

Online Safety for Parents

Due to the rising COVID-19 cases and businesses across the country asking their employees to work from home. This means that many parents suddenly have the task to take care of and entertain their children whilst adjusting to a new life of managing working from home.

Here are five top tips to help you and your children during this time:

1. Create a schedule

Sit down with your children and create a daily schedule for the week. Choose specific times for learning activities, reading, fun time, bedtime, etc. You can make it fun by writing the schedule on a piece of paper or cardboard and get the children to decorate it. Talk them through it each morning so they know what to expect.

Don't forget to hang this up for them to see!

2. Monitor screen time

Use the devices for short periods at a time a few times during the day – rather than binge-watching over one long period. Remember not all screen time is bad, so why not watch educational and fun shows with them? Just ensure [parental controls](#) are enabled.

3. Have regular check-in discussions

Set aside a time to talk as a family about how everyone is feeling and coping with the outbreak – there is a lot of false information around coronavirus online so be more vigilant and critical about what you see and only trust information from reputable sources.

It's also important to help them manage any feelings of anxiety. They may be feeling this way over what they see, hear or the fact they're missing out on face-to-face interactions with their friends.

4. Stay in touch with family and friends

Children may be feeling left out from not being able to socialise as much, so allow them to video or voice call their friends and extended family.

Staying in touch can help your family feel more at ease with the new working situation and provide a sense of comfort and connection with one another.

5. Go for a walk

If you or your children don't have any symptoms of the virus, why not try to go for a walk in the park? A bit of fresh air can help and it's always nice to have a change of scenery!

You can adjust these tips to suit the specific needs your child may have according to their age and levels of maturity.

Internet safety checklist for pre-school children

Explore together

Talk to your child about what the internet is and explore it together so you can show them all the great fun and educational things they can do.

Put yourself in control

Make use of the [parental controls](#) available on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. You can find out how at your broadband provider's website or by visiting internetmatters.org.

Use passwords

It's never too early to start setting rules about when and how long your child can use a device and start to introduce the subject of internet safety at the same time. Keep your devices out of reach and set passwords on all your internet-enabled devices and don't share them. Then you'll know when and where your child is accessing the internet.

Search safely

Use safe search engines such as [Swiggle](#) or [Kids-search](#). You can save time by adding these to your 'Favourites'. Safe search settings can also be activated on [Google](#) and other search engines, as well as [YouTube](#). You can find out more at google.co.uk/safetycentre.

Be involved

Encourage them to use devices in a communal area like the lounge or kitchen so you can keep an eye on how they're using the internet and also share in their enjoyment.

Manage access

Set your homepage to a child-friendly site like [CBeebies](#) and create a user account for your child on the family computer or device which only allows access to sites you've chosen.

Help them learn through games

You can choose safe, fun and educational online games to play with your child and that you'll be confident about them exploring. You can find good free of charge examples from [Cbeebies](#) and companies like [Disney Junior](#), [Nick Jr](#) and [Fisher Price](#).

Set boundaries

It's never too early to start setting boundaries. Set some rules about how long your child can spend online.

Listed below are some useful websites that provide information and advice to parents on keeping their children safe online.

[Childnet](#)

[NSPCC](#) you can also call their free helpline on 0808 800 5002

[Uk Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Think U Know](#)

[Parent Zone](#)

[Digital Parenting](#)

[BBC iWonder Guide](#)

[Vodafone Digital Parenting](#)