



Understanding chat

Lots of popular games include chat functions that let users communicate. In-game chat helps gamers make new friends and work together, but it's important for young children to play safe and use it wisely.

Top tips for playing and chatting safely

- **Don't overshare.**
Your child should be careful about sharing personal information with online friends. Ask them to make sure their username isn't revealing too much (like where they live or their full name) and remind them about what is and isn't OK to share online.
- **Watch your language.**
Many games have profanity filters, but some don't – and sometimes bad or upsetting language slips through anyway. Be aware that chatting with other gamers might expose young children to mature content even in an age-appropriate game.
- **Know the difference between online and offline friends.**
It's OK to have online gaming friends, but your child should remember they don't really know these people all that well. Your child should be very careful about requests to connect outside of the game – on social media, for example.
- **Watch out for scams.**
In games that let you exchange goods or property, some people might try to take advantage of other users. Your child should watch out for offers that seem too good to be true and shouldn't spend any real-world money in a game without asking you first. And make sure your child knows that downloads promising helpful cheat codes sometimes contain malware that could damage your device.
- **Know how to report.**
Any time your child is chatting online, you should make sure they know what to do if something goes wrong. Check with your child if it's possible to report inappropriate behaviour to their favourite games. Make sure they know they can come to you if they're worried, and remind them about reporting to CEOP*.

Disabling chat and purchases

Lots of games let you turn off chat and in-game purchases. If you've decided your child isn't ready for these features, have a look at the game's settings and see if this is possible. If not, you might need to set parental controls on the device your child is using to play.

**If someone makes your child feel unsafe or uncomfortable online, they can report it to CEOP. You can also make reports on their behalf. Find out more here: <http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>*