Your child's screen time

Know the risks, and what you can do to keep your child safe.

What's the problem?

Spending time online and on devices can be a positive thing. But, high levels of screen time can put your child more at risk of:

> Being bullied online

> Abuse and grooming (when someone builds a relationship with a child to exploit or abuse them)

> Seeing inappropriate content

> Not getting enough sleep and exercise

4 steps you can take to protect your child

1) Set parental controls on devices

Use parental controls to restrict access to in-app purchases and explicit or age-rated content, and, on some devices, how long they can spend on the device.

You'll likely need to set a password. Make sure it's different from the password used to access the device, and that your child doesn't know it.

Parental controls are usually located under 'Settings'. See below for more detailed instructions for different devices.

2) Agree rules on screen time

There are mixed views on 'safe' screen time, but you could agree some limits to stop screen time interfering with your child's sleep or family activities:

> Make a plan together, and stick to it. You could set media-free times and zones, like during meals or in bedrooms

> Try to avoid screens an hour before bedtime

> Model the behaviour you want to see – which may mean no screen time for you at the times agreed with your child. Children are more likely to learn from example

> Try to minimise snacking during screen time

3) Talk to your child about staying safe online

Tell them:

> To be aware that anyone can pretend to be a child online

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> If they talk to people they don't know, not to give away personal information – like what street they live on or where they go to school, or to share their location with them. To say no to any requests they get for images or videos, and stop talking to the other person if they are asked for these things

> To set their profiles to private, to limit what others can see

> To be 'share aware' – think carefully about what they share and with whom. Once it's out there, they've got no control over what the other person does with it. Remember, it's illegal to take, share or view sexual images of under-18s, full stop

> If they see something that upsets them, or someone bullies them, to tell an adult they trust

4) Encourage off-screen activities

Help your child get active for the recommended 60 minutes a day:

> See www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities for free ideas for activities and games

> Try an app that's designed to get children active – see the examples at www.internetmatters.org/resources/apps-guide/apps-to-help-kids-get-active/

How to set parental controls on your devices

Please note: when following the instructions below, the exact steps you need to take may be a little different depending on the device and software version you're using.

iPads and iPhones

Set a screen time passcode

> Go to 'Settings' (a grey icon with a circular pattern on the home screen) and tap 'Screen Time'

> Tap 'Continue', then choose whether it's your device or your child's

- If it's your device and you want to stop your child changing your settings, tap 'Use Screen Time Passcode' to create a passcode. Re-enter the passcode to confirm

- If it's your child's device, follow the prompts on the device until you get to 'Parent Passcode' and enter a passcode, then re-enter it to confirm

Block in-app purchases

> Go into Settings > Screen Time > Content and Privacy Restrictions. Enter your passcode if asked

> Tap 'iTunes & App Store Purchases'

> Choose a setting (for example, in-app purchases) and set to 'Don't allow'

Block explicit content and set controls on apps

> Go to Settings > Screen Time > Content & Privacy Restrictions > Content Restrictions

> Choose the settings you want for each feature or setting under 'Allowed Store Content'

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Filter website content

This sets restrictions on what websites children can access (e.g., you can limit access to adult content).

> Go to Settings > Screen Time > Content & Privacy Restrictions

> Enter your screen time passcode

> Tap 'Content Restrictions', then 'Web Content'

> Choose 'Unrestricted Access' (access to any website), 'Limit Adult Websites' (to block access to adult content in Safari and apps) or 'Allowed Websites Only' (to set specific websites as 'approved websites' and limit access to only these websites)

Fire Tablet

Set a parental controls password

> Swipe down twice from the top of the screen to show Quick Settings

> Tap 'Settings' (a cog icon)

> Tap 'Parental Controls'

> Toggle the switch to 'On'

> Enter a password, confirm it, then tap 'Finish'

Restrict apps, features and content

> In 'Parental Controls', tap 'Amazon Content and Apps' to choose which content or apps you want to block

> You can set controls on playing videos, accessing WiFi and location services by entering your parental controls password. Go into 'Password Protection' in 'Parental Controls' to toggle these on

> To block access to Amazon, go to 'Parental Controls' and press 'Amazon Stores (excluding Video)', and tap to block

Block in-app purchases

> In 'Parental Controls', toggle 'Password Protect Purchases' to on

Set times when your child can use the tablet

> Go to 'Parental Controls'

> Tap the switch next to 'Set a Curfew', then tap 'Curfew Schedule'

> Set the day and time limits you want

To unlock a device during a curfew, enter your parental controls password.

Android phones

Set up parental controls and set age ratings

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> Open the Play Store app, tap the 3-lines button in the top left > Settings > Family > Parental controls

> Toggle Parental controls to on

> Create a PIN. Make sure to choose a PIN your child doesn't already know

You can then choose the highest age rating you want to allow for apps and games, films, TV, books and music. Go into each option and choose the age rating you want.

You can set these controls on the Family Link app too. Family Link is an app that lets parents set "digital ground rules" for their children. See this page for more information: https://support.google.com/families/answer/7101025?hl=en

Restrict purchases

> Open the Play Store and tap the icon in the top right (it should show either your initials or your profile photo)

> Select Settings > Authentication > Require authentication for purchases > For all purchases through Google Play on this device

Manage screen time

You'll need to set up Family Link to do this.

In the Family Link app, select your child, then:

To set a daily limit on a device, on the 'Daily limit' card, tap 'Set up' or 'Edit limits', then follow the instructions on the screen.

To set a bedtime, on the 'Bedtime' card, tap 'Edit schedule', then follow the instructions on the screen.

PlayStation

You'll need to set up accounts for family members, with adult and child accounts, and make sure you and other adults have family manager or parent/guardian status. Read more about how to do this here: https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/get-help/help-library/my-account/parental-controls/family-management/

Set a login passcode and system restriction passcode

A login passcode means that only you can log in to the 'family manager' user on the system.

To do this on **PS4**:

> Go to Settings (this should be shown by a toolbox icon) > Login Settings > Login Passcode Management

> Set a 4-digit passcode using the controller

To do this on **PS5**:

> Go to Settings > Users and Accounts > Login Settings > Set a PS5 Login Passcode

> Set a 4-digit passcode

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Using a system restriction passcode will prevent your child from changing parental control settings.

To do this on **PS4**:

> Go to Settings > Parental Controls/Family Management > PS4 System Restrictions

> Enter the existing system restriction passcode (if you haven't set one before, the default is 0000)

> Select 'Change System Restriction Passcode'

> Enter a new 4-digit passcode using the controller, then re-enter it to confirm

To do this on **PS5**:

> Sign in as the family manager and go to Settings > Family and Parental Controls > PS5 Console Restrictions

> Enter the existing system restriction passcode (if you haven't set one before, the default is 0000)

> Select 'Change Your System Restriction Passcode'

> Enter a new 4-digit passcode using the controller, then re-enter it to confirm

Set spending limits

On **PS4**:

> Go to Settings > Parental Controls/Family Management > Family Management

> Select the user you want to set a spending limit for

> Select 'Applications/Devices/Network Features' under the 'Parental Controls' section

> Select 'Monthly Spending Limit' and press X

On **PS5**:

> Go to Settings > Family and Parental Controls > Family Management

> Select the user you want to set a spending limit for

> Select 'Parental Controls'

> Scroll down to 'Monthly Spending Limit' and press X

> Choose a monthly spending limit and press X

> Select 'Confirm' to save the settings

Restrict access to network features

On **PS4:**

> Go to Settings > Parental Controls/Family Management > Family Management (you may need to enter your account password)

> Select the user you want to set restrictions for

> Select 'Applications/Devices/Network Features' under the 'Parental Controls' section

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> Under 'Network Features', you can choose whether to allow a child user to communicate with other players on the PlayStation Network, or view content created by other players

On PS5, go to parental controls and go to the 'Communication and User-Generated Content' settings, then choose 'Restrict'.

Set screen time limits and bedtimes

On PS4 and PS5, you can set playtime limits, under 'Parental Controls/Family Management'.

Nintendo Switch

The [Nintendo Switch Parental Controls](#) smart device app is a free app which you can link with Nintendo Switch to easily monitor what and how your children are playing.

To link your Nintendo Switch console to the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls application on your smart device, see the instructions here: https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Support/Nintendo-Switch/How-to-Link-a-Nintendo-Switch-Console-to-the-Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-App-1494767.html

Set a parental controls PIN

> Launch the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app on your iOS or Android device

> Select 'Console Settings' in the upper-right corner

> If you have more than one Nintendo Switch console linked to the app, tap the + icon in the upper-right corner to choose the correct system

> Select 'PIN'

> In the 'Change PIN' section, tap the 'New PIN' field

> Enter the new 4 to 8 digit PIN that you want to set, then tap the orange check mark on the screen to confirm

Set playtime limits

> Go to 'Console Settings', as above

> Select each setting you want to adjust, from playtime limit (a daily limit on the amount of time the console can be used), bedtime alarm (set gameplay to stop at a certain time each day), and suspend software (to stop the software on the console when the time limit is reached)

> Once you've got the settings the way you want them, tap the orange check mark to confirm

Set restriction levels

In 'Console Settings' (see above for how to get there), you can choose from preset restrictions by age, or select 'Custom Settings' to manually adjust the settings.

Tap the orange check mark to confirm the settings once you've got them the way you want them.

Manage purchase restrictions from Nintendo's eShop

You'll need to have a family group set up to do this, and have your child's account associated with yours. See more on how to do this here: https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Support/Nintendo-Switch/How-to-Add-Members-to-a-Family-Group-1406409.html

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> Sign in to your existing parent or guardian Nintendo Account to access your Nintendo Account settings (on a Nintendo Switch console, or the Nintendo website)

> Click 'Family Group'

> Click the Nintendo Account for which you want to manage restrictions

> To restrict spending in Nintendo eShop, check the box to disable purchases and automatic renewal options on Nintendo eShop

> To restrict purchases on Nintendo eShop based on age, check 'Restrict'. This will automatically restrict content that appears in the eShop based on the player's age

> Click 'Save Changes' to confirm the change