

## Does your preschool child have access to connected devices?

Being online at this age can offer your child opportunities to learn through exploration, play and social interaction. But there may also be some risks if your child uses connected devices without supervision or for extended periods of time.

This might include coming across harmful content, contact with strangers or missing out on physical activity.

Here are our tips for a safe and balanced online experience for your preschool child:

### Set ground rules



#### Establish clear rules and be consistent

Be clear on things like when and where devices can be used and when they need to be switched off. A good time to switch off is during family dinner time and when your child is alone in a room.



#### Use a timer

Limit the amount of time your child spends online to ensure a good balance with physical activity. It can be easy to lose track of time, so setting a timer can help. Experts recommend no more than an hour of screen time within a 24 hour period for 3 to 5-year-olds.



#### Resist any push back

Getting your child off a device can be hard and it can be tempting to give in to their demands. Sticking to the rules at this age will help instil good online habits for your child now and in the future.



## Be involved



### Get to know your child's toys and devices

Be aware of the capabilities that come with a device, app or internet connected toy. Check the device guide and look out for any built-in cameras, microphones, chat functions and location settings that are not needed and can be deactivated.



### Supervise and explore together

It's easy for your child to explore through a touchscreen and accidentally access inappropriate content. Explore together and keep an eye on your child in case they come across something that might upset or confuse them.



### Know what's good and what's not

There's a lot of content on offer for your child. Common Sense Media can help with independent, age-based and educational ratings and reviews for a range of content, including online games, apps and websites. ([commonsensemedia.org/reviews](https://commonsensemedia.org/reviews))

## Manage access



### Bookmark the good stuff

Make a list of favourite sites and apps that are safe and that your child enjoys. Show them how to access these.



### Block the nasty stuff

Use parental controls and safety features that are available on the device or through apps, web browsers and service providers. These can help block inappropriate content. However, keep in mind that tech tools can't block all the bad stuff—you still need to back it up with supervision. ([esafety.gov.au/parental-controls](https://esafety.gov.au/parental-controls))



### Disable in-app purchases

Lots of apps feature additional payments for extra content. It can be easy for your child to accidentally rack up a big bill on your account. Restrict in-app purchases through settings in Google Play (Google Play > Settings > Require authentication for purchases) and on iPhones, iPads and iPod touch (Settings > General > Restrictions).

## Support positively



### Start the conversation

It's never too early to start talking about safe and respectful behaviour online. Help your child understand that what they say or do online is important.



### Get other trusted adults on board

Teach your child that it's important they come to you or another trusted adult (such as an aunt, uncle, grandparent) if they are upset because of anything they see or experience online.



### Know where to go for extra support

If your child is distressed because of anything they have seen online, then seek professional advice from your GP or Parentline ([parentline.com.au](https://parentline.com.au)) on 1300 30 1300. Raising Children Network ([raisingchildren.net.au](https://raisingchildren.net.au)) can also help with a range of resources and information on development, learning and health at this age.

