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Keeping Your Kids Safe Online

Online games can be great fun for your child but make sure you can help them manage the risks.

Many games can improve your child's coordination, problem-solving and multi-tasking skills, as well as help build social skills through online interactivity with other players. But it is also important to understand what might go wrong and could have a negative impact on your child.

How to create a safer gaming environment for your child

Prepare

- Locate the computer or games console in an open area of your home, or if your child is playing on their handheld device, get them to do it in the family room.
- Install current security software on all devices to protect against viruses, malware and other online threats.
- Activate parental controls and safety features on the device or in the app or browser. These controls can help restrict access to certain content and limit spending on in-game and in-app purchases. See the eSafety commissioners advice on [taming the technology](#).

Build good habits

- Help your child to protect their privacy online — get them to use a screen name that does not reveal their real name.
- Teach your child not to click on links provided by strangers, like 'cheat' programs to help with game play, which might expose their device to viruses or malware.
- Agree on strategies to help them to switch off, like a timer that signals game time is nearly over, with consequences for not switching off.

Stay involved

- Talk regularly with your child about their gaming interests and who they play with online. Help them understand the risks.
- Play alongside your child to get a better sense of how they are handling their personal information and who they are communicating with.
- Monitor the time your child spends online and keep a look out for any changes in their activity, school or social behaviours.
- Encourage your child to tell you if they experience anything that worries them or makes them uncomfortable.

Be aware of what they are playing

Games vary in their level of violent or sexual content, and may contain themes, language and images that are unsuitable for your child.

- You can check the age guidelines and classification for an individual game on its website or product packaging, or from the [Australian Classification Board's](#) public database.



- The Australian Classification Board also has useful [information on violent video games](#) to help parents and their children decide what video games are appropriate for them.
- Useful information about games ratings can also be obtained from the [Pan European Game Information](#) (PEGI) and the [US Entertainment Software Rating Board](#) (ESRB).
- Review sites can also be a good source of information about age appropriate content – check out the [Australian Council on Children and the Media](#), [Kiwi Families](#) (NZ), [Common Sense Media](#) (US), [Parents' Choice](#) (US) and [Ask About Games](#) (UK).

Additional Links

- Online Gaming: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/gaming>
- Parents Guide to eSafety: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-01/eSafety%20parent%20guide%20to%20online%20gaming.pdf>
- Rocket League: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide/rocket-league>
- Overwatch: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide/overwatch>
- Discord: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide/discord>
- Cyberbullying: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/cyberbullying>
- Play it safe online: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/corporate-and-community-education/playitfaironline?fbclid=IwAR2XoTQbi7ZOLe9H11ShOqBky3FtEa7XCeleFKW-y6ILljkYLGIGaaKUVU>