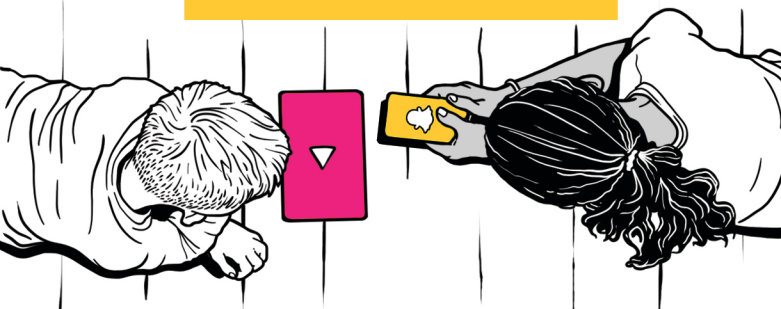## Talking with your child about wellbeing:

Social Media & Gaming

Parenting can be hard when children often seem to know more about the world of social media than we do ourselves. But while they may seem completely at home on their phones, tablets, PCs and consoles – they still need our help and guidance to stay safe. Children value their parents' good opinion, advice and support. By sharing and talking together about your online lives, you can model safe behaviours, agree boundaries, support your child's mental health through positive online experiences, and know how to help, should something ever go wrong.

CORRA FOUNDATION

Re-Solv

Top Ten Tips

1 The earlier you start talking, the better...
According to Ofcom, almost a quarter of 3-4 year olds have their own tablet. It's never too early to start establishing positive and safe practices together so that these quickly become the norm for your child. NetAware have a video of four simple steps you can follow to make talking online safety a part of your family conversation.

2 And keep talking!
You want your online lives to be something you enjoy talking about and sharing together, not something you just end up having arguments about. Talk about your own experiences, things you've enjoyed; encourage your child to tell you more about what they enjoy. These conversations can also provide natural opportunities for your child to share something that might have worried them or ask if there is something they are unsure about.

3 Practise online safety
Children will learn lots about online safety at school. By showing an interest and going online together, you can put their learning into practice at home. Childnet also have advice on key topics and ThinkUKnow have a range of activities you can do with your family to support their online safety at home.

4 Set a good example
Think about how you use social media, how often, how you behave towards other people online and so on. Would you be happy for your child to do the same? If not, are there some adjustments you could make? Simple things like putting phones to one side at mealtimes can help promote a healthy balance between your family's virtual life and other interests and activities.

5 Agree your family rules
Many parents hear from their children that "all my friends are allowed to ..." But does that work for your family? Work together to set realistic boundaries that your child sees the rationale for and can respect. ChildNet has a really helpful Family Agreement which can help start positive conversations about safe and responsible internet use, and agreeing expectations and boundaries.

FOLLOW

SHARE
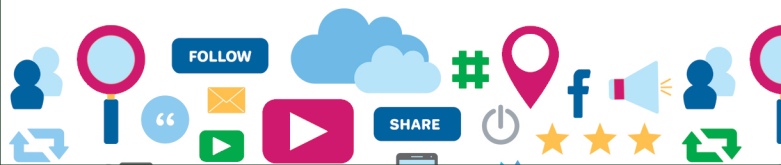
Help and information

ChildNet provides information and resources to help parents support their children to have a happy and safe online experience: childnet.com.

Internet Matters is a not-for-profit that provides information for parents and carers on how to keep children safe in the digital world: internetmatters.org.

From O2 and the NSPCC, **Net Aware** is a guide to social networks, apps and games used by young people: net-aware.org.uk or NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000.

The national child protection programme, **ThinkUKnow** has advice on staying safe online and offline for children/young people of all ages, and for parents: thinkuknow.co.uk.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep children safe online: saferinternet.org.uk.

Family Lives is a UK charity that supports parents in all aspects of family life. Their helpline is 0808 800 222 or chat online at familylives.org.uk.

The National Centre for Gaming Disorders provides assessment and treatment for age 13+, and family/carer support. Call 020 7381 7722 or email ncba.cnwl@nhs.net.

Scottish Policy on Internet Safety

The national action plan: **Internet safety for children and young people** is available online: gov.scot/publications/national-action-plan-internet-safety-children-young-people/.

Children in Scotland work to improve the lives of all children across the country: childreninscotland.org.uk.

---

5 Be aware of what your children are accessing
It can be hard to stay up-to-date with the latest apps, games and online trends. Talking with your child about what they're enjoying will be a great source of info, as will talking to other parents and friends. NetAware regularly review the most popular apps, games and social media sites that young people are using.

6 Understand the risks
Social networking can be a hugely positive part of a child's life – but there are some risks. By helping your child understand these risks, you can prevent them becoming problems. You might begin by helping your child understand what personal information is, and discuss what is safe to share online and what is not. Internet Matters has a helpful guide that suggests thinking about what children might see and do online, who they might meet, and how these experiences might affect them.

7 Let your child know you're there for them
You want your child to know they can come to you if they are worried or if something has gone wrong. Listen, stay calm and try not to get stressed yourself. Help them say what they need to by asking open questions (rather than questions that lead to a straight 'yes' or 'no'). Together, you can work through whatever the problem might be. And if your child hasn't said anything but you're concerned something is wrong, don't be afraid to ask.

9 Keep an online/offline life balance
It's OK not to be available all the time on social media. Gaming in particular can be hard to stop and it's understandable that children can feel frustrated at being asked to cut off in the middle of a level or if they're in a team with friends. ThinkUKnow have a useful parent guide on gaming. Managing these emotions comes back to setting good family rules and making sure children have a range of other activities that they also enjoy doing – sports, creative activities, family time and so on.

10 Don't be afraid to ask for help yourself
The social media landscape changes all the time – we all need help to keep on top of it, and we all need someone to talk to when we're worried about our kids. There's a list of websites and resources on the back of this guide that we hope you'll find helpful.

FOLLOW

FOLLOW

SHARE

Find links to all the above and more at **re-solv.org/mh** or scan the QR code:

Re-Solv supports the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

@resolvUK | **Helpline: 01785 810762**