

Early Years - Parents Online Safety

Among 3-4 year olds, in the last year, time online increased from 6 hours 48 minutes to 8 hours 18 minutes a week.

A report from the Children's Commissioner's Growing Up Digital Taskforce – January 2017

One of the best ways to keep young children safe online is **explore the internet together**. If they like a certain game or app make sure you sit with them and enjoy the internet together. Talk about ways to keep safe and look at what safety features are available within the game or app.

Set fair and consistent rules in relation to your child's internet use at home. As they get older, try to agree the rules with them so that they have some control over their digital world. **Sitting down and discussing a family agreement is so useful**. Technology should be kept downstairs near parent(s) and what is the plan going to be if something pops up online that is upsetting. With technology now being so portable it's easier for parent(s) to manage screen time if you are near them so you can answer questions.

Don't forget children learn from adults, the rules and boundaries you set will only work if adults at home also buy into them. Think really carefully about being on your phone, using the laptop, or playing a game online around children.

Managing screen time can be a real challenge, how long is too much? It's important we get a balance. Remember that **children should explore the internet but with boundaries, however tablets and the internet shouldn't be dominating a child's fun or playtime**.



3 great apps to download:

- **Netware** aimed at parents highlighting different apps and games young people use.
- **Internet Matters** full of useful online safety tips for parents
- **Youtube for kid's app** aimed at young children
- **Childnet International** crammed full of amazing tips for parents, in their resources section.

Setting up and implementing the 4 D's at home is vital

- **Digital free zones** – keep technology downstairs
- **Digital role models** – parents must lead by example online and with digital usage, this is so important.
- **Digital sunset** – young people need to come away from technology before they go to sleep
- **Digital detox** – As a family try a gadget free day or hour or no technology after 6pm including social media.