Digital Resilience Toolkit

Advice for parents of 6–10 year olds

Help children become more digitally savvy and get the best out of their online world

What are they doing online?

44% of six-year-olds are going online in their bedrooms[1]

28% of 10-year-olds have a social media profile[2]

8 in 10 aged 5 to 15 regularly use YouTube to watch short clips or programmes[2]

1. Internet Matters OL research 2016
2. Ofcom Children's and parents' media use and attitudes 2017

What challenges can they face?

It's the first time they are using technology, many independently. For children between 6 and 10, they are going online to play games or watch videos. This activity can quickly become very addictive.

As children get closer to 9 and 10, they are starting to engage online and socialise through games or through social media and they may come across potential risks when talking to others online such as cyberbullying.
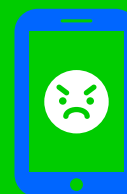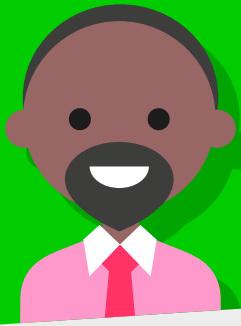
How do I get them prepared to deal with these challenges?

1. Managing time online

- For very young children playing a fun game is like scratching an itch and it becomes very addictive

- Set screen-time limits for their devices to create a norm and set a good balance on and offline

- Explain why you're putting time-limits in place so they can understand the positive benefits for them

2. Use parental controls to create a safer space for kids to explore online

- Set parental and privacy settings on apps, sites and devices they use and adjust them as they grow

- Use a child-friendly search engine as the homepage and a family login for sites such as YouTube, which are popular with children at this age or use YouTube Kids

- This means they can explore in a safe space and build independence online

3. Participation

- Get involved and show an interest in what they're doing online

- Play games with your child and find fun ways to interact to ensure they're using their time online in a productive way

- Getting involved at an early age will make it easier to engage with them as they develop their online identity

- Knowing about their habits online will allow you to feel comfortable to slowly bring down the safety wall as they get older

4. Being a good digital citizen

- Talk to them about the importance of being a good digital citizen as soon as you can

- Talk to your child about what they value in real friendships

- Discuss kindness and how important it is be kind online

- Talk to them about steps they can take if something goes wrong or they feel someone has been treated unfairly

- Remind them that they can talk to an adult if they are concerned

5. Be assertive - set digital boundaries

- At this age, children don't have the ability to self-regulate and need firm boundaries such as time limits

- Don't be afraid of being unpopular by saying 'no' when they are eager to get online if it is not appropriate - you are in control

Even with the right controls and settings, there's still a small chance children can stumble across something they shouldn't.

"What happens if things go wrong?"

- Try and understand what they've seen or come across whether it's a comment on a video or a game

- Find out how they came across it and discuss how it made them feel

- Don't overreact, show your support and talk it through

- Depending on the situation seek advice from specialist organisation or your GP to give them the best chance to recover and regain their confidence