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Here's how... you can support your child's learning with technology.

Activity cards





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FACT:

Getting involved in your child's learning at home has huge benefits for their studies in school.

Using the internet together at home can be an excellent way to get involved, but it can feel quite daunting at first.

These cards will help you and your child to get the most out of using the internet safely and responsibly.

For more ideas about ways to support your child's learning at home visit www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/at-home



Here's how... to help your child use the internet responsibly

Being safe online and behaving responsibly are important parts of using the internet effectively. Your children may seem ultra-confident with using technology, but there's still a lot you can teach them.

Understand what you can do and what your child needs to learn to keep them safe. Remember: protect, educate and empower! Get started with the ideas overleaf.

Get wise – talk to your children!

If you're unsure just how all this technology works, get your kids to show you!

Talk to them about what they do online, why they find it so exciting and what they use it for.

Get familiar with how your computer works and look to see what's online. Try surfing the net, searching a topic and having a peek at a social networking site like Bebo or Facebook. This is a great time to explore online with your child.

Start by being safe

Talk to your children about the importance of being responsible and safe online. Remind them that the online world is part of the real world and they shouldn't behave any differently there.

Get to know the parental controls, look at the history files on your web browser and talk to your children about what they are looking at and doing.

Remember, this is about parenting, not about knowing the ins and outs of technology.

Set some rules

Make sure your family has some clear do's and don'ts when using the internet. Set boundaries and time limits and encourage good behaviour online, such as:

- being respectful to others
- not sharing personal information
- not arranging to meet strangers.

Guard private information

Keep your family information private, think before you share information online and explain why this is important to your child.

Remember that once something goes public you no longer have control over how it is used.

Report abuse

You also need to be ready to act if your child feels uncomfortable with anything they experience online.

You can help by:

- giving them ways to let a trusted adult know if there's a problem
- ensuring they know where any 'report abuse' buttons are on the sites they visit
- showing them how to block unwanted messages.

Report abuse via:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

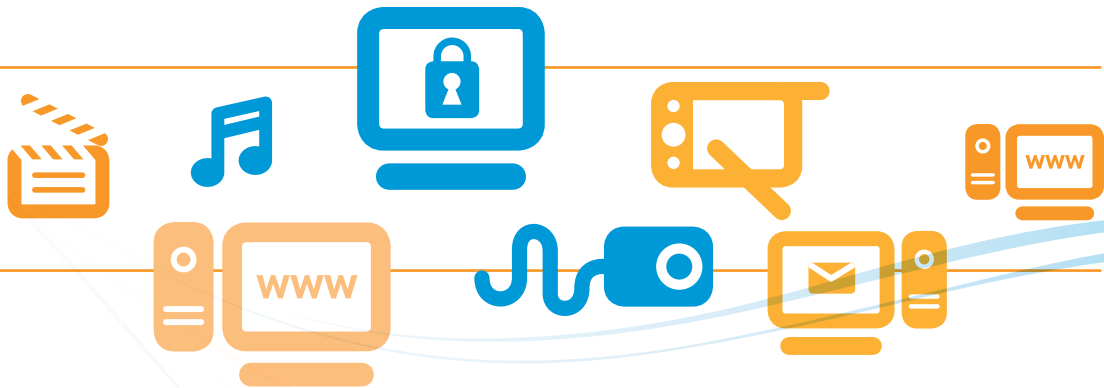
Find more useful parental information online:

www.direct.gov.uk/parents

www.childnet-int.org/kia/parents

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/help/web/staysafe





Here's how... to teach your child to use online content responsibly.

The internet offers unlimited resources to support your child's learning – from written information to images to music. However, it's important that they understand how to use responsibly the content they find.

Work through the ideas on this card to talk with your child about using online content for schoolwork and leisure.

Doing homework

Discuss why copying and pasting other people's work off the internet is:

- tempting
- wrong.

Talk about the difference between research and copying off websites.

Things to do together:

- Take a page that interests you from the internet.
- Rewrite it in your own words and state where you got the information or ideas.

Picture this

Ask your child to show you how to copy and paste an image from the internet to illustrate a piece of class work.

Have a go yourself.

Things to do together:

- Go back to the page where you found the image.
- What does it say about using the images ('copyright')?
- If there is any doubt about the copyright, discuss the use of the image.

Downloading and sharing

Find out what your child's attitude is towards:

- downloading music, movies, images etc
- sharing this kind of content with friends without paying for it.

Things to do together:

- Discuss why shoplifting or receiving stolen goods is wrong.
- Ask your child to compare this with illegal downloading/sharing.

Here's how... to search smartly for information

With billions of pages of information, the internet can sometimes appear overwhelming. So it's important to help your children understand how best to find the information they want so they don't waste time or become frustrated.

Everyone in the family can improve their online searching skills. Try out the top tips overleaf. Or visit a local library or a UK online centre to ask for help to improve your skills.



1. Got an address? Use it!

Save yourself lots of time. If you have the address of a website you want to visit, type it carefully in the address bar. Your children's school may have a list of recommended sites – just ask.

2. Choose a search engine

Three of the most popular are:

www.google.co.uk

www.yahoo.co.uk

www.live.com

Search engines designed specifically for young children include:

www.askkids.com

www.kids.yahoo.com

Try searching for the same thing on different search engines and see what results you get from each. Set the 'safe search' preferences to suit your child's age and maturity.

3. Know what to ask

Choose the best phrase to get what you want. For example, for information about the Egyptian pyramids, type 'Egypt pyramids' rather than just 'Egypt' or 'pyramid'. You don't need full sentences – just words.

4. Narrow your search

You can use double quotation marks to find exactly what you want, e.g. "geography revision sites". You can also use a minus sign to exclude information. If you want to find out about France but not tourism, type '*France -tourism*' (don't put a space after the minus sign).

5. Choose your country

Most search engines will provide a 'UK results only' option to click on so you can exclude information from sites in other countries.

6. Keep a track of good sites

When you're on a site you like, you can 'bookmark' or save it as a 'favourite' so you can find it quickly again. Simply click on 'favourites' or 'bookmarks' on the menu and follow the on-screen instructions.



Here's how... to assess online information

The internet is an instant source of valuable information on subjects children study or take an interest in. However, it is impossible to ensure everything on the internet is good quality.

Some sites contain information that is misleading, biased, badly written or just wrong. As a parent or carer you can play an important role in helping your children develop skills to discriminate between trustworthy and untrustworthy sites. Start with the questions overleaf.

1. Who owns the website?

Good websites will have a section called 'about us' or something similar, explaining who owns the site and what their aims are.

Choose a site and help your child look for the owner. Discuss whether you think they will be a reliable source of information or if they may be trying to sway the reader's opinions.

Look for clues in the web address:

.com and **.co** usually means commercial

.gov indicates a government site

.ac and **.edu** is a college or university site

.org is used by non-profit organisations.

2. Is the information correct?

How do you know? You can never be absolutely certain that what you are reading on the internet is accurate or truthful. It's up to you to decide – here's how...

3. Have you compared it?

Compare different websites for similar information. If they contradict each other, at least one of them must be wrong.

4. Facts or opinions?

If someone makes a claim, do they also provide any facts or sources to back it up?

5. Who do you trust?

After studying the different sites, which do you trust the most?

Still not sure? It may be best to stick with organisations you already know and trust from experience. Just look them up online to see what information they have on your subject.



Here's how... to expand your child's interests

Encouraging your children to follow up their favourite hobbies and interests with online activities has several benefits.

It will help them:

- deepen their understanding and enjoyment of their favourite things
- improve their reading, writing, communication and social skills
- sharpen their ability to find, understand and evaluate information
- find and communicate with others who share their interests.

Research interests

Scouts or brownies?

- Check out the official website of whatever you're into.

Football fan?

- Find football-themed educational games on TheFA.com.

Favourite TV channel or programme?

- Websites about kids TV have lots of educational games too.

Follow (or join in) a big event

Many national and international events – from sporting events to movie releases to charity fundraisers – are widely covered online.

- Choose a current hot topic.
- Compare different sites.
- See who's saying what.
- See how you can join in online, but be careful about giving away private information.

Read all about it

Who's your favourite author?

- Look them up online.
- Find out about other authors you may like.

Many children's authors have official websites with background information on their lives, their books and what they're planning next.

Discover all sorts of things you never knew!

Never be bored again!

The Directgov website has lots of ideas about fun sites to visit and things to do in the holidays. Log on to www.direct.gov.uk/parents and explore the 'Family, leisure and recreation' section.

Local authority websites and online editions of local newspapers also have 'what's on' listings. Check out yours.

Here's how... to visit a museum without leaving home

You know the excitement and educational value of visiting museums and how they can inspire young minds. But it isn't always possible to go and visit them in person.

Thanks to the internet, you and your children can now enjoy the latest activities at the UK's leading museums without leaving home. Let us show you how with www.show.me.uk



Learn together

Take a look at the parents' section of www.show.me.uk and find stacks of inspiration on a huge range of topics – from pre-history to the present day.

Complete some activities with your children and discover the pleasure of learning together.

School's out

Whether your child's into ancient Egypt or futuristic worlds, www.show.me.uk has a wealth of learning games linked to children's favourite topics.

The site also encourages children to send in their comments and artwork for the *Show and Tell gallery*.

Visit together

If you find time to visit an attraction with your children, www.show.me.uk has lists and links to museums and galleries nationwide.

Use your search skills to find a particular museum or gallery.

Plan a trip with your child using websites for online timetables, maps and route finders.



Here's how... to make the most of online communities

Online communities offer children varied opportunities for developing knowledge and interests as well as important social and communication skills.

However, as with most things in life, children need to behave sensibly, be aware of potential risks and know how to deal with any problems. This card gives you a quick overview of online communities and how they work.

Chat

A 'chat room' is a virtual meeting place where people can meet, discuss and share common interests – from study groups to music and more.

- Moderated chat is where a trained web person keeps an eye on what's being said.
- Children chatting without a moderator present should take extra care to check who they talk to and what they talk about.

IM (instant messaging)

IM is similar to chat, but it is private, not moderated. On certain services, groups of friends ('buddies') can join in IM discussions.

- It's a quick and effective method of communicating.
- Children using IM for 1:1 chats need to be aware of the dangers of chatting with people they've only ever met online.

Message boards, blogs and wikis

These are similar to email, but instead of sending a message to an individual, it's posted on the internet so anyone can read it.

- Great for researching and following debates on topics.
- The best sites are moderated.

Social learning networks

Social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace help you find and make friends and communicate in creative ways with all sorts of people.

- **www.SuperClubsPlus.com** is a subscription-based social learning network suitable for primary-age children.
- **www.GoldStarCafe.net** is a protected online learning community for 11–14 year olds.

Many sites have an age limit of 13+, but many younger children lie about their age to get on the sites.

Virtual worlds

There are a number of sites offering virtual worlds for children, where they can create 3D characters ('avatars') and interact with other characters.

Virtual worlds can improve children's social, communication and negotiation skills.

- **www.clubpenguin.com** and **www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/adventurerock** are appropriate for children aged 6–14.

Cyberbullying:

Bullying can happen anywhere, including in online spaces and by mobile phone.

Children need to learn respect for others while online, and not to take part in anything that sets out to deliberately upset someone.

You can get advice on what to do about cyberbullying from the internet safety section of www.direct.gov.uk/parents.

Children who are victims of cyberbullying can get advice from other children at www.cybermentors.org.uk.

