



ONLINE GAMING TIPS FOR KIDS

Games come in many different forms--from apps downloaded onto a tablet or smart phone, to a game console or an online platform. One thing is certain, the increased ability to chat, send files, share cameras, etc. increases the opportunity for cyber criminals to take advantage of children online. It is imperative that parents and guardians talk to kids about safe online behavior, what to look out for, and how to respond if they feel uncomfortable.

TIPS FOR KIDS

BLOCK THE BULLIES

If another player is making you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult. Remember that you can always kick a player out of the game if they are making you uncomfortable. Learn how to block and/or report another player if they are making you uncomfortable. Keep a record of what the other player said, but do not engage them.

PLAY IN DISGUISE

Playing with people you don't know or who aren't your good friends? Use a safe Game Name: something cool like SecretNinja99 or LeTigreVerde. Don't use your first or last name in your usernames. Use an avatar instead your actual photo. If a stranger asks you to share a photo or to turn on your webcam, say no.

PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal information is any information that can be used to identify you or your accounts. Examples include your name, address, phone number, usernames and passwords, pictures, birthday and social security number. If a stranger asks you to share this information, say no.

MAKE PASSWORDS LONG AND STRONG

Passwords are the keys to your accounts. The only people who need to know them are YOU and your parents or guardians. Not your brother, sister, best friend, or teacher – just you. Make a password in the form of a sentence you can remember, such as: "I like to eat ice cream on sundays"



DO YOUR RESEARCH

Mobile gaming makes up approximately 45% of the global games market.¹ Just because a game is available on a trusted app store, it doesn't mean it is a safe app to download. Before downloading any new gaming app on your child's device, make sure it's a legitimate app. Check out the reviews and look it up online before downloading. It's also a good idea to limit a child's ability to download new apps onto devices.

1 2019 Newzoo Global Games Market Report



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TIPS FOR PARENTS

KEEP SECURITY SOFTWARE CURRENT

Having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system are the best defenses against viruses, malware, and other online threats. When the computer or device says it's time to update the software, don't click postpone. Update. It improves the performance and security of the device.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental controls are a great way to establish parameters around what kids can and can't do in their gaming environments, including limiting communications, limiting time spent, restricting e-commerce, etc. Parental controls do not replace candid discussions with your kids about online security and safety, but they are a good resource to have. The Entertainment Software Rating Board has [parental control guides](#) for most of the major gaming platforms.



CONFIGURE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Go through accounts with children to configure privacy and security settings to limit over-sharing of information--such as location sharing. Walk the kids through why certain settings need to be changed.

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PLAY THE GAME

Have your kids teach you how to play whatever games they are playing. Explore all the features with them, such as communications capabilities, profiles, how they engage with other players, etc. You will learn more about how they experience the game, will get to spend some quality time with your kid, and you might just realize you enjoy the game as well!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



FTC: KIDS, PARENTS & VIDEO GAMES:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0270-kids-parents-and-video-games>



FBI: CYBER SAFETY FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

<https://www.fbi.gov/fbi-kids>