



PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD: Keeping Kids Safe and Secure Online

Gaming

Kids of all ages are gaming on mobile devices on online gaming consoles. Your children can interact online in multiplayer games with friends who live across town or cousins who live in another state, which has enabled them to be connected to their peers during quarantine. Online games can also be violent and sexual, and can expose your children to bullying, offensive language, inappropriate content, and child predators.

How to keep your children safe while gaming? Here's a start:

- Review descriptions and ratings before buying apps or games online
- Play their games with them!
- Supervise/check in – just as you would if your kids were playing with friends in person
- Remind kids not to disclose personal information to anyone
- Check out the safety features and parental controls of each game/device, and make sure privacy settings are set to the strictest level possible. (Did you know you can sometimes limit multiplayer access?)
- Enforce time limits
- Keep gaming consoles in an open, common room of the house – somewhere you can see what is happening when the games are in use
- Don't allow your children to wear headphones so you can monitor language of other gamers (Don't want to listen to it? Disable voice chat!)

Remember: technology like parental controls is no substitute for being involved and establishing a healthy dialog with your kids!

If you know of a child in immediate risk or danger, **notify law enforcement right away**. Online child exploitation can be reported to your **local police department** or to the **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's** CyberTipline: www.CyberTipline.com or by calling 1-800-843-5678

Resources:

www.justice.gov/usao-ma/outreach/project-safe-childhood
www.commonsemmedia.org/social-media
www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online
www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx
www.fosi.org/topics/what-parents-need-to-know-about-screen-time

