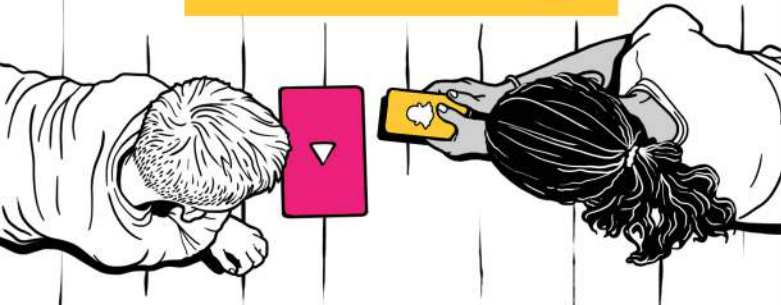


Talking with your child about wellbeing:

Social Media & Gaming



Parenting can be hard when children often seem to know more about the world of social media than we do ourselves. But while they may seem completely at home on their phones, tablets, PCs and consoles – they still need our help and guidance to stay safe. Children value their parents' good opinion, advice and support. By sharing and talking together about your online lives, you can model safe behaviours, agree boundaries, support your child's mental health through positive online experiences, and know how to help, should something ever go wrong.

Re-Solv

A Re-Solv Lowdown Guide

6 Be aware of what your children are accessing

It can be hard to stay up-to-date with the latest apps, games and online trends. Talking with your child about what they're enjoying will be a great source of info, as will talking to other parents and friends. **NetAware** regularly review the most popular apps, games and social media sites that young people are using.

7 Understand the risks

Social networking can be a hugely positive part of a child's life – but there are some risks. By helping your child understand these risks, you can prevent them becoming problems. You might begin by helping your child understand what personal information is, and discuss what is safe to share online and what is not. **Internet Matters** has a helpful guide that suggests thinking about what children might see and do online, who they might meet, and how these experiences might affect them.

8 Let your child know you're there for them

You want your child to know they can come to you if they are worried or if something has gone wrong. Listen, stay calm and try not to get stressed yourself. Help them say what they need to by asking open questions (rather than questions that lead to a straight 'yes' or 'no'). Together, you can work through whatever the problem might be. And if your child hasn't said anything but you're concerned something is wrong, don't be afraid to ask.

9 Keep an online/offline life balance

It's OK not to be available all the time on social media. Gaming in particular can be hard to stop and it's understandable that children can feel frustrated at being asked to cut off in the middle of a level or if they're in a team with friends. **ThinkUKnow** have a useful parent guide on gaming. Managing these emotions comes back to setting good family rules and making sure children have a range of other activities that they also enjoy – sports, creative activities, family time and so on.

10 Don't be afraid to ask for help yourself

The social media landscape changes all the time – we all need help to keep on top of it, and we all need someone to talk to when we're worried about our kids. There's a list of websites and resources on the back of this guide that we hope you'll find helpful.

Top Ten Tips

- 1 The earlier you start talking, the better...**
According to Ofcom, almost a quarter of 3-4 year olds have their own tablet. It's never too early to start establishing positive and safe practices together so that these quickly become the norm for your child. **NetAware** have a video of four simple steps you can follow to make talking online safety a part of your family conversation.
- 2 And keep talking!**
You want your online lives to be something you enjoy talking about and sharing together, not something you just end up having arguments about. Talk about your own experiences, things you've enjoyed; encourage your child to tell you more about what they enjoy. These conversations can also provide natural opportunities for your child to share something that might have worried them or ask if there is something they are unsure about.
- 3 Practise online safety**
Children will learn lots about online safety at school. By showing an interest and going online together, you can put their learning into practice at home. **Childnet** also have advice on key topics and **ThinkUKnow** have a range of activities you can do with your family to support their online safety at home.
- 4 Set a good example**
Think about how you use social media, how often, how you behave towards other people online and so on. Would you be happy for your child to do the same? If not, are there some adjustments you could make? Simple things like putting phones to one side at mealtimes can help promote a healthy balance between your family's virtual life and other interests and activities.
- 5 Agree your family rules**
Many parents hear from their children that "all my friends are allowed to ..." But does that work for your family? Work together to set realistic boundaries that your child sees the rationale for and can respect. **ChildNet** has a really helpful Family Agreement which can help start positive conversations about safe and responsible internet use, and agreeing expectations and boundaries.



Help and information

- Childnet International** **ChildNet** provides information and resources to help parents support their children to have a happy and safe online experience: childnet.com.
- Internet Matters.org** **Internet Matters** is a not-for-profit that provides information for parents and carers on how to keep children safe in the digital world: internetmatters.org.
- Net Aware** From O2 and the NSPCC, **Net Aware** is a guide to social networks, apps and games used by young people: net-aware.org.uk or NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000.
- ThinkUKnow** The national child protection programme, **ThinkUKnow** has advice on staying safe online and offline for children/young people of all ages, and for parents: thinkuknow.co.uk.
- UK Safer Internet Centre** **The UK Safer Internet Centre** has tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep children safe online: saferinternet.org.uk.
- Family Lives** **Family Lives** is a UK charity that supports parents in all aspects of family life. Their helpline is 0808 800 222 or chat online at familylives.org.uk.
- Young Minds** If you're worried about your child's mental health, **Young Minds** have a free Parent Helpline on 0808 802 5544 and info (including a Social Media Parent Guide) at youngminds.org.uk.
- Childline** **Childline** provides free, confidential help for young people on 0800 111 and at childline.org.uk.
- The Mix** **The Mix** provides free, confidential information and support for under-25s on 0808 808 4994 and at themix.org.uk.
- NHS** **The National Centre for Gaming Disorders** provides assessment and treatment for age 13+, and family/carer support. Call 020 7381 7722 or email nca.cnlw@nhs.net.

Find links to all the above and more at re-solv.org/mh or scan the QR code:

@resolvUK Helpline: 01785 810762

