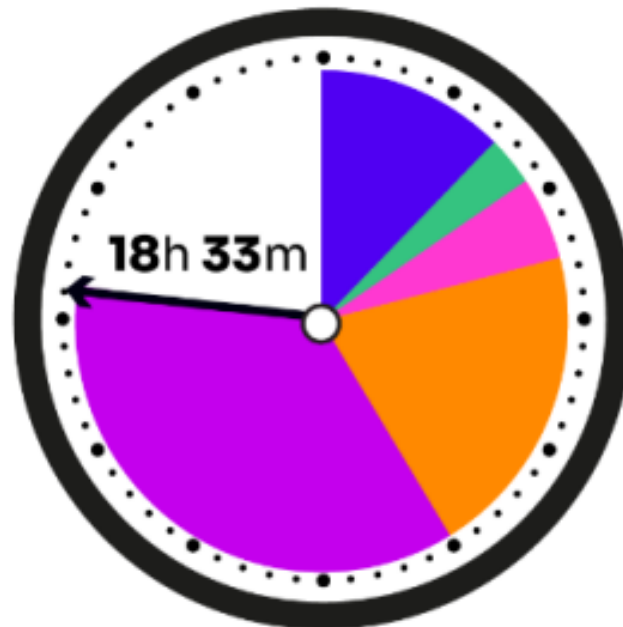
However, many also go online via:
Games consoles – about 58%
Laptops or netbooks – about 57%

- BVoD – Broadcaster Video-on-Demand(e.g. BBC iPlayer, ITVX, Sky On Demand)
- SVoD – Subscription Video-on-Demand(e.g. Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video)
- AVoD – Advertising Video-on-Demand(e.g. free services with adverts)
- VSP – Video sharing platform (e.g. YouTube, tiktok, twitch)

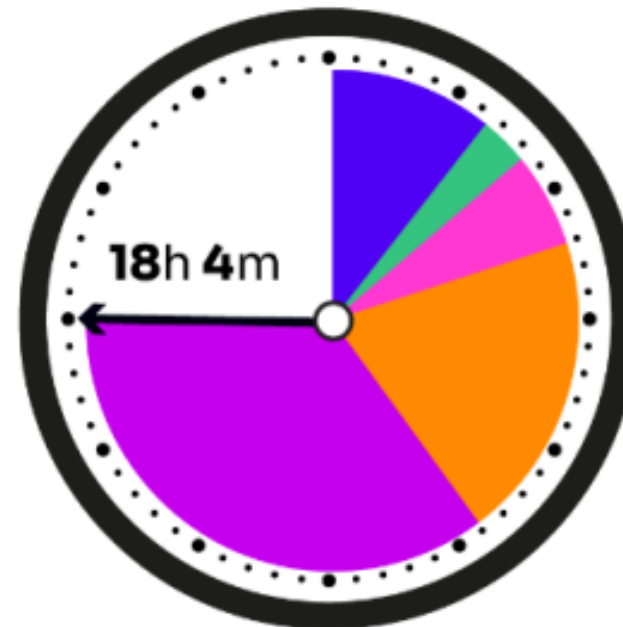
2022



2023



2024



Live TV

Recorded

BVoD

SVoD/AVoD

VSPs

- Children watched around 3 hours 20 minutes a week of live or recorded broadcast TV in 2024.
This is 11% less than last year and continues a long-term decline.
- Watching via broadcasters' on-demand services (e.g. catch-up apps) is slowly increasing, but not enough to replace live TV viewing.
- Overall viewing of broadcaster content is going down year-on-year.
- Time spent on streaming services (e.g. Netflix, Disney+) has stopped increasing and dipped slightly in 2024.
- Children now spend almost the same amount of time on traditional TV as they do on streaming services — the gap is getting much smaller.
- Simple takeaway:
 - Children are watching *less traditional TV* and their viewing is now split more evenly between TV channels, catch-up services and streaming platforms.



Top 5 types of video content watched



% 3-12 year olds

% 13-17 year olds



Cartoons, animation,
mini-movies or songs

66

1

75



Funny videos, jokes,
pranks or challenges

65

2

62



Videos that help to learn new
things/schoolwork/homework

47

3

52



Music
videos

44

4

50



Game tutorials, walk-throughs,
or watching others playing games

41

5

49

Funny videos, jokes,
pranks or challenges



Music
videos



Personalities or influencers
from TikTok or YouTube



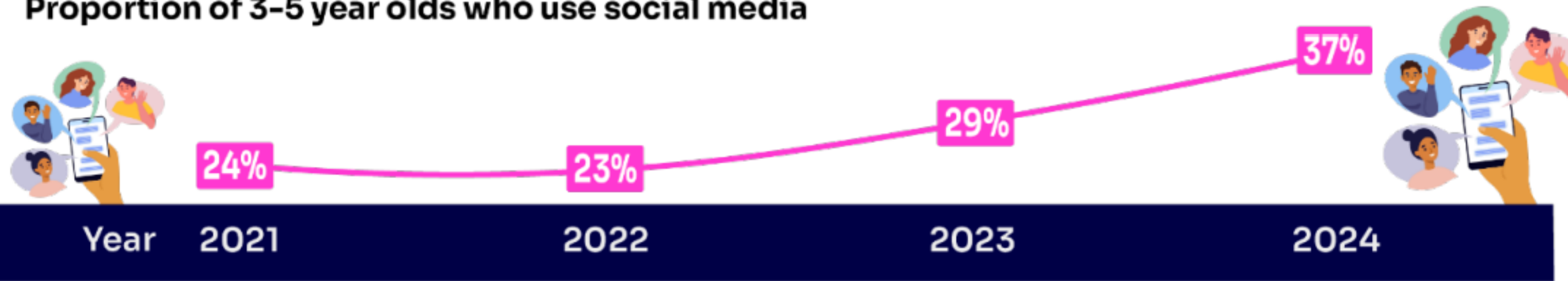
Videos that help to learn new
things/schoolwork/homework



Game tutorials, walk-throughs,
or watching others playing games



Proportion of 3-5 year olds who use social media



Type of profile picture used (among those with a profile)

3-12
12%



a photo of my child / me,
that anyone can see

13-17
21%



3-12
24%

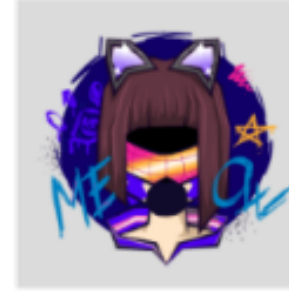


a photo of my child / me
that only friends
or contacts can see

13-17
37%

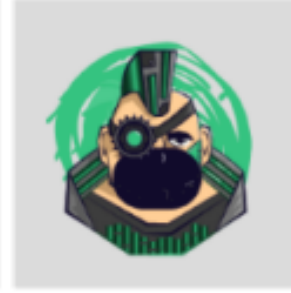


3-12
40%



some type of avatar (cartoon
style image of a person,
animal or something else)

13-17
23%



3-12
9%



some other photo,
picture, or image

13-17
14%

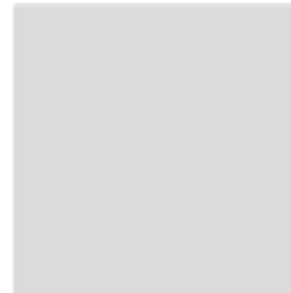


3-12
14%



no image/ it
is just left blank

13-17
5%



1. **Multiplayer games** **43%** of gamers
e.g. Fortnite, Among Us
2. **Creative and building games** **43%**
e.g. Roblox, Minecraft
3. **Sports** **41%**
e.g. FIFA, NBA
4. **Action/adventure** **38%**
e.g. Super Mario Odyssey, Subway Surfer
5. **Shooters** **36%**
e.g. Star Wars:Battlefront, Call of Duty



Boys aged 3-17

1. **Creative and building games** **46%**
e.g. Roblox, Minecraft
2. **Puzzles or quizzes** **42%**
e.g. Trivia 360, Candy Crush
3. **Playing in a virtual world** **28%**
e.g. Animal Crossing, The SIMS
4. **Action/adventure** **28%**
e.g. Super Mario Odyssey, Subway Surfer
5. **Multiplayer games** **26%**
e.g. Fortnite, Among Us



Girls aged 3-17

Parental concerns (3-12s)

Sharing personal information online



- 67%** Them giving out personal details to inappropriate people
- 61%** Companies collecting information about what they are doing online

Exposure to inappropriate content



- 76%** Seeing adult or sexual content
- 79%** Seeing any other type of inappropriate content



Experiencing harm or detriment



- 71%** Them being bullied online/cyberbullying
- 70%** Seeing content which encourages them to hurt or harm themselves
- 64%** The possibility of them being influenced by extreme views online
- 53%** The pressure on them to spend money online

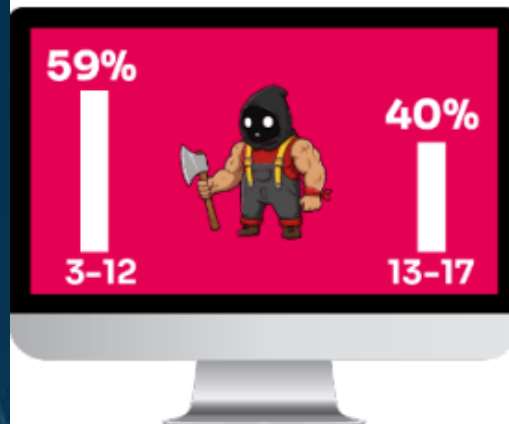


- 58%** Damaging their reputation either now or in the future

Them not knowing how to tell if something is real or fake online **77%** ✓ x

% Parents whose child age 3-12 goes online

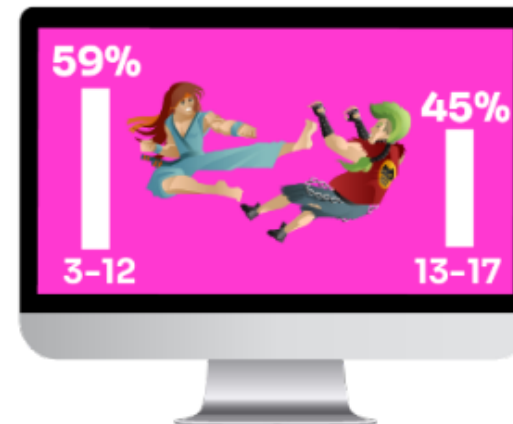
Parental concerns about gaming (% of parents of children who game)



The content of the games like violence, bad language, disturbing content, etc



Pressure to make in-game purchases, e.g. access to upgrades, skins, loot-boxes, in-game currency, etc

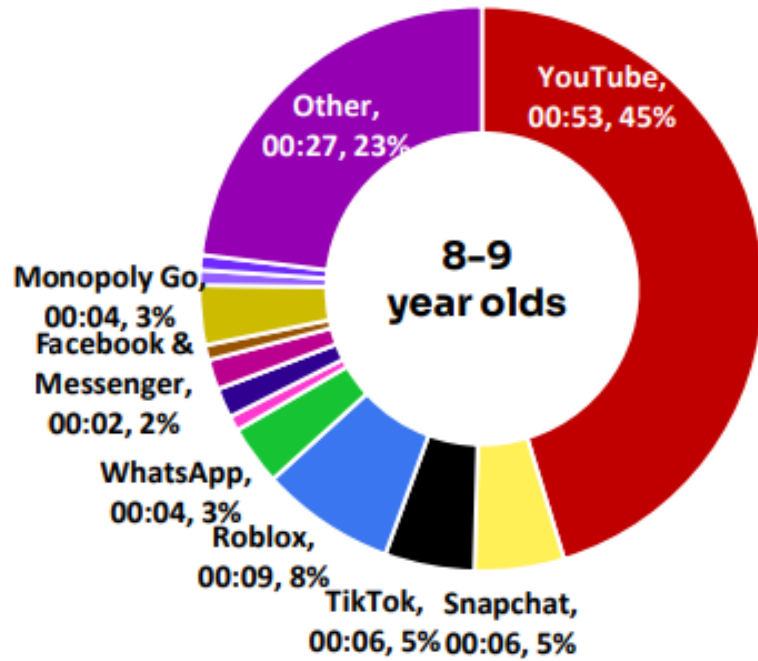


The possibility of them being bullied by other players

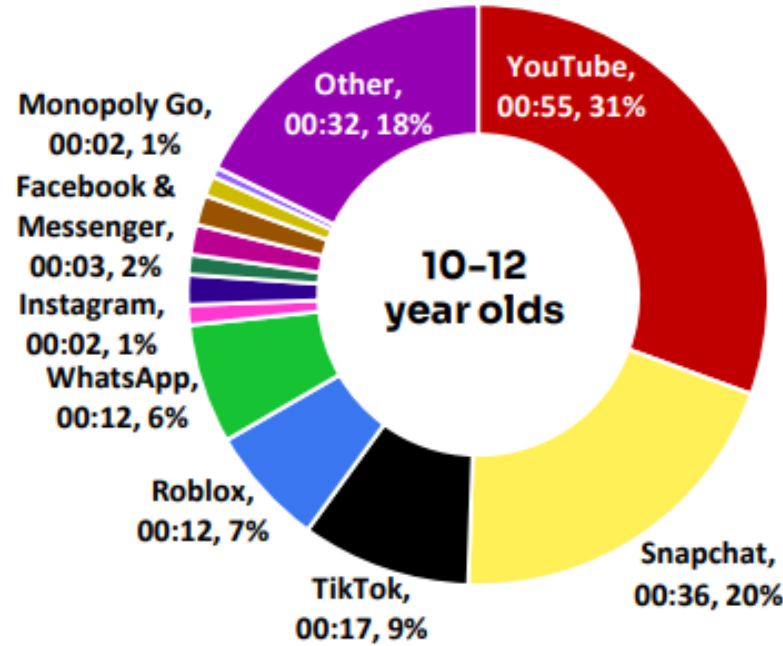


The possibility of them talking to strangers while gaming (within the game or via chat)

Total average daily time spent online
1 hour 57 minutes



Total average daily time spent online
3 hours



Total average daily time spent online
4 hours

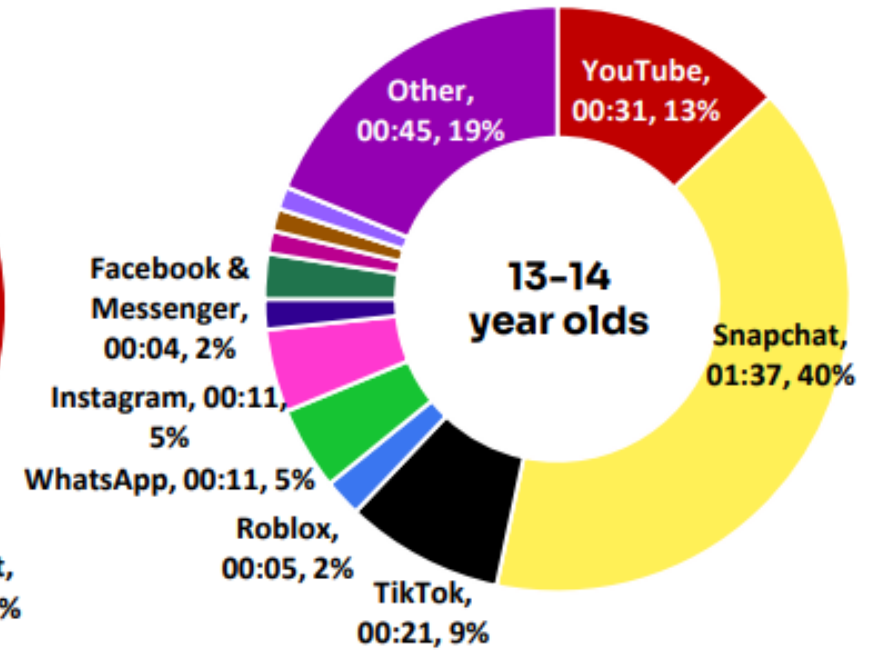


Figure 4: Top ten apps by UK 8–14-year-old reach in month: by age

Age: 8 to 9 10 to 12 13 to 14

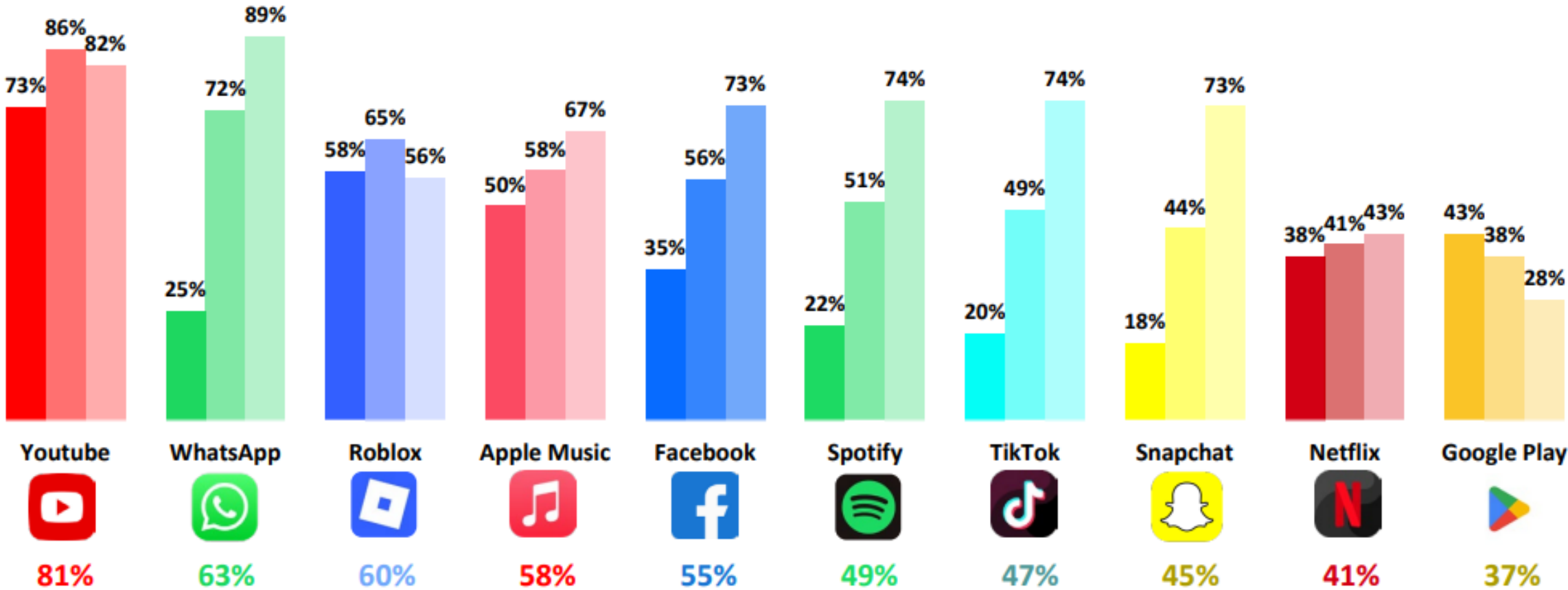


Figure 5: Top ten smartphone apps, Android phones vs iPhones, based on reach as a % of the selected smartphone universe: 8-14-year-olds (in month)

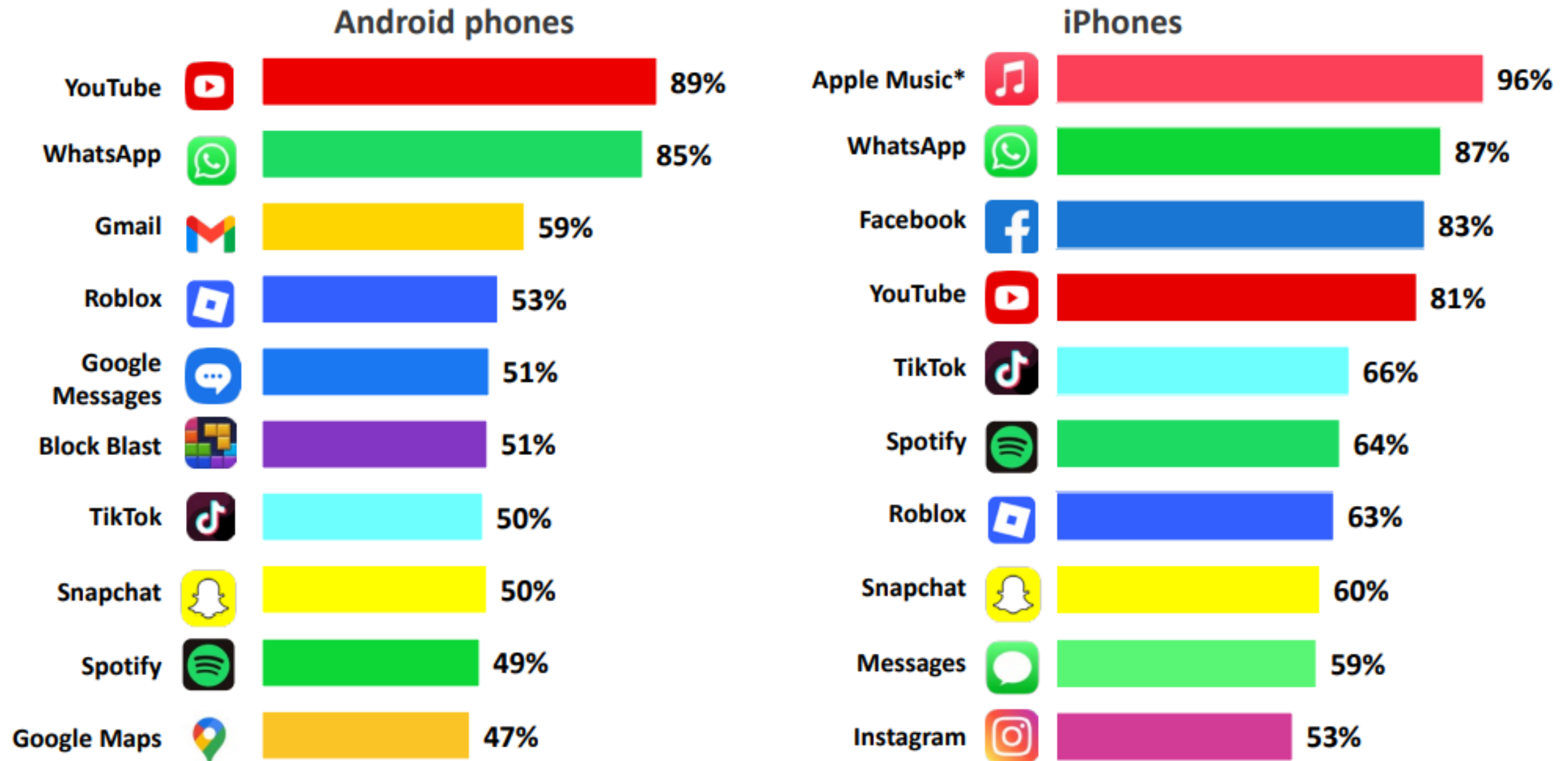
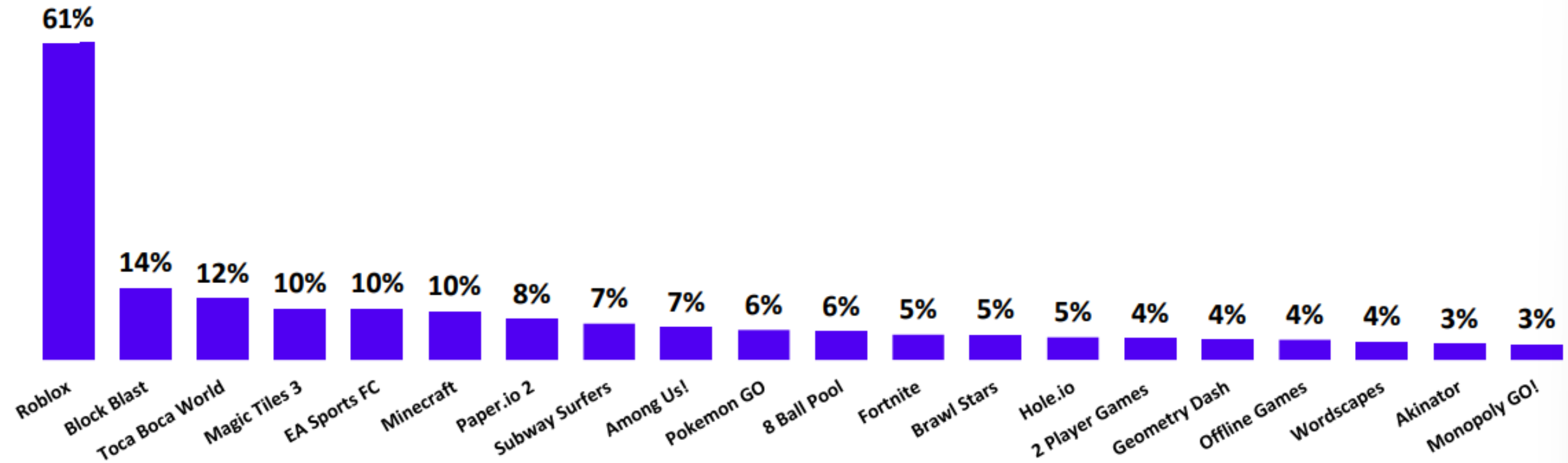


Figure 12: Top twenty gaming apps by UK 8-14-year-old reach in a month



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about OFCOM MEDIA REPORT 2025

Every year, Ofcom releases its Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report, offering fresh insights into how young people are using digital platforms. The 2025 edition highlights key safeguarding concerns as children's engagement with social media, gaming, and live streaming continues to grow. This guide pulls out the top statistics from the report, focussing on the main areas of concern for parents and educators.

ONLINE LIVES

Children are engaging with social media and online content at increasing rates:

37%
3-5s

now have access to social media platforms, however, only a small proportion use it independently of parents.

79%
3-17s

have a social media profile, with 16% including a public photo.

66%
3-17s

watch livestreamed videos regularly, with 16% of them streaming their own content.

POST

ONLINE GAMING

Gaming remains popular but raises concerns:

74%

of children say they play with someone they know, while 32% report playing with strangers.

62%

of parents worry about their children talking to strangers while gaming.

31%

of children who game online chat with people they don't know.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

Parents are increasingly worried about online risks:

70% fear their child may see age-inappropriate or sexual content.

72% worry about their child distinguishing real from fake information.

69% are concerned about online bullying.

68% fear exposure to content that promotes self-harm.

61% worry about exposure to extreme views.

SCREEN TIME

Screen time is still a major challenge for parents:

70% of parents of 13-17s say it's difficult to manage screen time.

33% of 9-17s think their own screen time is too high.

At 29% vs 24%

boys were more likely than girls to disagree that their screen time is too high.

18

HARMFUL CONTENT & INTERACTIONS

A significant minority of children continue to have negative feelings about social media and messaging apps:

Nearly four in ten 8-17s believe that people are mean or unkind to each other online all or most of the time.

Girls aged 8-17 are more likely than boys to say they have experienced someone being nasty or hurtful to them online (75%).

One third of teenagers agree that it's important that people can say what they want online, even if it offends someone.

ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

Positively, the vast majority of children reported learning about online safety at school:

92%

of children aged 8-17 recall at least one lesson on online safety and most report finding them useful.

The top three topics covered are:

63%

How to recognise harmful content.

63%

How to keep personal information safe.

62%

Being kind and respectful online.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Online Lingo

- Children pick up new words, slang and phrases from online spaces – especially from:
 - YouTube
 - TikTok
 - Games
 - Streamers and influencers
- Often:
 - Adults don't recognise the language
 - Children repeat phrases without fully understanding what they mean
- Some words are harmless, but others can have adult or problematic meanings

Why this matters:

- Language can give us clues about what content children are being exposed to
- Knowing what words mean helps us respond calmly rather than overreact
- You don't need to know every word — but knowing a few key ones can help you start better conversations.

Time to get involved

- We're going to use Kahoot – an online quiz – to explore some common online slang.
- You'll answer a few multiple-choice questions
 - Then we will look at the correct answer
- It's anonymous – you'll be given a random username
- I can't see who is who
- There's no judgement – this is just for curiosity and a bit of fun
- The aim isn't to “catch anyone out” – it's to help us understand the language children hear and use online.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE SLANG

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Slang moves fast – and for many young people, it's not just how they talk, but how they share their identity and feelings. Learning key terms helps adults connect and show understanding, even if the lingo seems baffling at first.

GENERATIONAL MISCOMMUNICATION

Words like 'vibe' or 'slaps' can be misunderstood by adults, leading to awkward moments or a breakdown in trust. These phrases often carry subtle social meanings among young people.

RAPIDLY SHIFTING MEANINGS

Slang changes quickly. A term like 'bag' might sound innocent one week and be reinterpreted the next. This makes it easy for adults to fall behind and for children to misstep.

SHIELDING BULLYING OR EXCLUSION

Inside jokes and trending terms like 'simp' or 'NPC' can be used to mock or exclude others. What looks like harmless fun might actually reinforce social divisions or bullying.

PERFORMING FOR THE ALGORITHM

Slang often reflects what's popular on platforms like TikTok. Young users might exaggerate or act out for likes, creating online personas that don't match their real selves.

CONTENT MODERATION WITH CODED SPEECH

To avoid content filters, young people sometimes use slang or emojis to talk about serious topics – for example, saying 'whities' instead of other death-related terms. This makes harmful content harder to spot.

LONG-TERM DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

A slang-filled post might seem funny now but could resurface years later during job checks or university applications – possibly out of context, but still damaging.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP UP, DON'T CATCH UP

Follow youth culture pages or ask your child about new slang. Staying informed shows that you're engaged and open to understanding their world.

ASK, DON'T INTERROGATE

Use open questions to invite conversation. You're not quizzing them – just trying to learn more about their online lives.

FOCUS ON CONNECTION OVER CONTROL

Being someone your child can talk to is more valuable than using strict filters or monitoring apps. Openness builds trust.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

Talk about where slang comes from, how it spreads, and how it can impact others. This helps young people use language more thoughtfully.

ONLINE SLANG CHEAT SHEET – The following slang terms are common examples – please be aware this isn't an exhaustive list and both meaning and prevalence can change swiftly.

COMMON SLANG:

- **Sigma** – Independent, self-reliant (often male) mindset; proud outsider status. Often celebrated in motivational memes.
- **Skibidi** – Nonsense word from the viral 'Skibidi Toilet' meme; expresses chaos or fun. Usually harmless but pervasive.
- **Chat** – The collective audience or group of viewers (e.g. on a livestream). Used when addressing followers directly.
- **Lock in** – To focus, commit or get serious (e.g. before gaming or sports). Positive encouragement to concentrate.
- **Cooking** – Doing something exceptionally well or gaining momentum. Opposite of 'cooking'.
- **Rizz** – Charisma or flirting ability (short for charisma). Can praise social confidence.
- **Aura or aura farming** – One's perceived 'energy' or vibe; 'farming' means manufacturing clout.

POTENTIALLY CONCERNING SLANG

- **Rap** – An adult content creator (e.g. OnlyFans). Indicates exposure to 18+ material.
- **Gyat or gyatt** – Sexualised exclamation about someone's backside. Objectifies appearance.
- **Tralalero tralala / bombardino coccodrillo / tung tung tung sahur** – Spammy references to AI-generated creatures with 'Italian-sounding' names. Can clog chats, derail discussion, and harass others.
- **Glazing** – Overpraising or obsessively defending a streamer or celebrity.
- **Crash out** – To lose control, give up or have a meltdown; sometimes hints at self-harm.
- **Cooked** – Ruined, exhausted or in serious trouble; sometimes mental health-related.
- **Unwell** – Euphemism for death or suicide; used to avoid content filters.
- **NPC** – Used to suggest someone is lacking independent thoughts or is repetitive and predictable.

Meet Our Expert

Keith Brant is a globally renowned email expert and the Editor in Chief of emailpedia.org, the world's number one email resource. He has an MSc in Business Psychology from University College London and an MBA from Queen's School of Business and Technology.



@wake_up_weds



/www.thenationalcollege



@wake.up.wednesday



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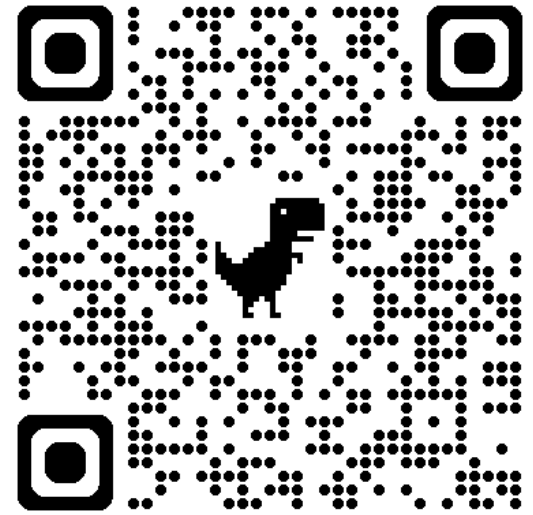
Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 23.07.2025

The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left corner, there is a white wireframe structure resembling a low-poly mesh or a network graph. In the top-right corner, there is a white pattern resembling a circuit board or a complex grid. In the bottom-left corner, there is another white wireframe structure, similar to the one in the top-left but with different connectivity. The text "Top Generic Resources" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Top Generic Resources

Platform Advice - Natterhub

<https://natterhub.com/platform-advice>



Platform Advice



4Chan



Among Us



Animal
Crossing



Apex
Legends



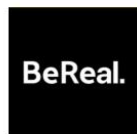
Us and the
Kids - Our
Shared
Reliance on
Technology



Communicating
to ensure
children's
online safety



ask.fm



BeReal



Bitmoji



Call of
Duty-
Modern
Warfare II



Does
smartphone-
free result in
freedom for
our children?



Happening on
our watch:
Children
being
groomed
online



About the platform

What does Among Us do?
Why would my child want to use Among Us?
How to play Among Us.
What are the benefits?
What can my child see on Among Us?

Important features

What is the Among Us age rating?

Settings

Can I make my child's account private?

UK safer Internet centre

- <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>



Online issues ▾ [Guides and resources](#) ▾ Training and events ▾ Safer Internet Day ▾ Blog Research About



Tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep your child safe online

As a parent or carer you play a key role in helping your child to stay safe online.

You don't need to be an expert on the internet to help keep your child stay safe online. Our advice and resources are here to support you as you support your child to use the internet safely, responsibly and positively.

Parents guide to technology



Phones

Guide to phones including



Laptops

Looking for advice on how to



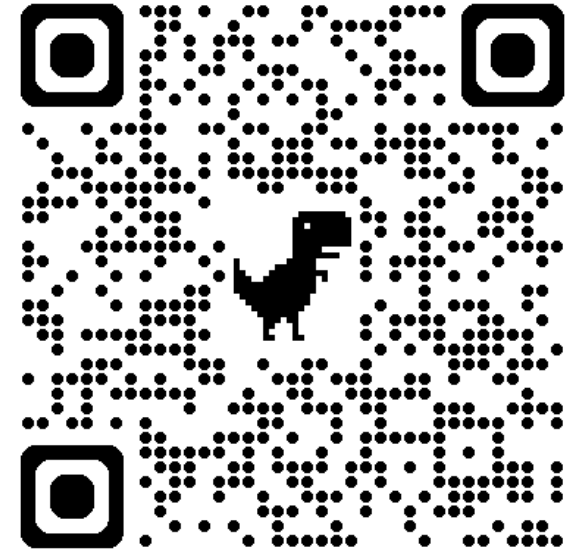
Smart Speakers

Looking for advice on how



Games Consoles

Looking for advice on how



NSPCC – Online safety

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

NSPCC

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Donate

Keeping children safe

Advice for families

Support us

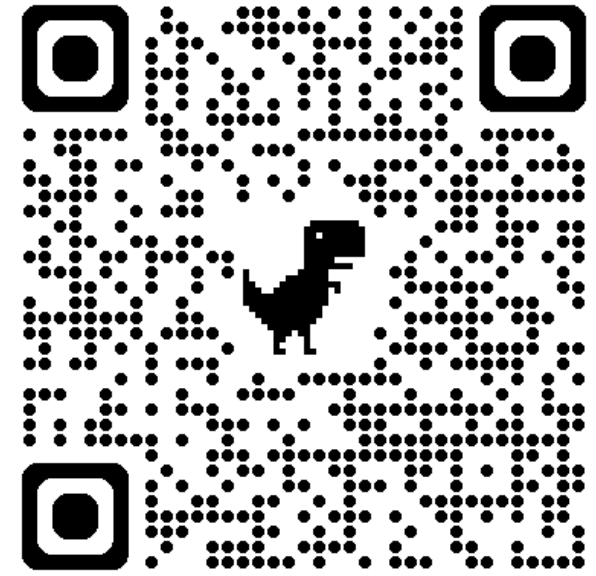
About us

Helpline

Search

Keeping children safe online

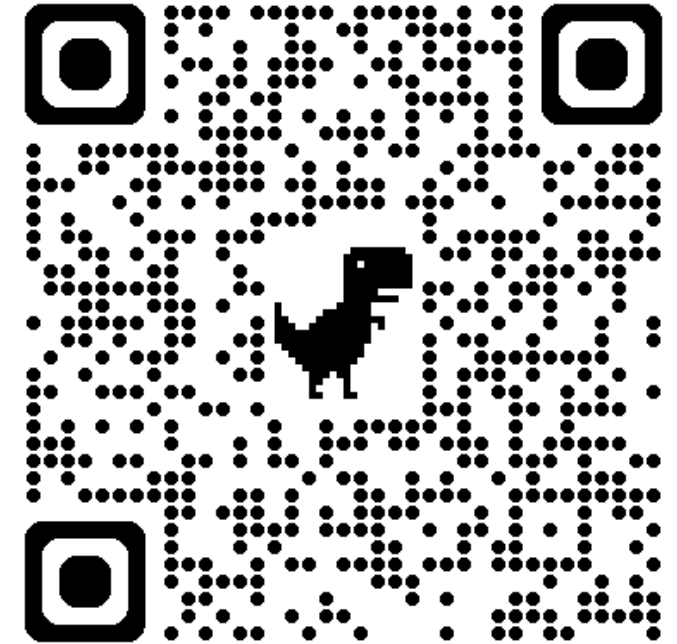
From understanding apps to setting parental controls, we've got information and resources to help you understand online safety and talk about it with children and young people.



Starting family conversations about online safety

Internet Matters – Parental Controls

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>



[Our work and impact](#) [Teachers hub](#)

[DONATE](#)

[Get advice](#)

[Set controls](#)

[Activities to do](#)

[Explore more](#)



You are here: [Home](#) > [Parental Controls](#)

Parental controls guides

Find step-by-step guides to help you layer up parental controls across networks, devices and apps, so children can have safer online experiences as they grow.

[FIND A GUIDE](#)

[DOWNLOAD SAFETY GUIDE](#)

232 Likes

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How to start your parental controls activation

- 1 Network first** – Switch on broadband or mobile network controls to add a basic layer of protection across all devices.
- 2 Devices next** – Use device controls to manage screen time, downloads and spending on the devices children use most.
- 3 Finish with apps** – Turn on safety settings in the apps, games and platforms children use every day.

Search for a guide

Search by device, app or keyword



Filter by type

ENTERTAINMENT & SEARCH ENGINES

SOCIAL MEDIA

BROADBAND & MOBILE NETWORKS

DEVICES

GAMING

98 guides found

New



PlayStation.

New



ChatGPT



mac OS



You can download a guide, watch a video guide, or read the online step by step instructions with screenshots of what it should look like.

Step 2 – Scroll down to **Get more from My BT** and select **'Manage'** under **Your security**.

Get more from My BT

Your bills and usage

Check your latest bill and view your usage.

View your bill

Your products

Make sure you're getting the most from all your products and services.

Manage

Your security

See how your broadband and landline can help keep you safe.

Manage

Your details

View or change your personal settings, log-in details and more.

Manage

Your BT Halo

Get more from your BT Halo connection in and out of the home.

Manage

Step 3 – Under **Broadband security**, select **'Switch on'** within the **BT Parental Controls** card.

Your security

Use our security tools to protect you from threats such as identity theft, harmful website content, viruses and more.

Broadband security

BT Web Protect

Included with your BT Broadband

BT Parental Controls

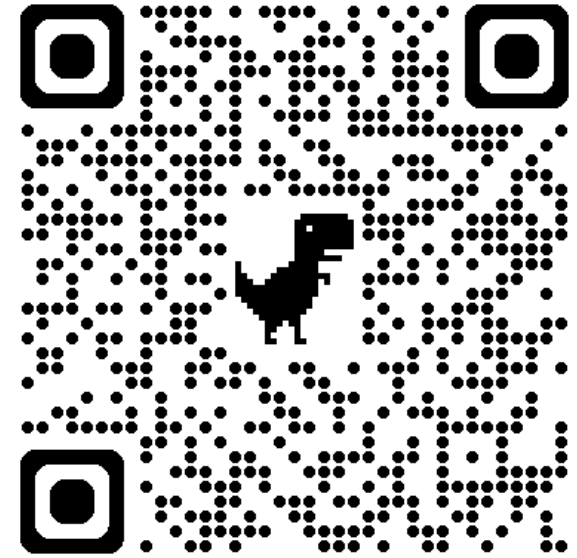
Included with your BT Broadband

BT Virus Protect

Included with your BT Broadband

Common Sense Media

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>



For Parents

For Educators

Our Work and Impact

Language: English ▼



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Movies

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Parents' Guides

Tips & FAQs

Celebrating Community

Ratings and reviews parents trust



Movies



TV



Books



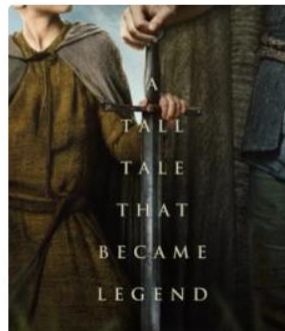
Guidance



Gaming



Social Media



Lego

<https://www.lego.com/en-gb/families/digital-play>

PLAY ZONE



Kanto Region Badge Collection gift with purchase* [Learn more](#)



Sign In



Join LEGO® Insiders



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DISCOVER

HELP

SMART PLAY™



Search



(0)

[Home](#) > [Families](#) > Your family's go-to source for digital play

FAMILIES

Products

Learn more

Your family's go-to source for digital play

Online video games are a part of life, and with all the talk around screen use and how it affects young minds, many parents and guardians are looking for practical advice. We're happy to help!

On these pages, you'll find a bunch of tips and playful activities for families with children aged 6-12. Each activity is built to start open conversations about the video games your child likes to play and how you can make better gaming routines together that are enjoyable, fair and safe for everyone.

We hope you'll have fun – happy exploring!



The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are faint, light blue wireframe structures resembling low-poly meshes or molecular models. In the top-right corner, there is a faint, light blue pattern resembling a circuit board or a complex grid of lines.

Roblox

What it is & How it works

- Roblox is a platform of millions of games, mostly made by other users.
- Children create an avatar, explore games (e.g. obstacle courses, roleplay, tycoons) and can:
 - play alone
 - play with friends
 - play with strangers online
- It includes chat and friend systems and an in-game currency (Robux).
- Games vary wildly in quality, content and safety because they're user-created.





Home



Profile



Messages



Connect



Avatar



Inventory



Trade



Communities



Blog



Official Store



Buy Gift Cards

Get Premium

Today's Picks

A curated selection of daily highlights



Pixel Quest

2D RPG action



Dueling Grounds

PVP battle action



OVERKILL

Fast-moving FPS



HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON

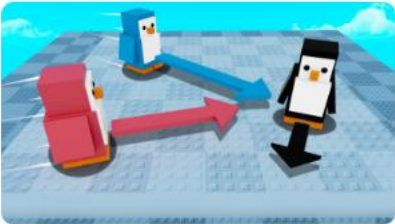
Dragon-raising fun

Recommended For You



RIVALS

94% Rating



Knockout!

97% Rating



Steal a Brainrot

86% Rating



Brookhaven RP

85% Rating



[NEW] Adopt Me!

85% Rating





Escape Tsunami For Brainrots!

👍 85% Rating



Murder Mystery 2

👍 90% Rating



[BIKES AND KITS] Driving Em...

👍 93% Rating



[🔥] 99 Nights in the Forest ...

👍 90% Rating



Dress To Impress 💖

👍 90% Rating



LifeTogether 🏠 RP

👍 90% Rating



Berry Avenue 🏠 RP

👍 85% Rating



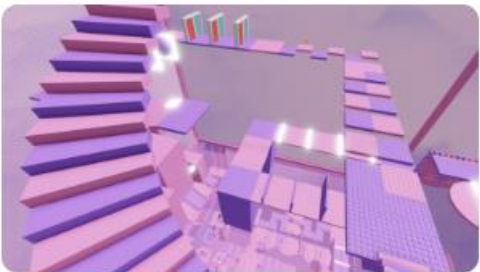
Blox Fruits

👍 91% Rating



Easy Obby

👍 78% Rating



🍬 Tower Of Candy - Tower ...

👍 70% Rating



Cheese Escape [Horror]

👍 86% Rating



[W88] Obby But You're On a ...

👍 76% Rating



Arsenal

👍 88% Rating



Logo Race: Guess The Logo ...

👍 28% Rating



[🐉] Survive LAVA for Brainr...

👍 94% Rating

What is Positive About Roblox?

- Creativity and Problem-Solving: Many children use the platform to build their own worlds, which can foster an interest in architecture, engineering, and coding.
- Social Connection: It provides a space for friends to hang out and collaborate on tasks, often while communicating via external voice chats like Discord or Snapchat to strategise.
- Developmental Roleplay: Games like Dress to Impress or Life Together allow children to act out social scenarios, such as managing a virtual home or exploring fashion trends, which helps them navigate social dynamics in a safe environment.
- Educational Content: Some creators use the platform to build simulators that teach children about managing businesses (Tycoon games) or exploring historical and scientific concepts.

What are the risks?

- Anonymous Interactions: Because Roblox connects random players globally, children may be exposed to anonymous users who could use the platform for bullying, harassment, or predatory behaviour.
- Unmoderated Content: With millions of games available, it is difficult to moderate everything; some smaller games may contain age-inappropriate themes, violence, or disturbing content that is not immediately flagged.
- In-Game Spending: Many games use aggressive monetisation, pressuring children to spend real money on Robux for "VIP" status or virtual items to gain social standing among peers.
- Scams: Younger players are often targets for scammers who promise "free Robux" or try to trade rare digital pets and items in exchange for personal information or real money.
- Addictive Mechanics: Rewarding gameplay loops and social pressure can make it difficult for children to log off, leading to concerns about excessive screen time.

Age Rating & Parental Controls

- Roblox has a PEGI 7 rating in the UK, but parents should be aware that content maturity can vary by game. To manage safety, Roblox provides several technical tools:
- Account Linking: Parents can link their own Roblox account to their child's to monitor activity and update settings from their own device.
- Roblox parental controls let you manage:
 - Screen time - Set daily limits and see how long your child plays
 - Who your child can chat with - Control messaging and experience chat
 - What content they can access - Set content maturity levels and block specific games
 - Friends & connections - View, block or report who your child connects with
 - Spending - Set monthly spending limits, Get email alerts when money is spent
 - Usage insights - See what your child plays most and how long they play

- Step-by-step (simple version):
 1. Create your own Roblox account
 2. Add parent privileges (you must be 18+ and verify your age)
 3. Link your account to your child's account
 4. Manage controls from:
 - Roblox website
 - Roblox app (iOS / Android)
- Once linked, you can:
 - change privacy & chat settings
 - set screen time limits
 - set spending limits
 - block specific games
 - view your child's activity
- Important things to know:
 - Multiple parents/carers can link to the same child account
 - Don't share one parent account between adults
 - If you unlink, you lose control of settings
 - Settings change automatically as children get older unless you lock them

Starting conversations

- Ask for a "Tour": Instead of lecturing, ask your child to show you their favourite game and explain how it works; this makes them the "expert" and opens a non-threatening dialogue.
- Discuss the "Why": If you notice them using slang or wanting a specific item, ask: "What do you think that word means?" or "Why is that VIP badge important to you?" to understand the social pressure they might be feeling [Workshop Overview].
- Focus on Feelings: Ask how they feel after playing for a long time; help them recognise the "dizzy" or "grumpy" feelings associated with "brain rot" content so they learn to self-regulate.
- Listen Openly: If something goes wrong, stay calm. Teens and children are less likely to seek help if they fear their parents will "panic" or take their devices away.

Roblox Age Verification

- Roblox uses two main methods:
- Facial Age Estimation
 - The app asks users to take a short *selfie video* using the device camera.
 - Roblox (via a third-party vendor) estimates the user's age and places them in an age group (e.g., under 9, 9–12, 13–15, etc.).
 - Images/videos are *deleted immediately after processing*, according to Roblox.
 - This is used especially to control access to chat and social features.
- ID Verification (13+)
 - Users aged 13 and over can verify with a government-issued photo ID if facial estimation is incorrect or unavailable.
 - Once done, this status *can't be easily removed* and is used to confirm age.

Age checks can fail or be tricked

- Facial estimation isn't perfect
 - Some users online have shared that the age estimation:
 - can place a child in the *wrong age range*
 - may set a child as much older than they are
 - can misclassify adults as teens or vice-versa
 - This can lead to unexpected chat restrictions or unwanted access.
- Important: In some reported cases, people have managed to trick the system in videos online by using pictures, drawn faces or non-human images to get past age checks. Those kinds of tricks *can reduce safety and aren't official features*

Specific instructions for parental controls

<https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/30428310121620-Parental-Controls-Overview>



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ROBLOX

AGE RESTRICTION
PEGI
7

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a 'sandbox' title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.

ONLINE PLAY RISKS

Because Roblox connects random players across the world, it can put younger players into an environment with anonymous users who could use the platform for malicious reasons. For example, some role-play games are used for online dates and mature role play, which could expose youngsters to inappropriate messages in the public chat box.

MATURE CONTENT

Content is difficult to moderate throughout Roblox, due to the number of games available. This is particularly notable on smaller games and experiences, but in summary, some of the games and experiences offered on the platform contain age-inappropriate content that could easily be seen by young players.

IN-GAME SPENDING

The majority of games within Roblox have extensive monetisation options, usually through season passes or microtransactions. Purchases can range in value from a few pennies up to much larger sums of money. While some games offer a lot of content via purchases, others can offer very little for real world money, causing younger players to end up out of pocket.

ANONYMOUS PLAYERS

The anonymity of users can leave players vulnerable to bullying, harassment, and predatory behaviour. Without the right parental controls or monitoring, users can connect with each other via personal messages or friend requests, and it is very difficult to know who's behind a username in this vast online world.

RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox games can feature rewarding or satisfying mechanics that keep players coming back – or persuade them to stay logged-in for much longer. Like most games, they focus on interactivity, with constant rewards via in-game unlocks and currencies, which can sometimes lead to an addictive need to remain online for long periods of time.

SCAMS

Many of the games on Roblox feature collectible items, pets, or characters. These objects, while digital, are worth a lot of real money on certain online markets. Scammers will attempt to trade with younger users in the hopes of getting rare items that can be sold for real money, manipulating the child into handing them over, usually via misleading information.

Advice for Parents & Educators

MONITOR THE CONTENT

While Roblox does implement plenty of moderation tools and parental controls, it's up to parents and guardians to monitor the types of games a child or impressionable player is experiencing. If a youngster wants to play Roblox, be sure to check out which specific games they want to play within it, and get a good idea of their content.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS

Use the parental controls within the game itself and teach youngsters how to report and block other players. Knowing the powers within their reach will make Roblox a safer, happier experience. You can set age ranges for who's allowed to contact you, close public chat boxes, block spending, and even make your Roblox profile completely private. All these options are helpful in cutting off bad actors from engaging with children.

PLAY TOGETHER

Consider playing Roblox with the children in your care. There are few more effective ways to see how monetisation works, gauge whether the game could lead to addictive behaviours, or even witness how interaction between players works. Then sitting down and trying the game for yourself. This should help you figure out whether it's suitable for particular children.

TEACH ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

Have an open conversation about the risks of online play and how to spend money wisely. By being honest and giving tips on how a younger user can protect themselves, you can empower them to not only take care of themselves, but others too. Any user can be reported to Roblox moderators by other players for behaving inappropriately. With this knowledge, younger players can be aware of what to look for and help prevent it.

Meet Our Expert

Don Upcombe is a videogame journalist and author of over 20 books on gaming, including books on Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, and more. For 15 years he has been writing about his passion for gaming. When he's not playing games, he's talking about them at GAMINGable.



@wake_up_weds



/www.thenationalcollege



@wake.up.wednesday



@wake.up.weds

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YouTube

What it is & How it works

- YouTube is a video platform where anyone can upload content.
- Children use it to watch:
 - gaming videos
 - challenges & pranks
 - Tutorials
 - short clips (YouTube Shorts)
- The recommendation algorithm suggests what to watch next based on what your child has already viewed.
- Content is not curated for children by default — it's driven by popularity and watch time.

What is Positive About Youtube?

- Huge range of educational content (maths, reading, science, art)
- Tutorials for games, crafts, hobbies
- Can support independent learning
- Shared videos can be a great conversation starter at home

What are the risks?

- Autoplay can lead children from suitable content to more questionable videos
- YouTube Shorts can encourage fast, repetitive scrolling
- Creators use adult humour, slang or pranks children may copy without understanding
- Ads and product pushing (toys, skins, merch, trends) Comment sections can expose children to rude or inappropriate language
- Content can look “child-friendly” but include violence, swearing or sexualised jokes

Age Rating & Parental Controls

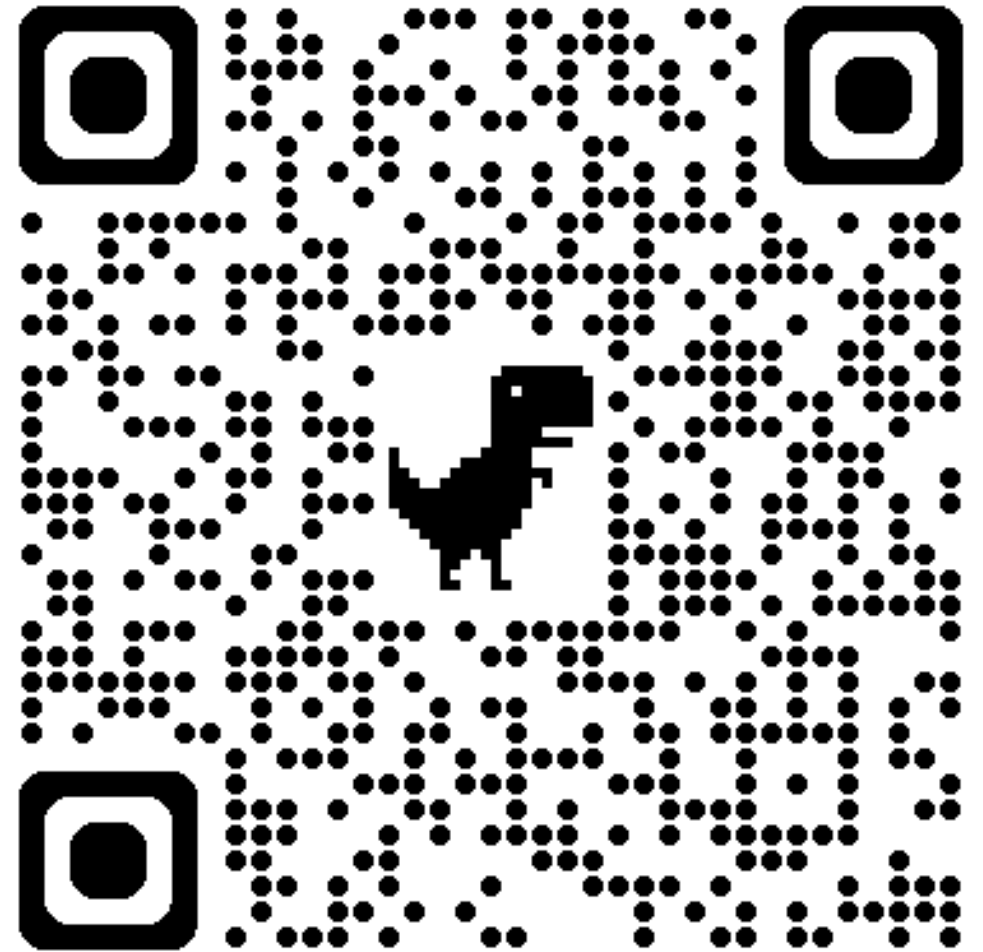
- YouTube's age rating is 13+
- Younger children often use it anyway
- Parents can:
 - turn on Restricted Mode
 - create a supervised account
 - use YouTube Kids for younger children
 - control content and screen time via Google Family Link
- Controls help — but they don't replace supervision and conversation

YouTube vs YouTube Kids

	YouTube Kids	YouTube (with supervision)
Who it's for	Younger children (roughly under 9)	Older children & teens
Type of app	Separate app designed for children	Normal YouTube with parental supervision
Content	Smaller, filtered library	Much larger library
Parental control	High – parents can handpick videos & channels	Medium – parents choose age level & block channels
Comments	No comments	Comments may appear for older settings
Account needed	No Google account needed	Child needs a Google account
Screen time limits	Can be set by parents	Can be set using parental controls
Big trade-off	Safer, but more limited	More content, but higher risk

More info about kids accounts

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids?sjid=6592053073829246335-EU#topic=>



Starting conversations

- “What kind of videos do you like watching on YouTube?”
- “Who are your favourite YouTubers?”
- “What’s the funniest or weirdest thing you’ve seen recently?”
- “Have you ever seen something that made you uncomfortable?”
- “Can you show me what YouTube Shorts looks like?”

Rate My YouTuber: Child-Friendly YouTubers and Channels

<https://natterhub.com/rate-my-youtuber>

natterhub
preparing children to thrive online

About ▾ For School ▾ For Home ▾ Information ▾ Login ▾ [Book Demo](#)

Online Safety solution for your home [Discover Natterhub Home](#)

Rate My YouTuber: Child-Friendly YouTubers and Channels

Search for a YouTuber or key topic



EYStream



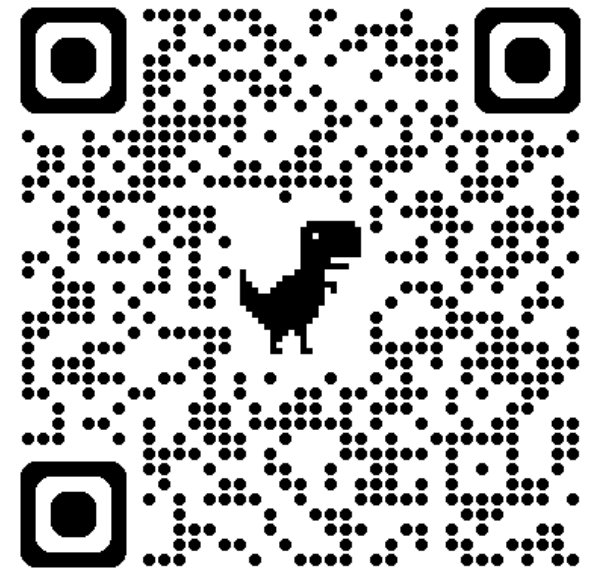
Nick Eh 30



KSI



Amustycow



What's MrBeast all about?

Jimmy Donaldson carries out stunts, physical and mental challenges, and often gives away a *lot* of money during his videos.

It's interesting to see people challenging themselves physically and mentally, and it's really funny.

The humour is quite mature, and there is some beeped out swearing.

13+

Star Rating: How happy would parents be for their children to watch this YouTuber?



Natterhub Notes

- Some YouTube users proved MrBeast for his usage of clickbait to make money and obtain subscribers.
- MrBeast's video titled "Can 20,000 Magnets Stop a Bullet Mid Air?" was pretty controversial due to the thumbnail Jimmy used. It showed him firing a



The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are faint, light blue wireframe structures resembling molecular models or complex networks. In the top-right corner, there is a faint, light blue pattern resembling a circuit board or a complex grid. The word "Snapchat" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Snapchat

What it is & How it works

- Social media app for messaging, photo/video sharing, and Stories.
- Messages (“Snaps”) disappear after being viewed, though screenshots can be taken.
- Stories show photos/videos for 24 hours to friends or public followers.
- Includes filters, lenses, Bitmoji avatars, and Spotlight (short videos).



What is Positive?

- Keeps children in touch with friends in a creative way.
- Encourages self-expression via photos, video and avatars.
- Some educational/creative content on Spotlight.
- Can support social bonding when used safely.

What are the risks?

- Disappearing messages can hide bullying or inappropriate content.
- Location sharing can reveal your child's location if enabled.
- Public exposure via Spotlight or public Stories.
- Peer pressure to respond quickly, share photos, or maintain streaks.
- Potential contact from strangers if settings aren't restricted.
- Age verification can be bypassed — the minimum age is 13.

Age Rating & Parental Controls

- Snapchat requires users to be 13+.
- Controls include:
 - Restrict who can contact your child (everyone, friends, or friends of friends).
 - Limit who can view Stories (friends only, custom lists). Disable location sharing or set it to “Ghost Mode”.
 - Report/block inappropriate accounts or content.
- No native screen time control — use phone OS tools (iOS/Android) to set limits.



Starting conversations

- “Who do you usually Snap with?”
- “What do you like about Snapchat?”
- “Do you ever see anything that makes you uncomfortable?”
- “Do you know how to check your privacy settings?”
- “Have you ever taken a screenshot of a Snap?”

Snapchat Safety Hub



Parents

[What is Snapchat?](#)

[The Teen Experience](#)

[Family Center](#)

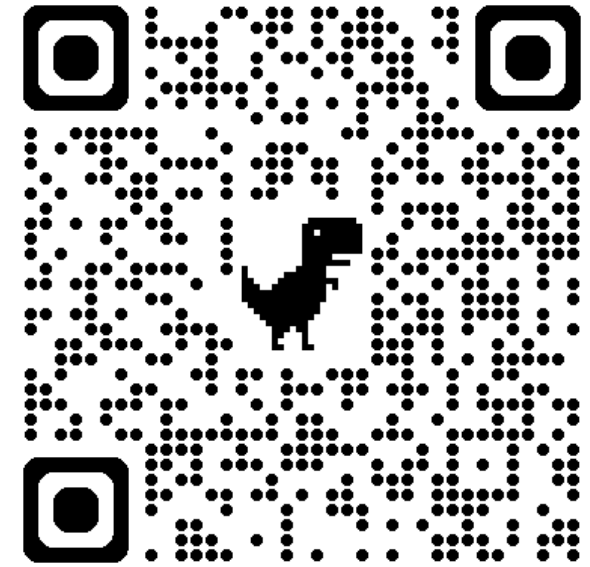
[Safety Resources](#)

[The Keys Digital Safety Course](#)

[Report a Concern](#)

SNAPCHAT SAFETY HUB

Snapchat was designed to bring you closer to friends and family, in an environment that prioritizes safety and privacy. Learn how Snapchat works, the key protections we offer for teens, and how to use our safety tools.



SNAP STREAK

97

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

With over 900 million active monthly users and billions of 'Snaps' sent each month, Snapchat is a popular messaging app among children and young people. It allows users to share fun, spontaneous pictures and videos with friends and family while using playful filters. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures, videos and messages are only viewable for a short period of time.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Snapchat's use of artificial intelligence (AI) includes features like the 'My AI' chatbot and AI-powered filters, offering interactive experiences that can be fun but also pose risks. These tools may share unfiltered or inaccurate responses, promote unrealistic beauty standards, and collect personal data. Advanced filters and deepfake-style lenses can distort reality, potentially leading to manipulation, impersonation, or inappropriate content.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Snapchat boasts user engagement and daily use with features like streaks (daily Snapchat exchanges between you and a friend). When a streak's been going for a few days, users will see a 🔥 emoji. The number alongside it shows the number of days, but if users miss a day and break the streak, the only way to restore it is to pay. This encourages daily use habits, and frequent notifications can keep users returning to the app even more often.

SEXTORTION

Because Snapchat's disappearing messages feature may foster a sense of safety, users may become targets of sextortion. For example, a predator may pressure someone into sending nude images, then somehow capture those images to threaten and intimidate the victim. This might involve claiming they will share the images with friends or family unless money is paid.

SNAPCHAT+

Snapchat+ is the platform's premium subscription service, offering early access to new and exclusive features. In June 2025, Snapchat introduced a new tier called Lens+, giving subscribers access to hundreds of lenses and AR experiences for playing, creating, and sharing Snaps. These paid features may encourage young users to spend money to access exclusive content, increasing the risk of overspending or feeling pressured to make in-app purchases.

ACCESSIBILITY

Snapchat is now accessible from a web browser, meaning children can use it on a laptop or tablet without downloading the app. This can make activity harder to monitor, reduce the effectiveness of parental controls, and increase the risk of unsupervised communication or exposure to inappropriate content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's disappearing messages feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACCESS THE SNAPCHAT FAMILY SAFETY HUB

Created with guidance from Common Sense Media, Snapchat has developed a Family Safety Hub that explains how the app works and how to use its in-app protections for teens. It's recommended that you review this guidance before allowing a child to download Snapchat. Remember, the app is only intended for children aged 13 and over.

BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger connects with a child on Snapchat and makes them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them to send or receive unwanted or inappropriate images, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile to report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user, with a tailored reporting section under the 'Harassment and Sexual Content' category. In this category, there's the option to report somebody for threatening to look at or share explicit images or 'nudes'.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. Talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Sit down with the children in your care and explore Snapchat's privacy settings as a shared activity. You can help them adjust who can contact them, view their stories, or see their location on Snap Map. It's a good opportunity to explain why some settings are safer than others, reinforcing their understanding of online boundaries. Encourage them to regularly review these settings, especially after app updates or changes in their friendship groups.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are abstract geometric patterns consisting of white lines and dots, resembling a network or a molecular structure. In the top-right corner, there is a curved, grid-like pattern of white lines, resembling a circuit board or a globe's latitude/longitude lines.

WhatsApp

What it is & How it works

- Messaging app owned by Meta Platforms.
- Allows users to send texts, voice notes, images, videos, documents and location.
- Supports group chats, video calls and voice calls.
- Messages are end-to-end encrypted (only sender and receiver can read them). Often used for whole-class friendship groups in Years 4–6.

What is Positive?

- Easy way to stay in contact with friends and family.
- Group chats can help children feel included socially.
- Voice notes can support children who struggle with typing.
- Can be used positively for homework collaboration (with guidance).

What are the risks?

- Large group chats can quickly become overwhelming or unkind.
- Screenshots and message forwarding mean messages can spread rapidly.
- Added to groups without permission.
- Pressure to respond immediately.
- Inappropriate images or jokes being shared.
- Arguments escalating outside of school hours.

The minimum age to use WhatsApp in the UK is 13, but many primary-aged children use it earlier.

Age Rating & Parental Controls

- 13+ minimum age.
- Parents can help children:
 - Control who can add them to groups (Settings → Privacy → Groups).
 - Limit who sees profile photo, status and “last seen”.
 - Turn off read receipts if preferred.
 - Block and report users.
- Use Apple Screen Time / Android Family Link for time limits.

Starting conversations

- “What groups are you in at the moment?”
- “What happens if someone sends something unkind?”
- “Do you know how to leave a group?”
- “Would you tell me if something made you uncomfortable?”
- “How many messages do you think you get in a day?”

The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are abstract geometric patterns made of thin white lines and small dots, resembling wireframe models or network diagrams. In the top-right corner, there is a curved, grid-like pattern of white lines, suggesting a sphere or a complex surface.

TikTok

What it is & How it works

- Short-form video platform owned by ByteDance.
- Users watch and create short videos (usually 15 seconds to a few minutes).
- The “For You Page” (FYP) shows videos chosen by an algorithm based on what a user watches, likes or interacts with.
- Content includes dance trends, comedy, tutorials, gaming, lifestyle, and challenges.
- Users can like, comment, share, message, and livestream.

What is Positive?

- Creative outlet for video making, music, editing and storytelling.
- Can inspire learning, hobbies and creativity (art, cooking, science, etc.).
- Many creators share educational content in engaging ways.
- Children enjoy participating in trends and challenges with friends.

What are the risks?

- Highly addictive design – endless scrolling keeps users watching.
- Algorithm may show inappropriate content if a child interacts with certain videos.
- Exposure to unrealistic body images or lifestyles.
- Comment sections can include negative or harmful messages.
- Dangerous or risky “challenges” occasionally trend.
- Children may feel pressure to post videos or gain likes/followers.
- **The minimum age for TikTok is 13.**

Age Rating & Parental Controls

- TikTok has a feature called Family Pairing, which allows parents to link their account to their child's account.
- Parents can control:
 - Screen time limits
 - Who can send messages
 - Who can comment on videos
 - Private vs public account
 - Restricted mode to limit mature content
 - Search settings
- Accounts for under 18s are private by default, meaning only approved followers can see their content.

With [Family Pairing](#), parents or guardians can link their TikTok accounts to their teens' to manage a variety of content, privacy and well-being settings. These include features such as:

- All accounts for teens under 18 years old start out as private. Teens can choose to make their account public, and if you've linked your accounts, you can change this choice by using [Family Pairing](#).
 - A daily screen time limit is set to 60 minutes for all teens under 18 years old by default. You and your teens can further customise this limit to suit their needs when Family Pairing is enabled.
 - Only accounts for people who are at least 18 years old can [go LIVE](#).
 - Accounts for teens under 16 years old don't have access to [direct messaging](#) or [group chat \(in select regions\)](#).
 - We don't allow content posted by accounts for teens under 16 to [be recommended](#) in the For You feed to people they don't know.
 - We mute [push notifications](#) for your teen overnight.
- Setting a [screen time limit](#), which is customisable by the day of the week. When you set a screen time limit through Family Pairing, your teen has to ask you for a one-time passcode to continue using TikTok once the limit is reached.
 - [Customise your teen's For You feed](#) using keywords. TikTok will filter out posts that contain the keywords that you choose by checking for them in the description of the post.
 - Customise your teen's [comment controls](#) or completely turn off comments.
 - Decide who can send messages or message requests to your teen.
 - View who your teen is following on TikTok, and who follows them, along with [accounts they blocked](#).
 - Get an overview of your teen's privacy settings, such as their account visibility and who can comment on their posts. The settings shown here depend on your teen's age and the features available to them.

Digital Safety Partnership for Families

A conversation guide to help families create safe, age-appropriate and positive digital boundaries.

Remember to approach this agreement from a place of:



Curiosity

Do your research; come prepared to ask questions; be ready to learn



Empathy

Try to put yourself in the other's shoes. Teens say they want adults to recognise the importance of a digital life, while caregivers often want teens to understand safety concerns and risks.



Partnership

Remember, this is a joint and equal partnership. Find the best way to follow these agreements that work for your family.



Respect

Approach this discussion – and all interactions related to this agreement – with respect.

Agreements

Collective Agreements

We commit to an open dialogue.

Whenever the other wants to have a conversation, we'll be there for each other and listen to what the other has to say. We will talk about our digital lives often, not only when something goes wrong.

We will know the tools and respect the rules.

Before downloading or getting started with any new app, we'll review the app's rules and safety features, including parenting tools and account settings. If we don't think we can uphold the rules, we will discuss whether the app can be on the device.

We will clearly define when and where we use our devices,

whether at home, in school, during family time, or out with friends, and we will all respect these limits.

We will revisit our agreements regularly.

We will check in after 30 days to review the details together and make sure it's achievable. From there, we'll revisit it once a year to ensure it's still relevant and fits with our family's needs.



Teen Agreements

I will stop and think before deciding to act.

Before I do anything online - whether it's posting a comment, sending something to a friend, or interacting with someone I may not know in real life - I'll stop and think. Is it safe? Is it respectful? Is it real? If I'm unsure, I'll check with you or another trusted adult.

If I see something, I'll say something.

Even though apps have community guidelines, I may still encounter content or have interactions that make me uncomfortable. If I see something that worries me or makes me feel uneasy, I'll tell you so that you can help me avoid it or report it.

I agree to our limits on in-app purchases:

If allowed, we will set boundaries for in-app purchases and how I spend money online.

Caregiver Agreements

I will be available to chat.

I recognise that being available to talk will help you feel supported. Please don't be afraid to initiate a conversation. I will initiate conversations about your digital life, and won't only talk to you about it when something goes wrong.

I will be curious about your online life.

I will talk to you about what you're seeing online, who you're speaking to and what's brought you joy recently, as well as share my own experiences.

I will always be there for you if things go wrong.

When you share a problem, I'll listen, ask questions, and focus on how we can navigate the challenge together.

I will respect your privacy.

My goal is to keep you safe while honouring your personal space. We'll work together to find a balance, and I'll explain why I may want to follow your online accounts, turn on safety features, or have certain access to your device.

I will lead by example. I understand that my behaviour sets the standard for our family's digital habits. In addition to what is outlined in this contract, I agree to:

I will keep educating myself about the digital world. I understand that technology is constantly changing and exciting new apps, features, and products are coming out almost every day. While I can't promise to be an expert on every platform, I will educate myself as we make collective decisions and I welcome learning from you too.

What should happen if we don't follow these agreements

For Teen:

- I will have to complete certain chores around the house to get my smartphone back.
- I'll take away your device for a certain amount of time so you can have a break and other privileges may be taken away, such as video game access.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

(Certain features are restricted to over-13s only)

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £5.99 to £24.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.8 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-13s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can spread young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 13-16-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even bad tips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chance of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.



The National College

What are streaming platforms?

- Popular services such as Netflix, Disney+, and Amazon Prime Video allow families to watch films and TV programmes on demand through smart TVs, tablets, phones, or games consoles.
- Children often use these platforms to watch:
 - Cartoons and children's programmes
 - Films and series
 - Content recommended by friends or YouTubers
- Unlike traditional TV, content is available instantly and continuously, meaning children can easily watch multiple episodes without noticing how long they have been watching.

Things to be aware of

- Many platforms auto-play the next episode, encouraging binge watching.
- Children can accidentally access older content if profiles are not set correctly.
- Some programmes aimed at older audiences can appear in recommendations.
- Children may watch content on multiple devices, making it harder to monitor.

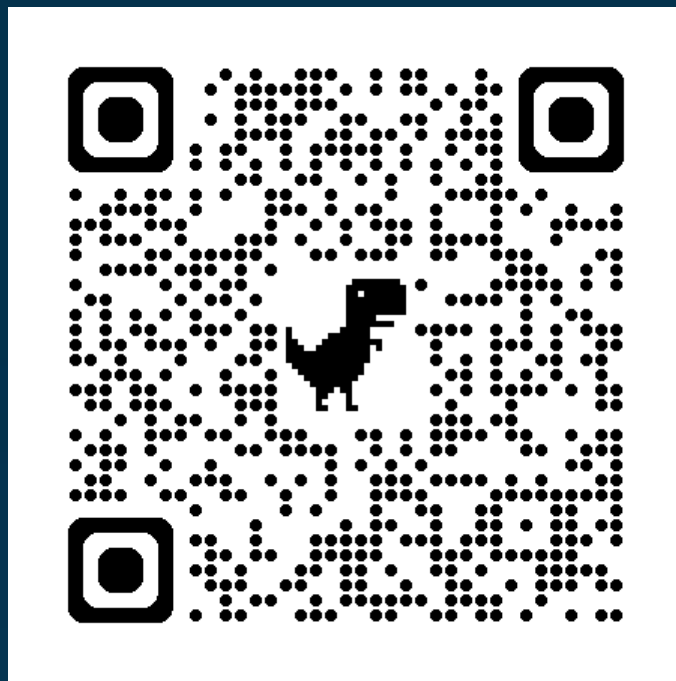
Parental controls on streaming services

- Most streaming services allow parents to create child-friendly profiles.
- Common controls include:
- Age-restricted profiles (e.g. only content suitable for under 7s or under 12s)
- PIN protection to stop children switching profiles
- Viewing history so parents can see what has been watched
- Turning off autoplay to prevent continuous watching
- Setting up a separate child profile is one of the simplest ways to make streaming safer.

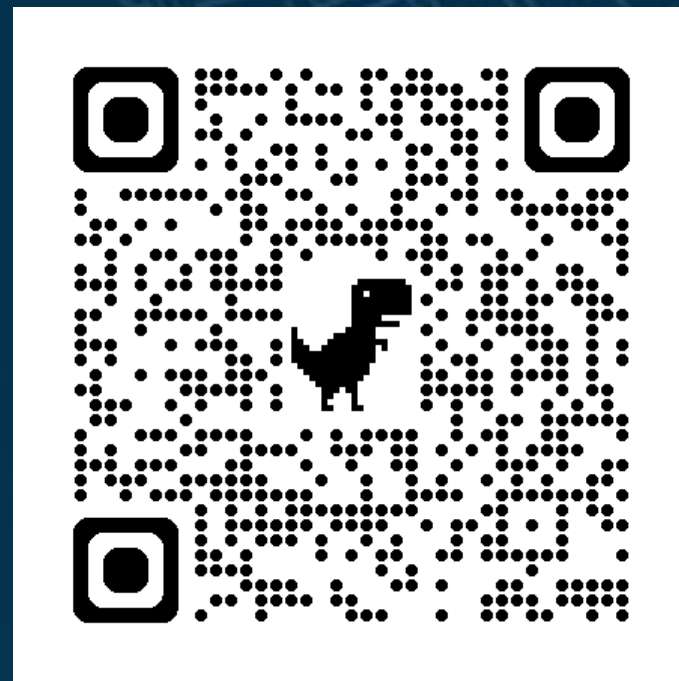
Netflix



Disney Plus



Amazon Prime
Video



Age ratings

Why age ratings matter

- Age ratings help families understand whether a film or programme is suitable for children. They are based on things like:
 - Violence
 - Scary scenes
 - Bad language
 - Sexual content
 - Drug or risky behaviour
- In the UK, age ratings for films and many streaming platforms are set by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC).
- These ratings are designed to guide parents so children watch content appropriate for their age and emotional maturity.

Rating	What it means
U – Universal	Suitable for all ages. Very mild language or very gentle themes only.
PG – Parental Guidance	Suitable for general viewing but some scenes may be unsuitable for young children. Parents should decide.
12 / 12A	Content may not be suitable for children under 12. Can include moderate violence or language.
15	Suitable only for people aged 15 and over. May include strong language, violence or mature themes.
18	Adults only. Contains strong adult themes not suitable for children.

Remember

- Age ratings are guidance, not guarantees.
- Two children of the same age might react very differently to the same programme. It can be helpful to:
- Watch new programmes together first
- Check the age rating and description
- Talk about anything confusing or upsetting

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What age rating do you
think these films are?

Titanic

12



Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire?

12

All Harry Potter Films before this one were PG



Jaws

12



Moana



Encanto

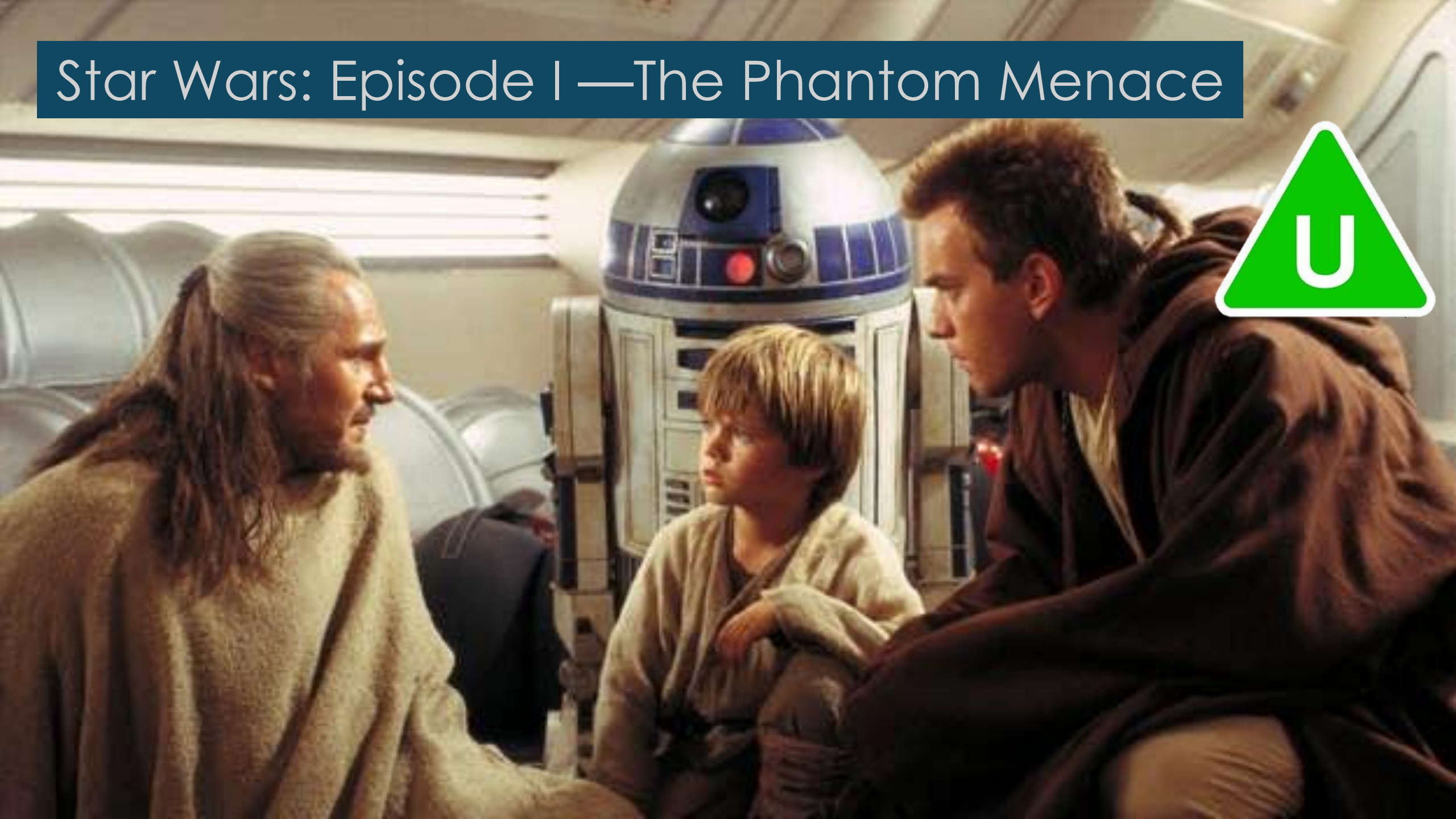


Deadpool

15



Star Wars: Episode I —The Phantom Menace



5 Things That Make the Biggest Difference to Children's Online Safety

- Keep conversations open
Children are more likely to ask for help if they feel they won't get into trouble.
- Know what they are using
Take time to understand the apps, games and websites your child uses.
- Use parental controls
Controls can help limit contact with strangers, restrict content and manage screen time.
- Set clear family expectations
Agree rules about screen time, devices in bedrooms and how to behave online.
- Remind children they can always ask for help
Make sure they know they can talk to a trusted adult if something worries them online.

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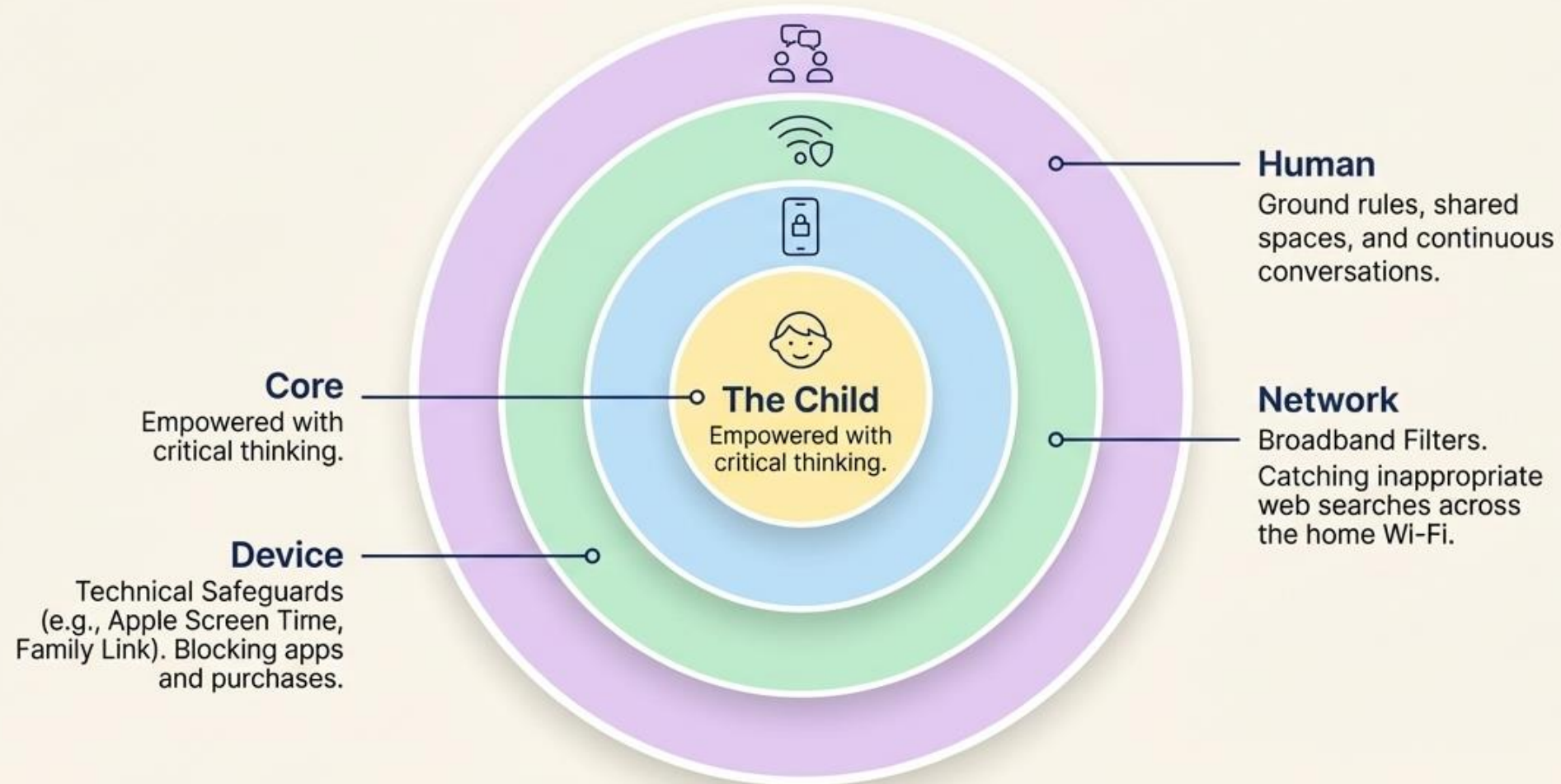
First devices, Screen time and Wellbeing

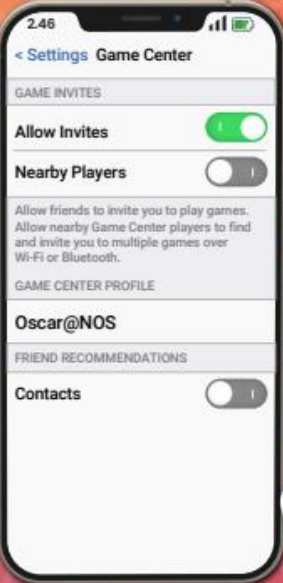
First Devices: Starting Early, Staying Safe

- Why it matters:
 - Many children get their first tablet, phone, or smart device around Y1–3.
 - Early habits can shape how they use technology later.
- Tips for parents:
 - Keep devices in shared family spaces.
 - Set family rules about when and how devices are used.
 - Consider child accounts or parental controls from the start.
 - Teach basic online safety: never share personal info, passwords, or location.

The Layered Defense Model for Digital Safety

If one layer fails—like a child guessing a passcode—the other layers provide backup. Technology creates the walls; active parenting teaches them how to play safely inside.





How to Restrict Built-in Apps/Features

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap Allowed Apps (you may need to toggle this to 'on' at the top)
- 5 Enable or disable the apps you wish to appear (or disappear) on your child's device

How to Restrict Game Centre

- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap Content Restrictions (you may need to switch the toggle at the top to the 'on' position)
- 5 Scroll down to Game Centre
- 6 Choose between Allow, Don't Allow, or Allow with Friends Only in the settings for each feature

How to Restrict iTunes & App Store Purchases

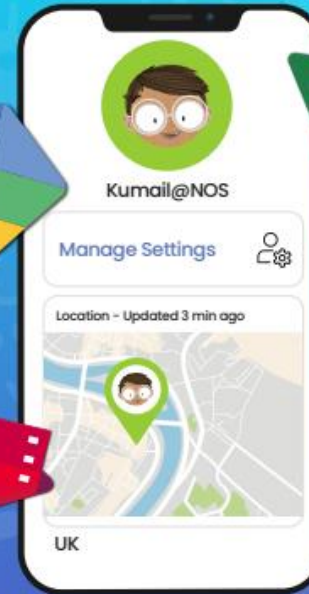
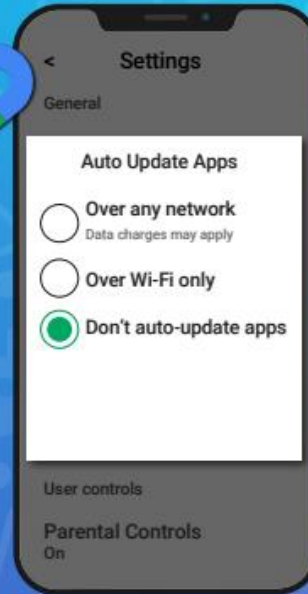
- 1 Open Settings
- 2 Tap Screen Time
- 3 Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
- 4 Tap iTunes & App Store Purchases
- 5 Select Allow or Don't Allow for each feature (you can also lock these settings with a password)



National Online Safety

www.nationalonlinesafety.com





How to Block App Downloads (This Also Disables In-app Purchases):

- 1 Open Google Play Store
- 2 Tap the profile icon in the top right
- 3 Tap Settings
- 4 Scroll down to the Family section and tap Parental controls
- 5 Toggle 'Parental controls are off' to 'Parental controls are on'
- 6 Create a PIN and tap OK
- 7 Confirm your PIN and tap OK again
- 8 Tap Apps & Games
- 9 Set the age limit you wish to set
- 10 Tap Save to apply your changes

How to Stop Auto-updates

- 1 Open Google Play Store
- 2 Tap the profile icon in the top right
- 3 Tap Settings
- 4 Tap Auto-Update Apps
- 5 Select 'Don't auto-update apps' and then tap Done

Restricting Apps Through Google Family Link

- 1 Open Google Play Family Link for parents
- 2 Tap the three horizontal lines in the top left
- 3 Select your child's account
- 4 Tap Manage
- 5 Tap Controls on Google Play
- 6 Tap Apps & Games
- 7 Select the age limit you wish to set



Screen time and wellbeing

- Screen time impacts:
 - Sleep disruption
 - Mood changes / irritability
 - Difficulty stopping after playing or watching
- Practical tips:
 - Set screen time limits per day.
 - No devices in bedrooms overnight.
 - Balance online and offline activities (reading, outdoor play, hobbies).
 - Use apps or device settings to monitor time gently, not punitively.

Encouraging healthy habits

- Talk & model behaviour:
 - Children notice what adults do online.
 - Have screen-free zones or times as a family (meals, before bed).
- Support self-regulation:
 - Encourage children to take breaks
 - Praise children when they follow screen time rules
 - Explain why breaks, sleep, and offline time matter

Questions

The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left corner, there is a white wireframe structure resembling a complex polyhedron or a network graph. In the top-right corner, there is a white pattern of lines that looks like a circuit board or a stylized globe with circuitry. In the bottom-left corner, there is another white wireframe structure, similar to the one in the top-left but with a different configuration of lines and nodes.