



Life in the Early Years

Online Safety at Home



Why Talk About Online Safety?

Online safety starts long before children can read or write.

By Reception age, many children:

- Use tablets independently
- Watch videos on streaming platforms
- Play games online
- Access content through siblings' devices

Our aim is not to stop technology, but to help children develop **safe and healthy habits from the very beginning.**

Think of technology like sweets...

A little can be enjoyable and beneficial.

Too much can affect:

- Sleep
- Attention and concentration
- Physical activity
- Family interactions

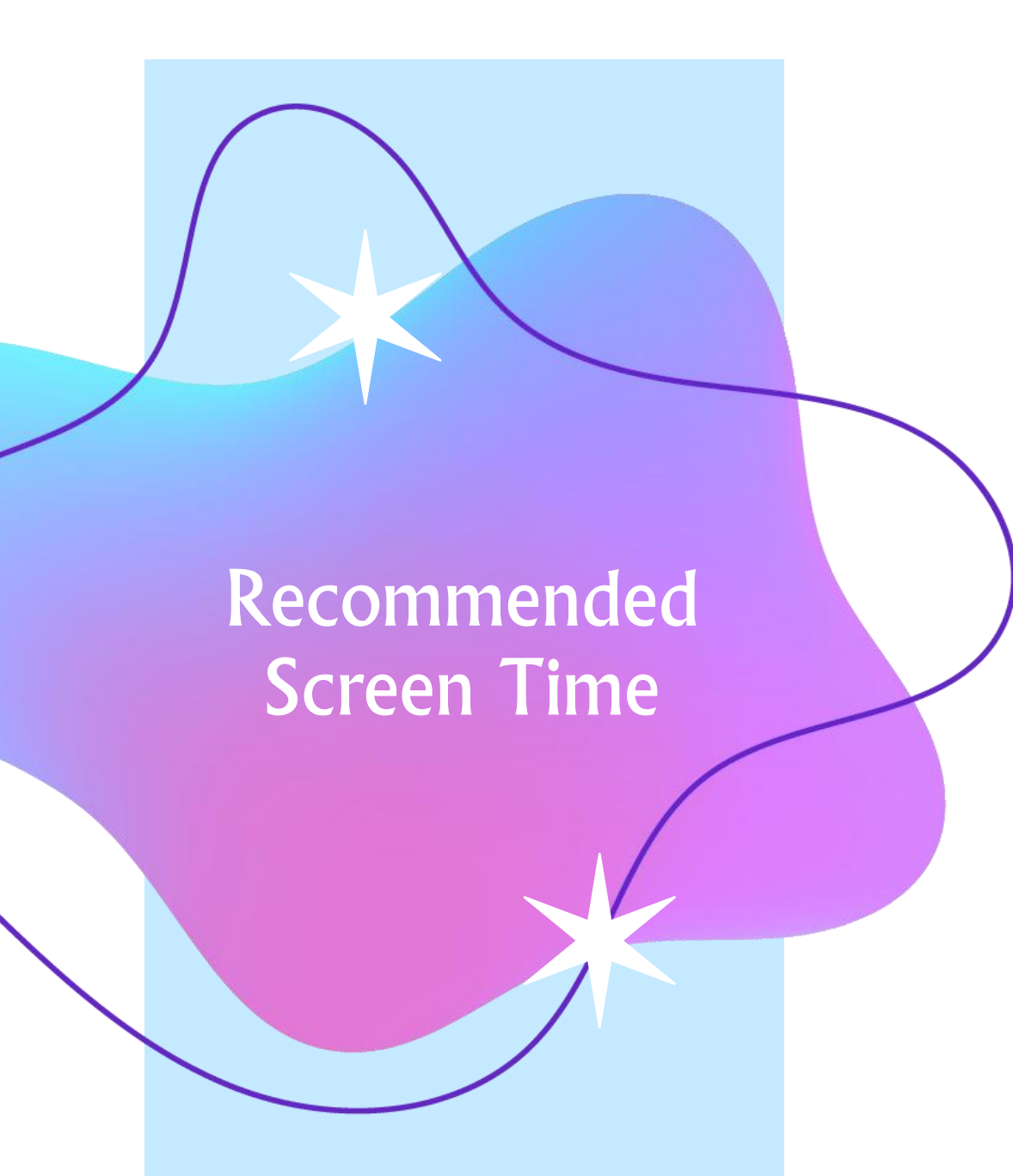
Healthy habits include:

- ✓ Screens used in shared family spaces
- ✓ Plenty of play, conversation and outdoor activities
- ✓ Screen-free mealtimes
- ✓ No devices at bedtime
- ✓ Adults modelling healthy habits too

Key message: Children learn more from what we do than what we say.

Healthy Online Habits





Recommended Screen Time

There is no single perfect amount.

Instead, ask:

- ✓ Is my child sleeping well?
- ✓ Are they active every day?
- ✓ Is there plenty of time for play and family interaction?
- ✓ Is screen use becoming a battle?

As a guide:

- Keep screen use balanced with active play and real-world experiences.
- Avoid screens in the hour before bedtime where possible.
- Younger children benefit most from using screens alongside an adult.

Remember: Quality matters more than simply counting minutes.



Choosing Safe Apps

Not all children's apps are suitable for young children.

Before downloading, ask:

Does it:

- ✓ Encourage learning or creativity?
- ✓ Have clear parental controls?
- ✓ Avoid chat functions?
- ✓ Avoid encouraging children to make purchases?
- ✓ Avoid showing adverts?

Good examples:

- CBeebies apps
- BBC children's content
- Teach Your Monster to Read
- Numberblocks and Alphablocks apps



Understanding PEGI Ratings

PEGI ratings help parents decide if a game is suitable.

PEGI is about content, not difficulty.

A child may be able to play a game but still be too young for its content.

- PEGI 3 = suitable for young children
- PEGI 7 = may contain mild frightening scenes
- PEGI 12+ and above = not suitable for young children

Important:

If a game has a higher PEGI rating than your child's age, there is usually a reason.

Always check the rating before downloading or buying.



Parent and Carer Monitoring

The most effective safety tool is not an app...

It's a trusted adult.

We recommend:

- ✓ Know what your child is watching
- ✓ Know which games they are playing
- ✓ Use parental controls
- ✓ Keep devices in family rooms
- ✓ Check privacy settings
- ✓ Talk regularly about what they do online

Ask:

"What was your favourite thing you watched today?"

rather than

"Have you done anything unsafe online?"





Our Top 5 Takeaways

1. Keep screens in shared family spaces.
2. Choose age-appropriate apps and games.
3. Check PEGI ratings before downloading games.
4. Use parental controls and monitor usage.
5. Talk regularly with your child about what they do online.



Where Can Parents Find Help?

Trusted Sources

NSPCC Information for parents about online safety.

Internet Matters Age-specific advice, guides and parental controls.

Childnet Online safety support and resources.

Thinkuknow (National Crime Agency) Advice and activities for parents and children.

