Online Safety For Under Fives

Statistics released by OFCOM reveal that over 50% of children aged 3-4 go online for nearly 8 hours a week and 1 in 5 children aged 3-4 have their own tablet. It is therefore, becoming increasingly important that we talk to children about keeping safe online from a very young age.

There are of course huge benefits of children engaging with technology. The internet can provide them with all sorts of opportunities to learn, connect with family, develop creativity and, of course – have lots of fun. It is an undeniable fact that many apps and games aimed at the Under 5's can support them with literacy and numeracy skills as well as promote their hand eye coordination and fine motor skills.

There are many excellent, child friendly sites, such as Cbeebies, which keep children entertained through videos and games but also promote learning and gaining knowledge.

So how what can you do to support your child to reap the benefits of using IT but also keeping safe? Here are a few ideas to point you in the right direction

1) Why not **explore together**? Spend time with your child looking at their favourite websites – this will not only be fun but will also enable you to see what your child enjoys doing online
2) **Chat to your child about their online experiences** – Have regular conversations with your child about what they have enjoyed doing online and also introduce online safety messages. Your child should then become comfortable with telling you if they have seen anything that frightened or worried them.
3) **Supervise your child whilst they are online** – Make sure your devices are in communal areas such as the living room where you can observe your child. Children under 5 should never access the internet unsupervised or in private spaces e.g. their bedrooms.
4) **Parental Controls** – Always make use of the parental controls available on your broadband or internet device. Most providers will have advisors who can help you with this if you are not sure what to do.
5) **Safe search** – Most website search engines will have a 'Safesearch' function which allows you to filter content your child can see online. Please do remember, however, that no 'Safesearch' function is 100% effective.
6) **Set boundaries from the start**. Decide as a family on a set of rules such as where and when devices can be used and for how long. Ensure you use passwords on devices you do not wish your under 5 to access and put out of reach.

Remember parents need to act as role models too for example no devices at the dinner table.

For more advice visit: www.nspcc.org.uk/online safety OR contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 to discuss any concerns.

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You should start talking to your child about keeping safe online at an early age. It's easier to have conversations about online safety little and often, rather than trying to cover everything at once.

✓ Set boundaries from the start. It makes it easier than trying to play catch-up at a later stage.

✓ Check that websites are suitable before your child visits them. Look for websites that have parental pages that explain how the site works and how they keep your child safe.

✓ Ensure your home page is set to a child-friendly website.

✓ Talk to friends about what websites their children use.

✓ Play games with your child to get them used to being online.

✓ Set 'Safety Mode' up on YouTube to help filter out explicit content.

✓ If you use Google, turn on Google 'Safe Search' to filter sexually explicit content from your search results.

Click here to play

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NSPCC
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.