



Keeping Children Safe Online Parent Workshop

February 2025



internet
matters.org



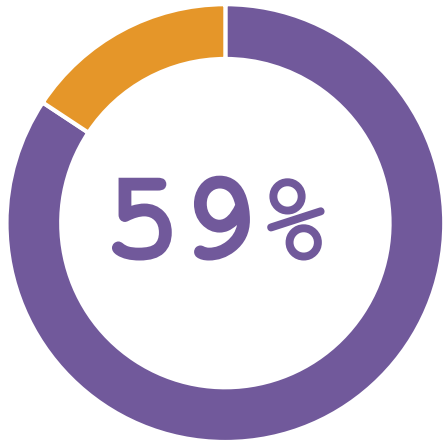
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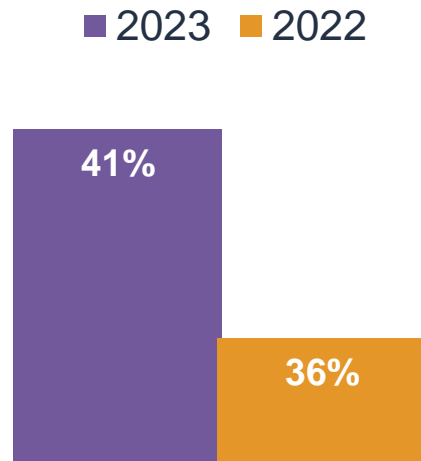
**How do you keep up
with online safety?**

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matters.org**

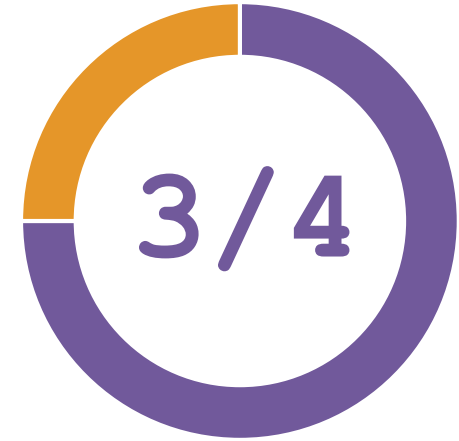
The positives of being online...



of children say the internet has a positive impact on their wellbeing*



% of children who say spending time online makes them feel confident**

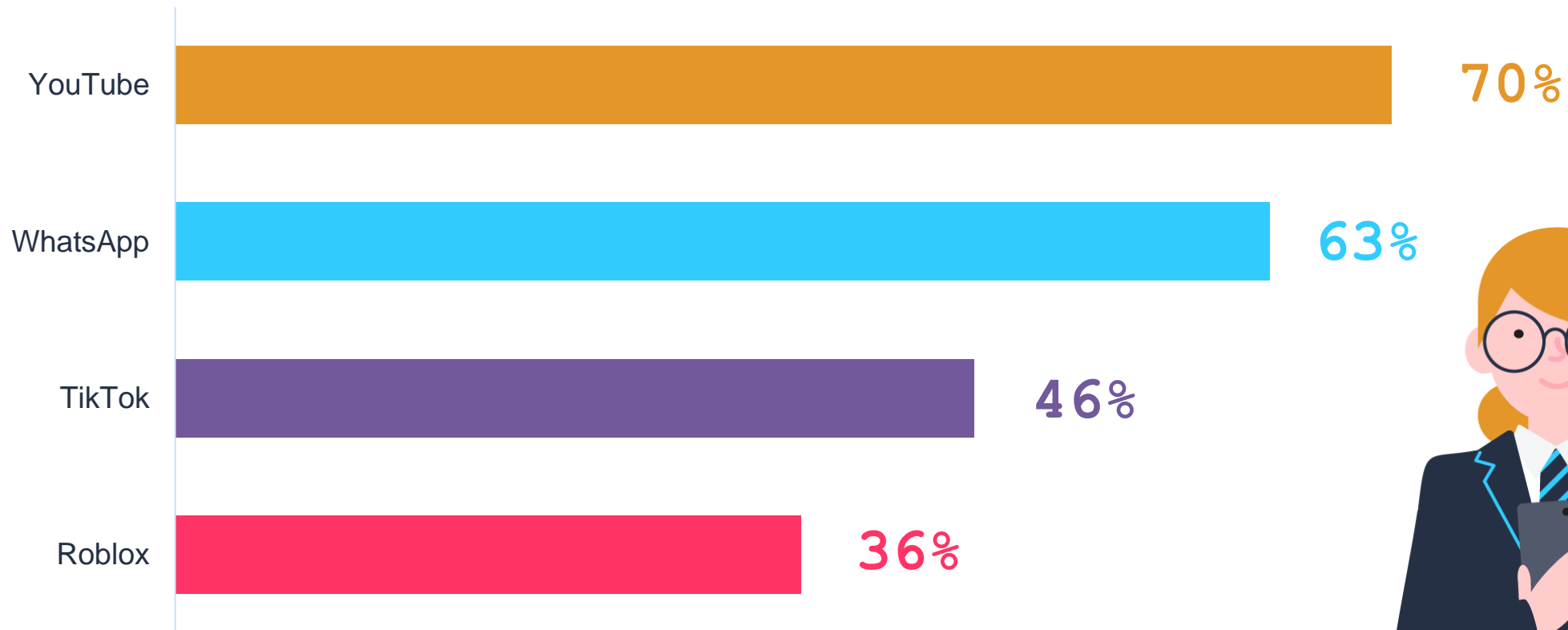


of children say the internet/tech is important for their independence**

*Internet Matters tracker survey, Wave 19 (2024)

**Children's Wellbeing in a Digital World, Year Three, Internet Matters (2024)

What they're doing online...

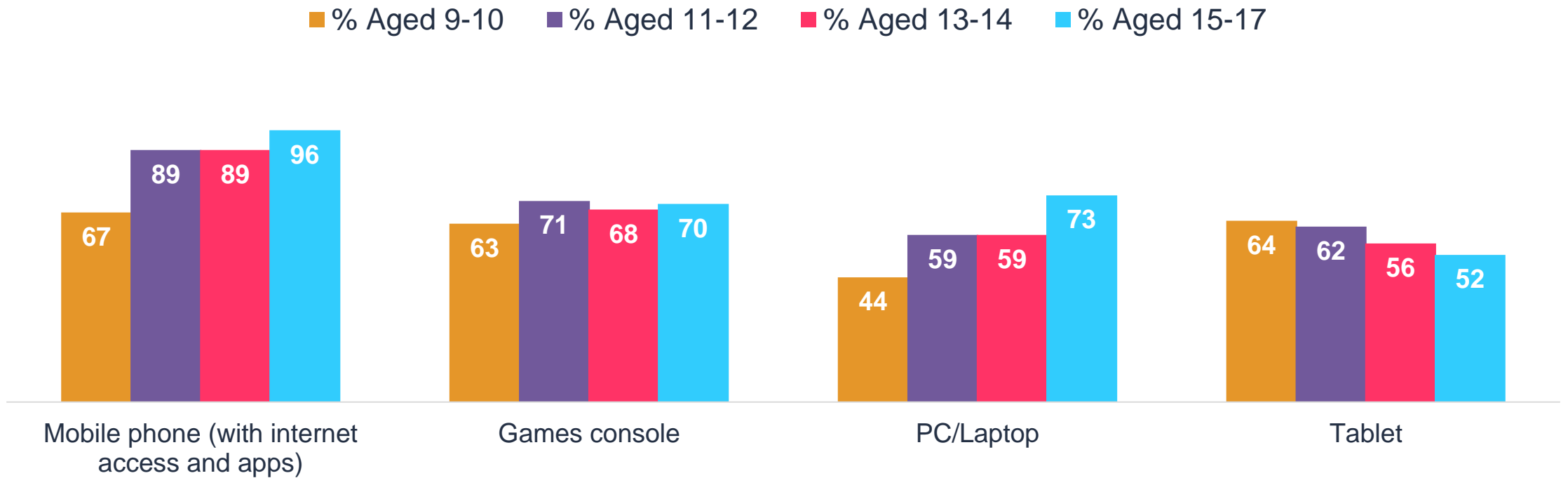


The potentially negative impacts...

- **Sleep cycles** are often affected by blue light from too much screen use, which can **impact their daytime activities** like school;
- Excessive screen use might result in **less movement**, leading to **physical health issues**
- Platforms use **persuasive design** to keep people using it, which children are particularly **vulnerable** to
- More time online means more opportunity to come across **potential harms**.



Device preferences by age



Smartphones vs dumb phones



Internet access

Apps and games

Connection any time

A range of parental controls

No internet access

No (or few) apps and games

Messages and calls any time

Limited parental controls





Common online safety issues

Types of harmful risks

Contact	Content	Conduct	Commerce
<p>Contact risks come with online communication.</p> <p>This could include cyberbullying and hate speech as well as grooming and sextortion.</p>	<p>Content risks come with image- and video-sharing online. It's also in video games and music.</p> <p>This could include explicit or hateful language, violent videos, age-inappropriate games and pornography.</p>	<p>Conduct risks are the actions children might take that could lead to harm.</p> <p>This could include visiting porn sites, gambling platforms and chat rooms, or sending sexual images or texts.</p>	<p>Commerce risks come with online spending, advertising and scams.</p> <p>This could include clicking on ads in a mobile game, sending money to a harmful source or even receiving a phishing email.</p>

Dealing with inappropriate CONTACT

What to talk about

- Sometimes people hide behind fake profiles for dishonest reasons
- Agree how they will respond to requests from people asking them for something/to do something
- Never agree to meet up with anyone they don't know in real life (or who makes them uncomfortable)

Top tips & tools

- Set up safe social media profiles that don't share personal information
- Customise communication options in video games
- Turn off geolocation settings on devices
- Learn/teach your child how to report, block, mute and use any other similar tools

Dealing with inappropriate CONTENT

What to talk about

- They can come to you if they see anything that upsets them
- The importance of respect for each other and the meaning of consent
- If they have seen online pornography, talk about the unrealistic image of sex and relationships it presents

Top tips & tools

- Parental controls on home broadband
- Content locks on mobile networks
- Safe search on browser search engines (or use child-friendly search engines)
- Content controls in the apps they use or games they play

Dealing with inappropriate CONDUCT

What to talk about

- Talk to a trusted adult if they experience anything upsetting online or if they're not sure about something
- Think carefully about sharing images or videos of others without permission
- Every action they take creates a digital footprint, which creates a picture of who they are; so, be responsible.

Top tips & tools

- Demonstrate healthy behaviour both offline and online
- Block age-inappropriate websites on broadband or using parental controls apps
- Report inappropriate posts or content on social media or other apps to web providers or the Internet Watch Foundation.

Dealing with inappropriate COMMERCE

What to talk about

- Talk about scams, including what they could look like and the harm they could lead to
- Encourage them to come to you or another trusted adult if they're not sure if something is trustworthy
- Avoid clicking on unknown links or responding to unexpected emails/text/WhatsApp messages

Top tips & tools

- Stay informed about scams that your child could come across in social media or video games
- Install cyber security software on your child's devices – there are free and paid-for options available
- Where relevant, set up parental controls that restrict spending or require a PIN so you can check purchases first.

Risk is not harm

While risk-taking can lead to harm, it more often results in children discovering new passions and abilities.

Positive actions can limit risks from becoming harmful. Here are 5 tips:

1. Understand the risks
2. Communicate regularly
3. Keep risks in proportion
4. Agree on helpful mediation strategies
5. Develop coping strategies to foster resilience

Children who have experienced online issues

- Spent too much time online
- Spent money in games/apps
- Strangers contacted me
- Came across mis/disinformation
- Came across hate speech
- Came across content promoting unrealistic body images or altered bodies
- Came across content which promotes dangerous stunts or challenges
- Came across violent content or content that promotes violence
- Online bullying, trolling or abuse from people I don't know



Dangerous online challenges

- Viral online trends attract many children and teens
- Most are harmless, but some can be dangerous
- **1 in 5** children say they've come across content which promotes dangerous stunts or challenges
- It's important to talk with your child so they understand the dangers and can avoid potential harm.

How to spot dangerous online challenges
Advice for children & teens

Why people try online challenges

- Their friends are posting about challenges;
- Someone 'nominates' them for charity;
- It makes them popular with people online;
- They might get lots of likes;
- It's for a 'good cause';
- They want to see if they can do it.

Signs to look out for
These signs are clues that a challenge might not be safe:

- You feel pressure from friends or strangers to copy a challenge.
- You don't want to do it for any reason, even if you're not sure why.
- You could hurt yourself or others if you try the challenge.
- Someone says they will give you something if you do the challenge.
- You see the challenge through an ad in an app or game you play.
- The challenge involves eating or drinking something.
- You have to remove clothes or do something you don't want to do.
- Someone is threatening you or bullying you to do the challenge.

How to get help

- Tell a trusted adult like a parent or teacher about the online challenge and your worries.
- Block and report anyone pressuring you to do a challenge.
- Report content to the platform if it shows dangerous or harmful content.
- Talk to a counsellor at childline.org.uk

Some challenges are dangerous, so it's important to think carefully about what we copy online.

Are online challenges dangerous?

Popular online challenges or trends have raised money for charity while others have led to harm. Learn about these challenges so you can help your child stay safe online.

Why challenges attract young people

- There is the excitement of risk;
- Young people are naturally curious and adventurous;
- It makes them feel like they belong - because their peers are doing it;
- It may make them feel popular - they get more attention, likes, views or comments;
- If everyone is doing it, to them it's OK. Challenges are easy to do. They often involve ordinary objects you can easily find at home or skills that are easy to learn like dance steps.

Friends, family and influencers often nominate people to do it, without thinking about the risks this might bring to your child. It could be harmful if a group of 'friends' are manipulating and putting pressure on your child to do the challenge so that they can get entertainment out of it.

You may see or hear a warning about online suicide challenges which have encouraged young people to act in harmful ways. Take a deep breath! Most have been found to be hoaxes, untrue or exaggerated.

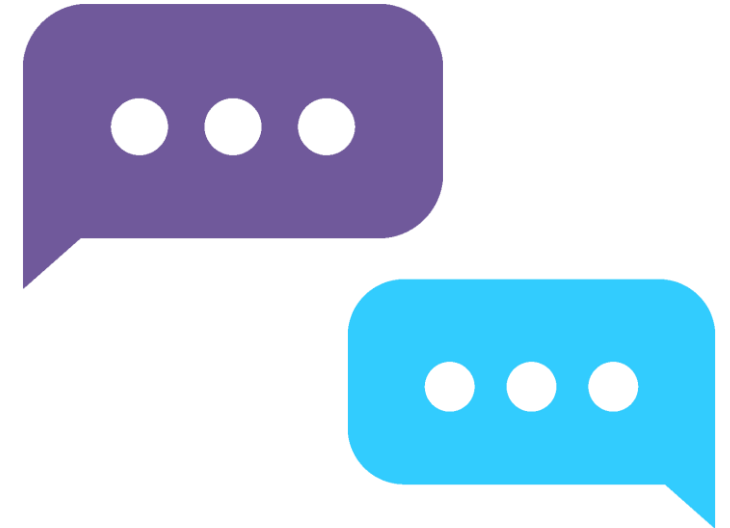
What if I think my child has taken part in a dangerous challenge?

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Online bullying (cyberbullying)

- Online bullying is more difficult to escape than 'traditional' bullying
- It can happen between friends or strangers
- It can happen in video games, on social media, in messaging apps, etc.
- About **1 in 10** children say they have experienced online bullying. This increases for children with SEN needs or similar vulnerabilities.

Set parental controls, talk about healthy behaviour and show your child how to block and report content.



**Cyberbullying
conversation
guide**



Inappropriate content

- 27% of children see pornography by age 11
- Around 1 in 10 children report seeing pornographic or violent content online. This increases with age.
- Children with vulnerabilities are more likely to come across these things – especially violent content.

Parental controls can help limit access to certain websites, content and more. It's also important for your child to report any inappropriate content they accidentally come across.

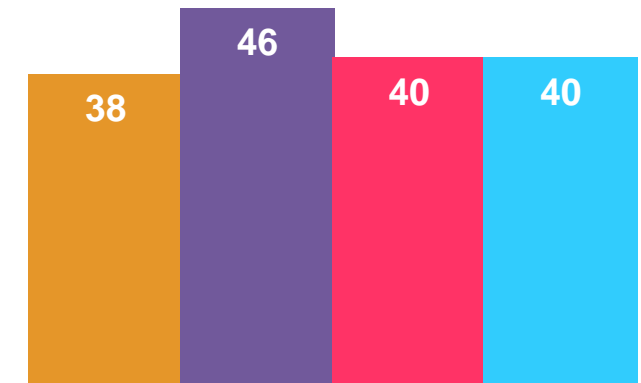


Spending too much time online

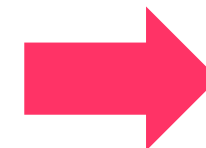
- 41% of children believe they spend too much time online
- Of these children, most reported it causing them some distress, upset or harm
- Not all screen time is negative, but if your child's wellbeing is negatively impacted, they need your support.

Most games and apps have screen time controls to manage this, but you should also help them find other activities to make their time online positive.

■ % 9-10s ■ % 11-12s
■ % 13-14s ■ % 15-17s



**Guide to
balancing
screen time**



3 things to teach your child

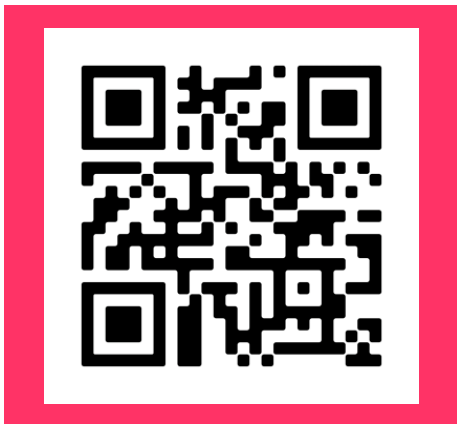
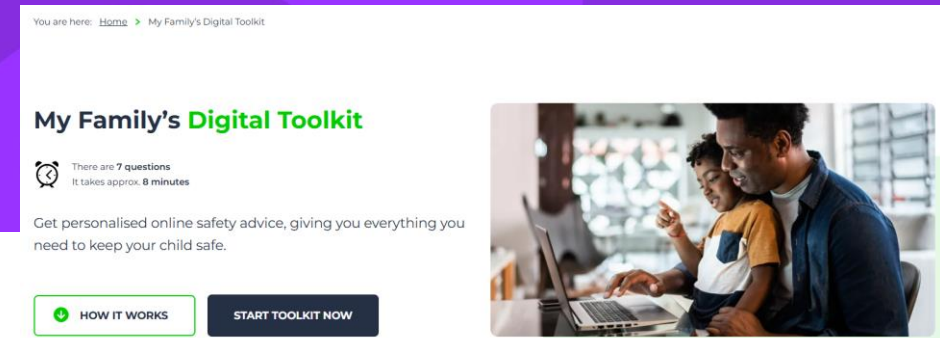
Be a confident
communicator

Be a critical
thinker

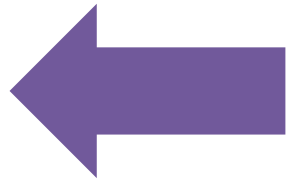
Be a capable
tools user

Create your family's digital toolkit

- Get resources based on your child's **age**, **devices**, **interests** and **needs** along with your **concerns**.
- Learn about the **popular apps and platforms** your child uses and see how to set **parental controls**.
- Learn how to **deal with any issues** or harmful risks your child might face.



Create your
digital toolkit



More support available at InternetMatters.org

Or on social media:

-  [/InternetMatters](https://www.facebook.com/InternetMatters)
-  [@IM_Org](https://twitter.com/IM_Org)
-  [@InternetMattersOrg](https://www.instagram.com/InternetMattersOrg)
-  [@InternetMatters](https://www.youtube.com/InternetMatters)

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