

## What parents and carers need to know about setting up new devices for children

All National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and not just adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, a hard day's work. It's a hard day's work. This guide focuses on the issue of many in the world we live in: how to ensure that children are safe online. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guidance, hints and tips for adults.

### What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP NEW DEVICES FOR CHILDREN

At Christmas, millions of lucky children will be excitedly ripping the wrapping off new phones, tablets, computers or consoles. However, in the rush to let young ones enjoy their shiny gadgets, many parents neglect to set these devices up safely – increasing the chances of children going online and stumbling across adult content, making expensive downloads or installing unsuitable apps. A little time configuring the device properly can save a lot of anguish later. Here are our top tips to ensure that a dream gift on Christmas morning doesn't turn into a nightmare by New Year.

#### PASSCODES FOR IPHONE/IPAD

If your child's getting their own iPhone or iPad, you can set parental controls that make it difficult for them to access inappropriate content or download expensive apps. Once the device is set up, go to the Settings app and tap Screen Time, then select Use Screen Time Passcode and enter a passcode. Keep it to yourself so your child can't switch the protection off.

#### SCREEN TIME SETTINGS ON IPHONE/IPAD

Once you've set a Screen Time Passcode, you can adjust various safety settings. You could, for example, only allow communication with people from the Contacts app, place restrictions on App Store purchases and apply age limits to movies, music and web content. There are many more protective options available within the Screen Time settings section.

#### FAMILY LINK FOR ANDROID

Parents can manage Android phones and tablets, as well as Google Chromebooks, through Google's Family Link app. This gives your child some independence (and their own Google account) but lets parents monitor which apps are being used, set limits on content and ensure that parental permission is required to install apps. Look for Family Link in the Google Play store.

#### ADD A CHILD TO FAMILY LINK

The easiest way to add a child's device to Family Link is to set it up with its own Google account. It's a good idea to create this before they use their new phone, tablet or Chromebook. Once they're logged in, open the Family Link app on your phone, press '+' in the top right and add a new family member using their Google account details. Then follow the on-screen instructions.

#### PLAYSTATION PARENTAL CONTROLS

With parental controls for the PS5, you'll need a PlayStation Network account (as the 'family manager') and the child will need their own account, which they should sign in with on the console. This all needs to be set up in advance, so you might want to do it before the big day. Go to [Playstation.com](http://Playstation.com) and search 'family account' for instructions.

#### INSTALL XBOX FAMILY SETTINGS

If you don't have a PC, but your child does have an Xbox, it might be easier to use the Xbox Family Settings app for iPhone or Android. Here, you can restrict console screen time (particularly handy if the console is in a bedroom), restrict communication and monitor the types of game being played. There's also a feature where you can allocate spending money for games or in-game purchases.

#### TREAT AN XBOX LIKE A PC

The same control settings you use for a PC can be used to apply parental controls on an Xbox. Again, once your child is signed into the Xbox with their own account, you can then monitor and regulate their activity from a PC or web browser. Microsoft's dashboard allows you to manage voice communication through the console, so you can limit who can contact your child, for example.

#### SET AN ADMIN ON PCS

On Windows PCs and laptops, it's important not to let your child share a general user account or be the main admin on the device. If you're looking up a new family PC or a child's old desktop, it's important to set up your own account details and you'll become the admin by default. Then set up children with their own separate account: Settings > Accounts > Family & Other Users > Add Other User.

#### SET WINDOWS LIMITS

Once your child's account has been created, a parent admin can go back into the Family Safety settings menu and apply limits to it. These include restricting screen time, the type of games and apps that can be installed, web filters and more. Microsoft also includes reporting tools which, for example, can email you with a weekly summary of your child's activity on the device.

#### STAY VIGILANT

It's important to remember that none of these methods is 100% foolproof. Nobody will ever invent flawless filters or parental controls – not least because what's unacceptable to some parents is perfectly acceptable to others. So although devices' parental controls will help to keep your child safe online, they work best side by side with good old-fashioned parental vigilance.

#### DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR CHILD

If you're planning to implement any kind of restriction or protection settings on your child's new device, we'd recommend having a discussion with your young one first about what these controls do, and what they are for. If you try to impose parental controls surreptitiously or with no advance warning, don't be surprised if your child tries to find a way around them.

#### FAMILY SHARING ON A MAC

Families using a Mac get similar screen time options to iPhone and iPad users. Again, if you're setting up a Mac for a child, make yourself the main admin and add them as a user. This is handled through Apple's Family Sharing service, which not only allows you to put controls on child accounts but share apps and other purchases with them too. Search 'family sharing' at <https://support.apple.com>.

#### MEET OUR EXPERT

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Today's young people are the first generation to grow up in a world where internet-enabled devices are the norm. A recent UK study, for example, found that 88% of 12-year-olds have a smartphone. Four out of ten 6-year-olds own a tablet, while almost two-thirds (64%) of children aged 8–11 use a games console. Santa's deliveries this week will significantly increase those ratios.

While a new online-capable device means exciting fresh regions of the digital landscape to explore, it also raises the likelihood of children encountering unfamiliar threats. In this week's #WakeUpWednesday guide, we outline some simple steps trusted adults (including Santa) can take to reduce the risks by setting up those phones, tablets, PlayStations and Xboxes correctly!



## What parents and carers need to know about Fortnite Chapter 3

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one game of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, tools and tips for adults.

### What Parents & Carers Need to Know about FORTNITE CHAPTER 3

First released in 2017, Fortnite has become one of the most popular games in the world. It currently has around 350 million registered players. Developed by Epic Games, it began life exclusively as a 'battle royale' contest, where up to 100 online player characters would fight – with weaponry including rifles, handguns and rocket launchers – to be the last one standing. Today, it features multiple modes which each offer something different (although some modes, such as 'Save the World', are only available on certain platforms).

**IN-APP PURCHASES**  
Not all of Fortnite is free. Save the World mode, for example, can become quite costly. An in-game currency called V-Bucks is used to buy items such as cosmetics, which are not a necessity to play the game. It can feel like buying them is essential, however – even for adult players. Making sure no payments methods are linked to the game's store is a good idea when children are playing Fortnite.

**REPEAT SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
Fortnite now offers a monthly repeat subscription which costs £3.99 (or equivalent). This package offers different non-essential benefits every month – including fancy cosmetics, rare weapons, V-Bucks and special bonuses. Signing up, therefore, can be tempting for dedicated players. However, subscriptions cannot be paid for with V-Bucks earned in the game, only with real-world money.

**COMPETITIVE COMMUNITY**  
Fortnite isn't purely a competitive experience (some modes prioritise cooperation), but the reality is that competitive Battle Royale is an especially ruthless mode, where the last player or squad left standing wins. Games can become heated, and players' desire to win can often cause excessively aggressive or 'toxic' behaviour towards others – via the game's audio chat, for instance.

**POSSIBILITY OF SCAMS**  
Popular games like Fortnite are often targeted by unscrupulous individuals trying to trick or exploit genuine fans. In Fortnite, scammers have been known to offer children free V-Bucks or vast amounts of V-Bucks in exchange for rare items – often asking the player to click a particular link. These scammers are seeking access to your child's account, personal information and payment details.

**USER-CONTROLLED CONTENT**  
Some elements of online video games can't be rated for age appropriateness because the developer doesn't have control over them. In Fortnite, for instance, things like voice or text chat, usernames, profiles and other player-generated content may not always be suitable for children. It also means that the makers aren't liable for anything a stranger might say to young Fortnite players online.

### Advice for Parents & Carers

**STAY AWARE OF SPENDING**  
Free-to-play games (that is, ones without up-front costs) can still be big financial drains. In Fortnite, for example, the Battle Pass – a set of rewards to improve players' experience in the game – can be either earned through playing or bought with real money (with additional incentives for the latter). With supervision however, this can be a great lesson in money management for children.

**TALK ABOUT TALKING**  
Communication is key in the squad-based Fortnite modes, and children will quickly realise that talking with team-mates online helps to increase their win rate. It's a good idea, therefore, to chat with your child first about speaking to strangers online, trading, scammers and other potential risks. Remind them that they can always come to you for help if they run into problems online.

**ENCOURAGE BREAKS**  
Gaming sessions can reach marathon lengths, especially when your child is on a winning streak and doesn't want to stop. Sitting in the same position for hours, of course, isn't healthy but it's an easy habit to form. Encouraging young ones to break regularly for drinks and so on will help them stay hydrated, rest their eyes and release some of the tension from competitive gameplay.

**DISCUSS OTHER APPS**  
Games like Fortnite can lead on to third-party apps (Discord, for example) where players can join a voice, text or – in some cases – video chat about the game. Certain add-ons also let children talk with other players from their local area, which clearly presents a potential risk. When discussing Fortnite with your child, you might also want to ask them about other apps they use while playing.

**Meet Our Expert**  
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Fortnite is one of those rare titles which breaks through from the gaming world to create a wider cultural impact. This success was swiftly monetised, of course, leading to Fortnite action figures, plush toys, branded clothing, stationery, bedspreads and the like. The nature of these products hints at a sizeable proportion of the game's fans being below the recommended age limit of 12.

So how much of a danger does Fortnite pose to its younger players? For starters, the game is fundamentally about using an array of weaponry to eliminate a stream of enemies. As our #WakeUpWednesday guide outlines, however, on-screen violence is far from the highest concern – with potential issues over in-app purchasing, scams and toxic behaviour from other players.