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Parenting Generation Game



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Foreword

Carolyn Bunting

Chief Executive Officer,
Internet Matters

As the focus on children's digital wellbeing intensifies, it is important for us to ensure we look at the broad range of online activities that children participate in.

There can be no doubt that gaming is now a mainstream pastime for almost all children growing up today, and our latest research reinforces that there is a significant online element both to game play and the peripheral activities that it drives.

Like we have seen with screen time and social media, parents are quick to acknowledge there are both

positives and negatives associated with gaming, and this research seeks to explore this balance more. We are delighted to have worked with Three to share greater insight into parents' attitudes and needs when it comes to parenting 'generation game'.

Internet Matters ultimately exists to prevent children being harmed on the internet, and our focus is on helping parents get the information, advice and knowledge they need to help manage any risks their children encounter. This report is fundamental to developing the resources that families need to ensure that they can benefit from all that gaming has to offer. You can find our resources for gaming and very much more besides on our website, www.internetmatters.org

David Dyson

Chief Executive Officer,
Three UK

We believe phones are good. They make our lives easier and more fun. To keep the focus on fun, we're committed to supporting our customers to understand how their data is used and how to safely navigate the online world.

Our partnership with Internet Matters provides us with an opportunity to be part of a collaborative effort to help parents raise their children safely in a digital world. We're proud to have sponsored Internet Matters' independent study on gaming and be working together to create resources as a result of the insights the research has revealed.

With 5G unlocking the next level of gaming and providing a near-zero lag experience, we know gaming will continue to play a significant role in many children's lives. Gaming can provide many

benefits to children from stress relief to increased strategic thinking, concentration, team work and socialisation, as games are now typically played with friendship groups. But their world of gaming has moved on to become almost unrecognisable from the one their parents experienced, leaving parents struggling to feel up to date and confident in their ability to manage their child's experience. Like the wider online world, we know we need to help parents with tools and support to guide their children to avoid potential risks. One of the biggest concerns from parents with gaming on mobiles is in app purchases, which we're proud to say Three customers can either block entirely or limit. Beyond tools, we're working with Internet Matters to create top tips so that our people can support parents with gaming advice, as well as creating free sessions on gaming through our Discovery programme, which offers a wide range of courses to anyone who wants to find out more about making the most of the online world.

Executive Summary

Gaming is a huge part of our children's lives. They use it to connect with friends, to entertain themselves and to let off steam. It's a significant pastime – and like many other activities our children engage in, it brings with it a number of opportunities and risks. In the course of this research we listened to parents and children about their relationship with gaming, across all devices and platforms.

Whilst children and young people are clear and articulate about why they game and what they get out of it, parents have a nuanced view of what's good about gaming and the elements of it that impact on behaviour and family life.





Gaming is social currency

Over 81% of parents of children aged 4–16 told us that their children play video games online, mostly on smartphones or consoles, which combined with the duration of daily play suggests gaming online is a significant part of our children's lives. This is because of the social currency that gaming holds. Children are motivated to start gaming or move to a different game because that's what their friends are doing. Parents of children who regularly game online tell us that 62% of them play with their school friends.

Age ratings are flexible

A third of all parents allow their children to play games with a higher age rating than their age, and this rises to 2 in 5 parents of 14–16 year olds. In practice this means that one third of children this age are regularly playing Call of Duty and 24% of them are Grand Theft Auto players. Both of these games are PEGI rated 18. Permission to play does not always equate to parents being comfortable with the levels of violence of adult content however. It's more reflective of parents responding to the acute fear of missing out felt by young people in this age range.

Parents feel differently about risk

Whilst parents acknowledge that gaming carries some online risks, they judge the risks to be different to the content risks found on social media – such as self harm material or bullying. Over half of parents are concerned about online grooming with gaming, which combined with the preference of a third of children to play alone and nearly three quarters of older children playing in their bedrooms, suggests that parents need help in addressing this. Parents are also concerned about the normalisation of gambling behaviour through in game purchases such as loot boxes.

Beyond gaming

As technology has become ever more connected, children's love of gaming is extending to include peripheral screen-based activities to support their interest in gaming. Over half watch video guides or game reviews, and a similar number of watch others playing online on streaming services such as Twitch or YouTube. One in five record themselves playing games and broadcast it online at least once a month, and almost a third are chatting or communicating with other gamers on streaming services.

Gaming is good

Parents see much good in games. They credit their children's gaming with the development of a range of social and technical skills which are net positives. Also, parents recognise the ever growing role of technology and see that interest and expertise in gaming begins useful familiarity with technology. Parents see a career in the gaming sector as a credible choice for their child.

Parents need help

Parents, especially mums, who have less familiarity with gaming, are keen for more insight and support. They have high expectations of gaming companies to help young players take regular breaks. Additionally, they want independent help and support when they have identified a behaviour change in their child or young person which they ascribe to gaming. They are concerned about a range of issues including online grooming, sharing personal data and addiction.

Methodology

All participants were carefully screened to ensure they met the required criteria to take part and were suitable for this research. An integrated approach was undertaken:



Quantitative survey to provide robust data

- Nationally representative sample from a consumer access panel (conducted 5th - 12th April 2019)
- Participants were recruited from a consumer access panel to take part in a 20 minute online survey
- Screening questions were asked upfront to ensure we were speaking to parents with children aged 4 - 16 years old and had broadband at home
- Quotas were applied to the survey to ensure the sample was balanced and the data was weighted to ensure it was representative of UK parents
- In total, 2,002 parents completed the survey between 5th - 12th April 2019, representing 480 parents from the North, 681 from the South, 500 from the Midlands and 340 from NI, Wales and Scotland
- Differences between subgroups reported are statistically significant at 95% confidence level
- We asked parents to focus on their eldest child when answering these questions in order to be able to analyse the data by children's demographics



Qualitative online community

- 1 week with 33 parents with a child aged 6-16 years (conducted 1st - 8th April 2019)
- Children of these parents were also invited to answer questions and take part in several tasks on the community
- To ensure eligibility for the community, as part of the recruitment process parents were asked to complete a recruitment survey and to confirm they would be happy for their quotes and examples to be used in this report
- Demographics:
 - Gender of parents: Fathers (16) Mothers (17)
 - Gender of child: Sons (15) Daughters (18)
 - Social class: mix of parents across social economic grades ABC1C2D
 - Location: recruited parents from across England: North (7), South (8) and Midlands (7), Scotland (5) and Wales (6)

Research objectives

Internet Matters commissioned this research to gain a detailed insight into parents' attitudes to gaming. We sought to understand their perceptions of the risks and benefits of gaming and how that changes as children grow older. We wanted to explore the benefits of gaming as identified by both parents and children and to understand what parents are already doing to enable their children to have a safe gaming experience. We were also keen to understand what resources would make a real difference for them.

This research focuses on parental understanding and attitudes towards their child playing digital games on various consoles and devices (including smartphones).

The following terms are used in the research and throughout this report:

Definition of gaming: This could include any recreational use of video and mobile games, including:

- 'Boxed' games for PC or consoles (video games bought in the traditional boxed format, either a CD, cartridge or a keycode from a high street or online retailer)
- Games downloaded online for PC or consoles
- Mobile app games played on a smartphone or tablet
- Games played on a web-browser on a smartphone or tablet or a PC (e.g. games played on social media or through a website)

In the community we explained online gaming as the following:

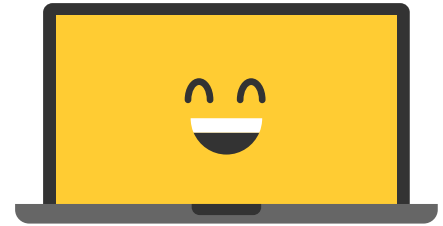
"We are particularly interested in online games. By this we mean games that require you to be connected to the internet in order to play. These games can be played across devices such as smart phones (Candy Crush, Alto's Odyssey) and consoles (Halo, Fortnite). Either alone or against other people."



Research was conducted by Trinity McQueen. They are MRS Company Partners and members of the Association of Qualitative Researchers (AQR). Fieldwork services are aligned to and follow the IQCS and ISO20252 quality standards.

Game Changers





The new normal

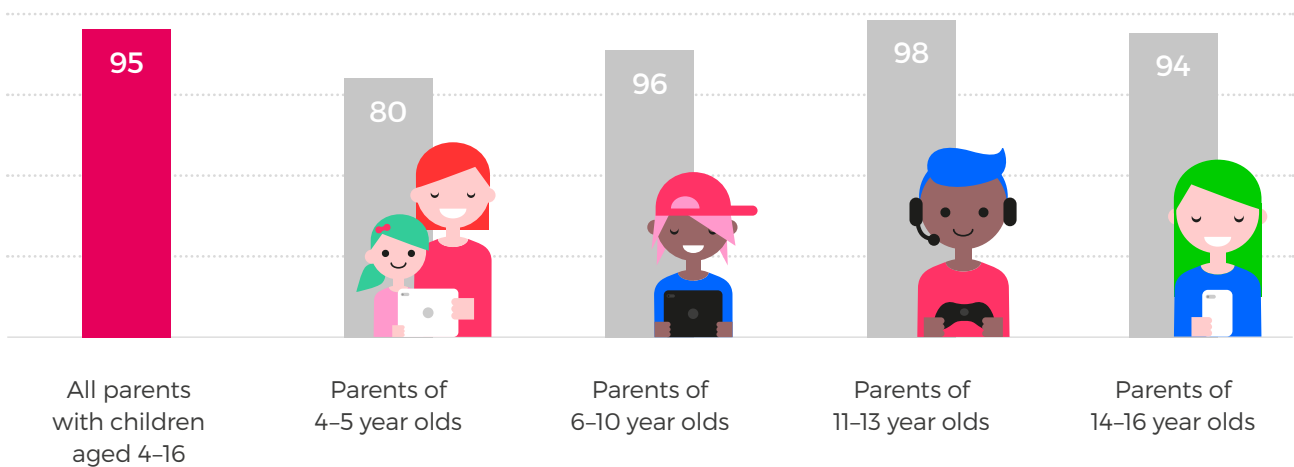
Almost all parents (95%) claim their children have played video games in some capacity – and they start very young; nearly three in four children between the ages of 4–5 have experienced playing games on a tablet.

There is only a small difference between genders with 97% of parents of boys and 92% of parents with girls claiming their children have played video games. Overall the console remains the most popular device, with tablet use for gaming declining as children age. Like many online activities, gaming peaks at the ages of 11–13.



95% of parents say their child uses any device to play video games

% of parents who said their eldest ever played games across any device



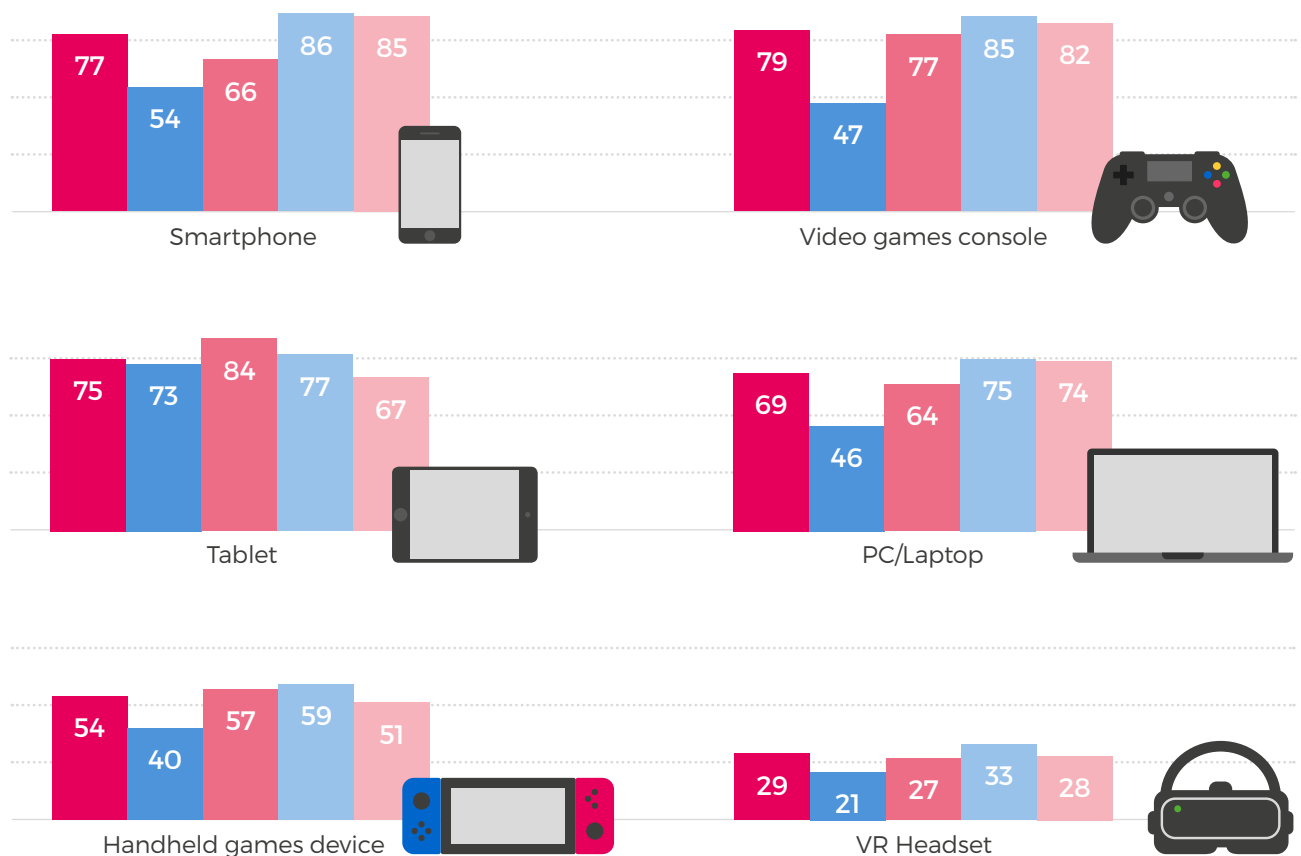
Q. First of all, thinking about your eldest child, could you tell us how frequently they use the following to play games? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 (2,002), eldest child is 4 – 5 years old (148), eldest child is 6 – 10 years old (590), eldest child is 11 – 13 years old (499), eldest child is 14 – 16 years old (765)

Clearly the console is the gaming device of choice amongst gamers, with smart phones and tablets enjoying huge popularity as gaming devices. Whilst parents report that nearly all children game, the ubiquity of phones and tablets suggest there is no real gender split across these devices, but there are significant differences across all other gadgets.

This is particularly the case with games console usage, where there is a 20% difference by gender. Perhaps this is reflective of the genre of games best suited to the console format, and the cult following some of those blockbuster games have amongst boys.

% of parents who said their eldest ever played on the following devices by age (irrespective of frequency)

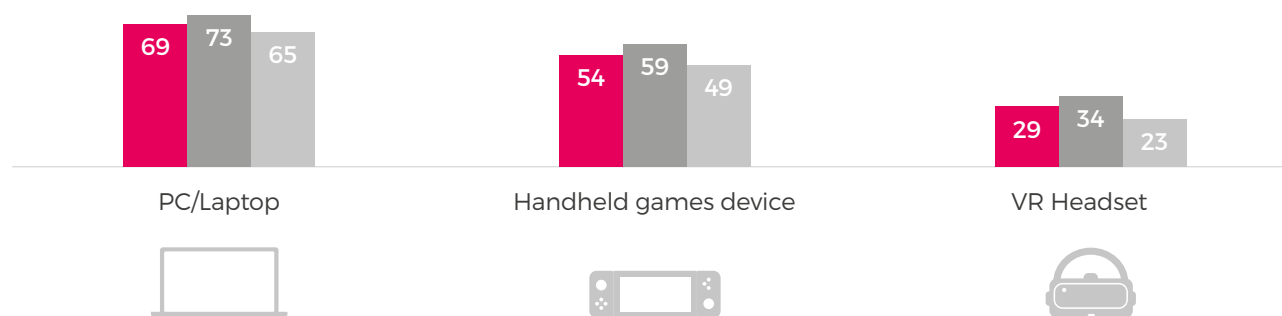
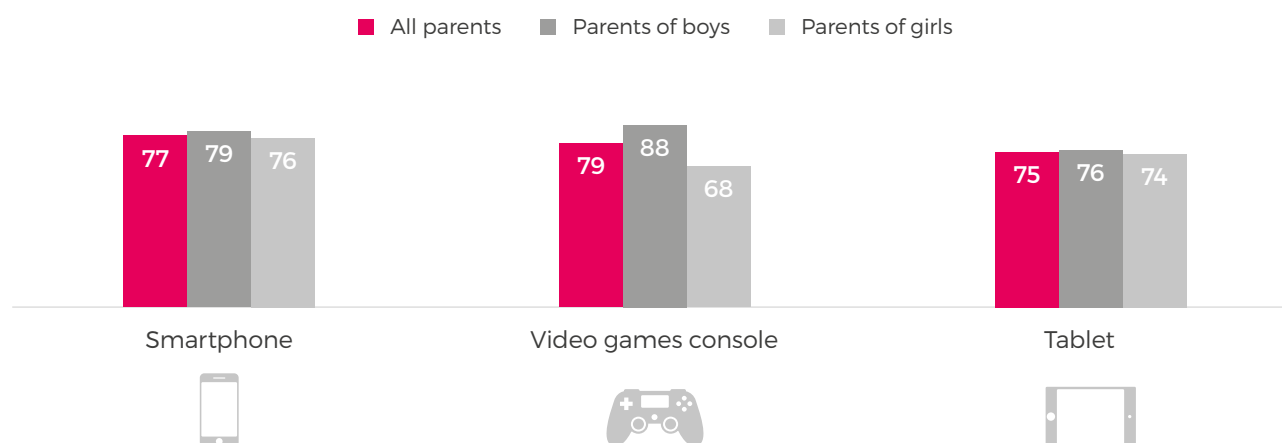
■ All parents ■ Parents of 4–5 years old ■ Parents of 6–10 years old ■ Parents of 11–13 years old ■ Parents of 14–16 years old



Q. First of all, thinking about your eldest child, could you tell us how frequently they use the following to play games? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4–16 (2,002), eldest child is 4–5 years old (148), eldest child is 6–10 years old (590), eldest child is 11–13 years old (499), eldest child is 14–16 years old (765)



% of parents who said their eldest ever played on the following devices by gender of child (irrespective of frequency)



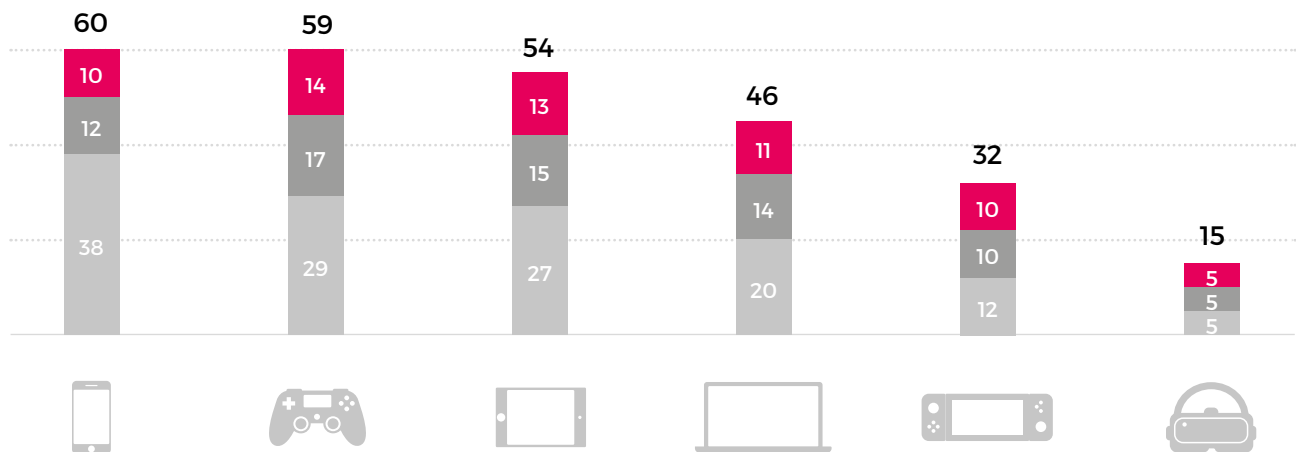
Q. First of all, thinking about your eldest child, could you tell us how frequently they use the following to play games? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4–16 (2,002), parents whose eldest child is a boy (1048), eldest child is a girl (954)



Frequency of use varies by device. Half of the parents in the survey told us their children use a smartphone to game at least every 2-3 days, with almost 4 out of 10 saying their child uses a smartphone to game at least once a day. Likewise, nearly half (46%) use a console at least every 2-3 days, with 29% gaming on at least a daily basis.

Plays at least once a week (net)

■ At least once a week ■ Every 2-3 days ■ At least once a day



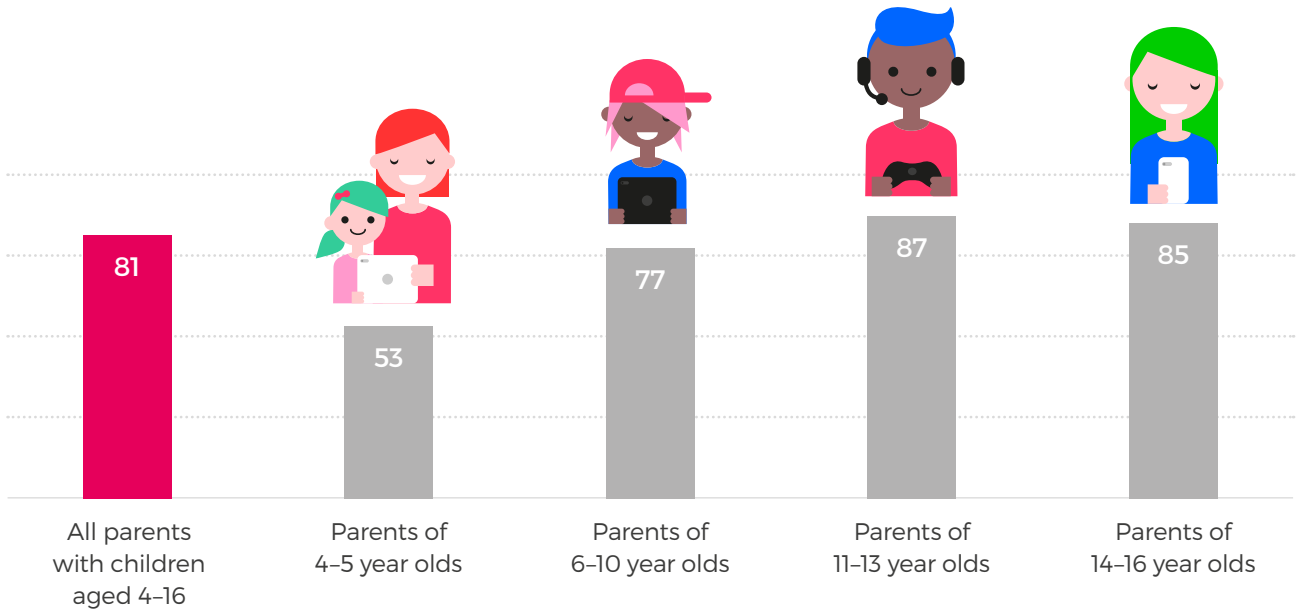
Q. First of all, thinking about your eldest child, could you tell us how frequently they use the following to play games?
Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 (2,002)

Having understood the prevalence of gaming by age, gender and device, we wanted to explore the place on online gaming in children's lives, to better understand the social elements of gaming.

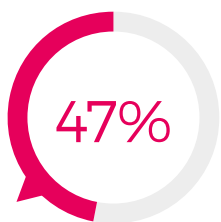
Online Gaming – A source of social currency

With most parents being aware that their child has played video games online (81%) and almost half saying their children prefer to play this way, it is clear that online gaming has a marked presence in children's digital lives. Online gaming (playing whilst connected to the internet) is more prominent amongst boys than girls – particularly when it comes to gaming on consoles, handheld games devices and VR devices. It is also more popular amongst older children especially after the age of 10, although just over half of the very youngest children are playing internet connected games. Smartphones, video game consoles closely followed by computers and tablets are overall the top devices children use to play video games online, with at least a quarter of parents saying their children always or often use these devices to play online.

% of parents who said their eldest ever played games online across any device (irrespective of frequency)



Q. When your eldest child is playing games on the following devices, how often are you aware that they are playing online?
 Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 (2,002), eldest child is 4 – 5 years old (148), eldest child is 6 – 10 years old (590), eldest child is 11 – 13 years old (499), eldest child is 14–16 years old (765)



of parents say their child's preference to play video games online



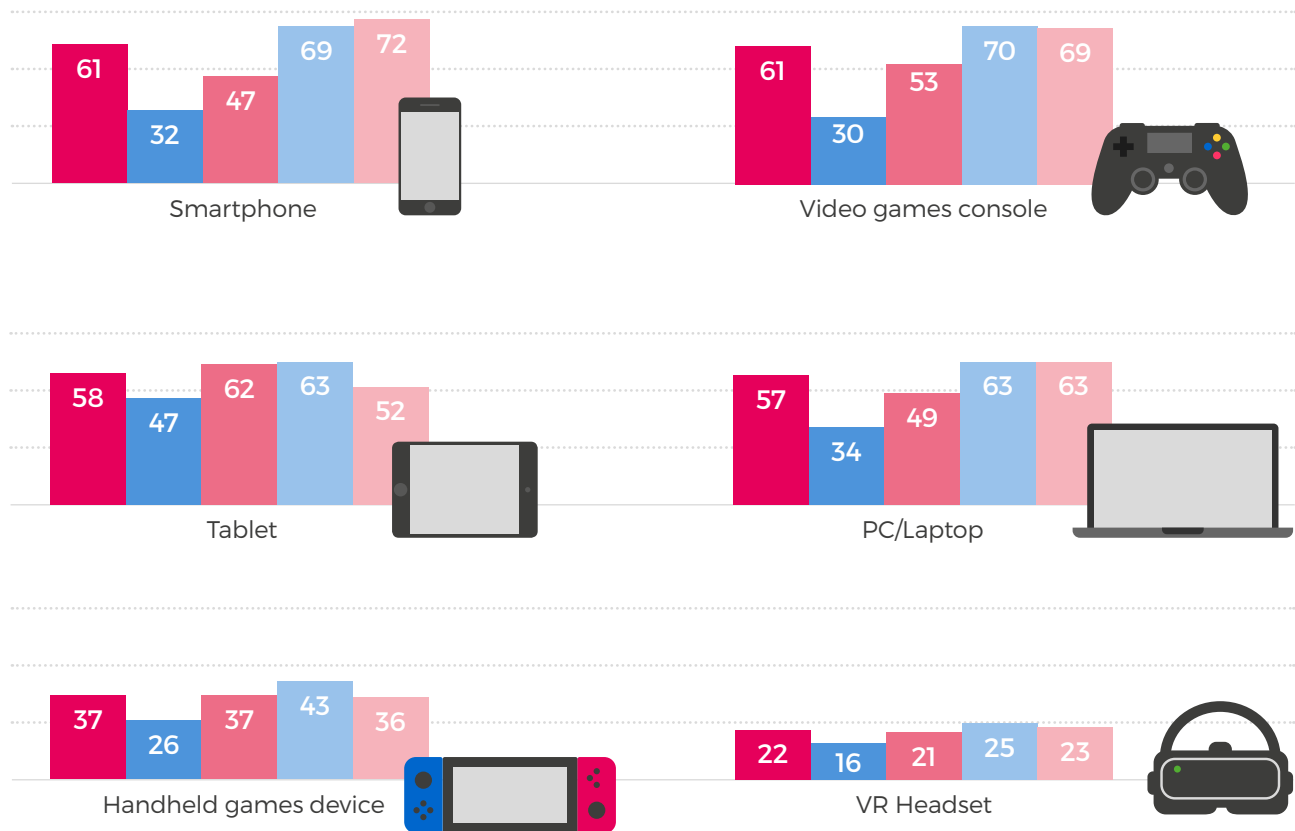
Whilst online gaming is really popular amongst young people there are some significant differences between on and off line gaming in terms of device preference and gender.

Although gaming online using a console remains high from ages 11 through to 16, it's not the same story across the genders - when under half (47%) of girls use a console compared to three quarters of boys.

Interesting too that there is a 13% difference between genders when gaming online across all devices. So whilst nearly three quarters of girls game online, nearly nine in ten (87%) boys do so.

% of parents who claim their eldest child ever played online games on the following devices by age (irrespective of frequency)

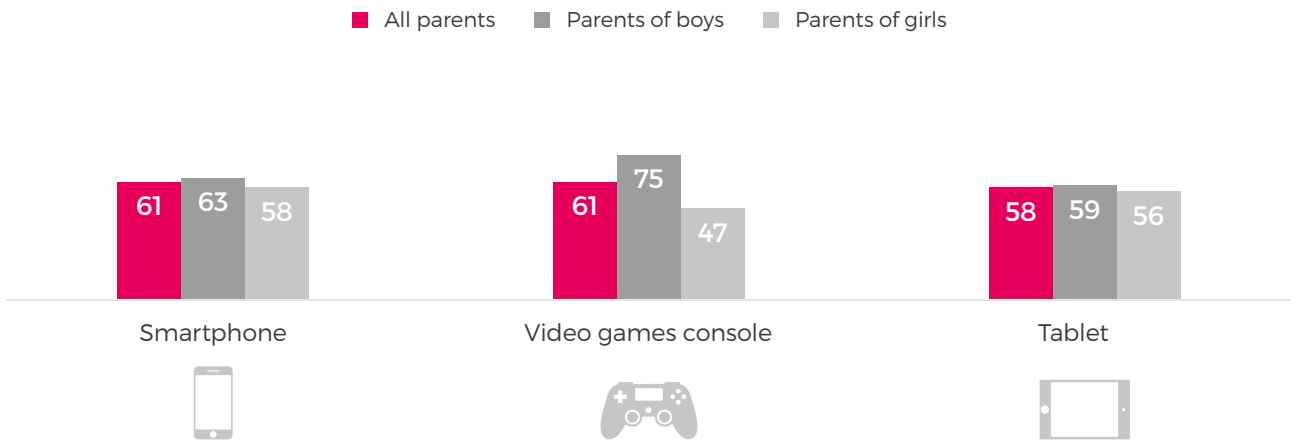
■ All parents ■ Parents of 4-5 years old ■ Parents of 6-10 years old ■ Parents of 11-13 years old ■ Parents of 14-16 years old



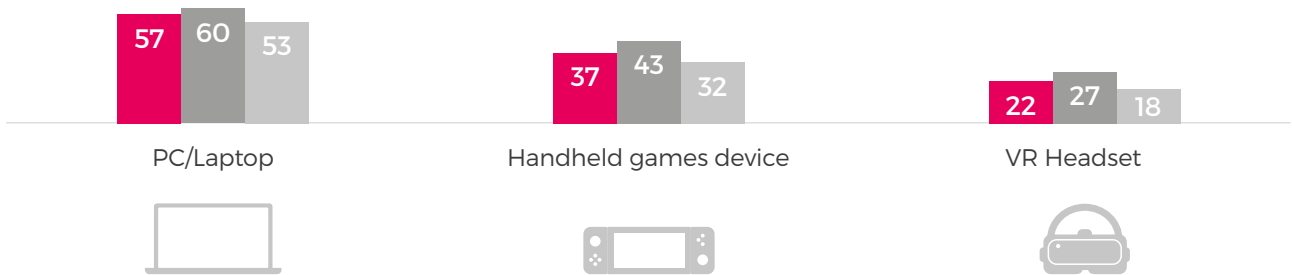
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 Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 (2,002), eldest child is 4 – 5 years old (148), eldest child is 6 – 10 years old (590),
 eldest child is 11 – 13 years old (499), eldest child is 14–16 years old (765)*



% of parents who claim their eldest child ever played online games on the following devices by gender of child (irrespective of frequency)



87% Parents of boys
 Gaming online across any device (%)
74% Parents of girls



Q. When your eldest child is playing games on the following devices, how often are you aware that they are playing online?
 Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 (2,002), parents whose eldest child is a boy (1048), eldest child is a girl (954)

Time out?



“My son was around 7 or 8 when he first started, he wanted to start doing it because his pals were doing it, his dad loves doing it as well”

Mum, with son aged 15

The debate about screen time will be a familiar one for families, professionals and policy makers, and it is clear that gaming is a driver in the time children spend looking at screens. We found difference between weekends and weekdays, genders and devices.

Time spent gaming at weekends peaks at the 11-13 age range with over 5 and a half hours across the two days. Older teens seem to slightly reduce their weekend time, but it's still over 5 hours for the two days.

These insights are useful as they add colour to the screentime conversation which often suffers from a monochrome focus on time spent, rather than in developing an understanding of what young people are doing within that time.

Gaming is a significant time commitment

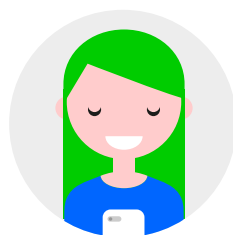
Parents of children who play video games claim that on average their children spend just over 2 hours using them on a typical day and estimate that their children play about 5 hours on average over the course of a weekend. There are some gender differences with boys tending to spend more time engaging with video games than girls. Gaming screen time also increases as children get older, with 11-16 year olds spending more time gaming than 4-10 year olds.

Average time spent playing video games on a typical weekday:

2h:7m



2h:29m
Boys



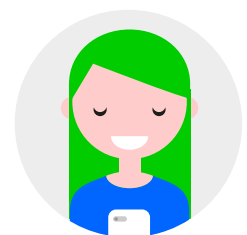
1h:40m
Girls

Average time spent playing video games on a typical weekend:

4h:49m



5h:40m
Boys



3h:50m
Girls

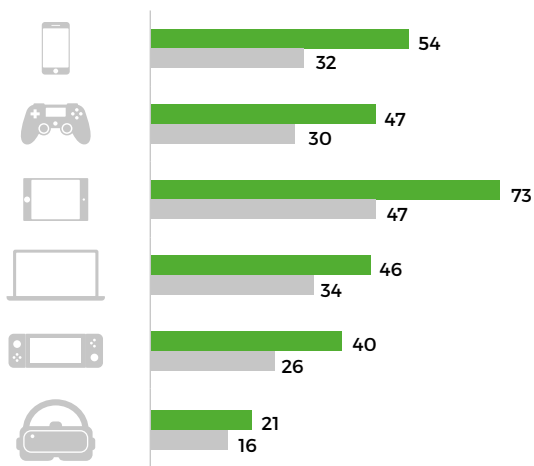
“My son was around 7 or 8 when he first started, he wanted to start doing it because his pals were doing it, his dad loves doing it as well”

Mum, with son aged 15

As expected, the devices used to play games change as children grow older and acquire access to more of their own devices.

■ Use device to game ■ Use device to game online

Parents with children aged 4-5 years old



1h:27m

Average time gaming on a typical weekday



3h:27m

Average time gaming over a typical weekend (Sat & Sun)

Parents with children aged 6-10 years old



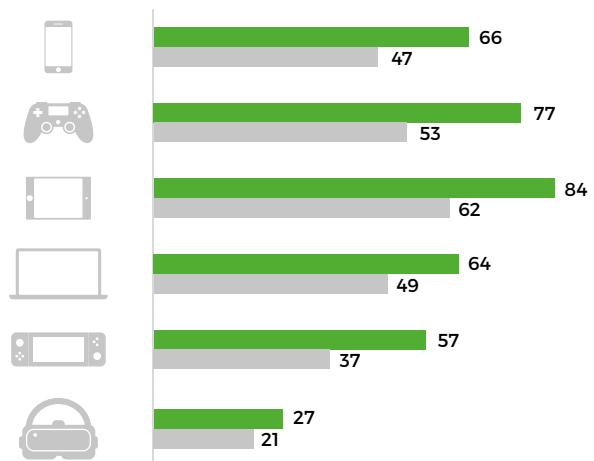
1h:43m

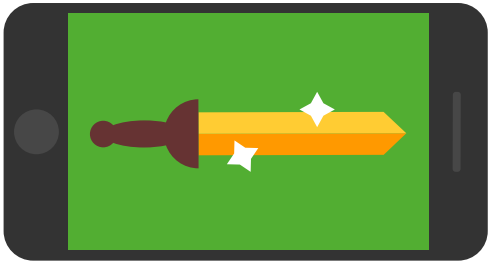
Average time gaming on a typical weekday



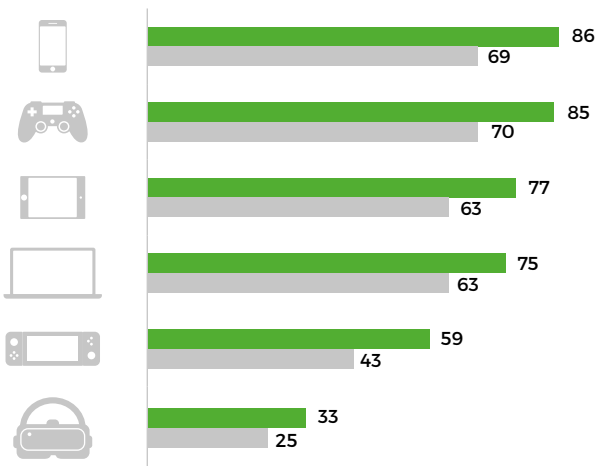
4h:59m

Average time gaming over a typical weekend (Sat & Sun)





Parents with children aged 11-13 years old



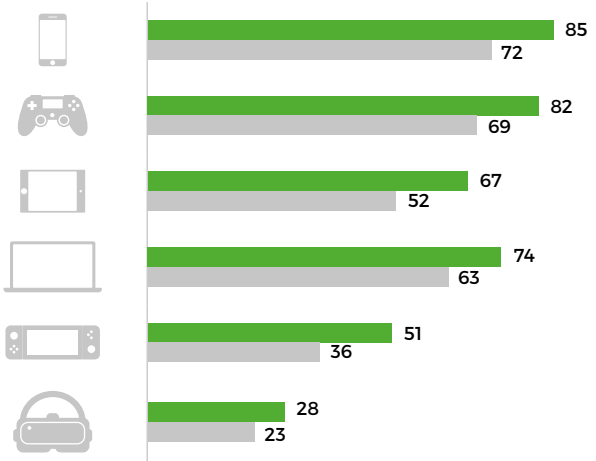
2h:30m
Average time gaming on a typical weekday

5h:39m
Average time gaming over a typical weekend (Sat & Sun)

Parents with children aged 14-16 years old

2h:16m
Average time gaming on a typical weekday

5h:13m
Average time gaming over a typical weekend (Sat & Sun)



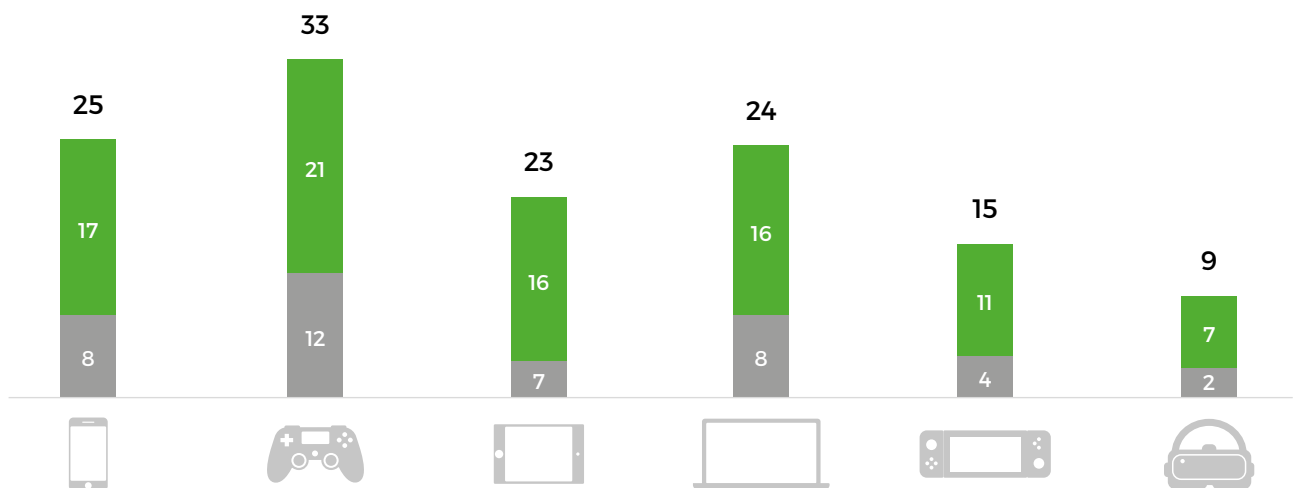
% of parents who said their eldest child ever played games across any device

“My child started gaming when he was 8 or 9 when we bought him his first tablet so he got used to a qwerty keyboard”

Dad, with son aged 14

% of parents who claim their eldest child always or often played online games on the following devices

■ Often playing online
■ Always playing online

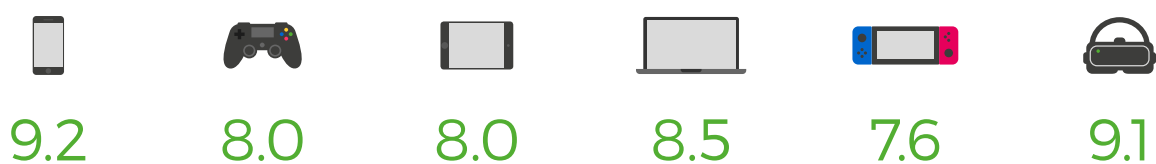


Q. When your eldest child is playing games on the following devices, how often are you aware that they are playing online?
Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 (2,002)

Age at which children start playing

Parents report their children regularly starting to play video games at the age of 7 or 8, though tend to start playing games on smartphone and VR headsets slightly later, at around 9 years of age. However, it's worth noting that 73% of parents of 4–5 year olds also told us their child(ren) uses a tablet to play games and the average age they first started was 4 years old. Video gaming is a strong social currency in the playground and children are motivated to start playing video games because their friends and family are already doing so.

Average age started playing



Q. At what age did your eldest child start playing games on the following devices? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games on a smartphone (1552); all whose children play on PC/laptop (1385), all whose children play on a tablet (1493), all whose children play on a video game console (1564), all whose children play on a handheld games console (1063), all whose children play on a VR headset (559).

“My daughter started playing mainly on a tablet and our phones. We would download games for her when she was about 8 or 9. I think she mainly wanted to do it because she saw her friends on these games”

Dad, with daughter aged 11

Hours spent gaming (% All parents who have children who play video games across any device)

	Gaming on a typical weekday <i>(average time spent – hours:minutes)</i>	Gaming over a typical weekend <i>(average time spent across Saturday and Sunday – hours:minutes)</i>
Parents of 4 – 5 year olds	1:27	3:27
Parents of 6 – 10 year olds	1:43	4:59
Parents of 11 – 13 year olds	2:30	5:39
Parents of 14 – 16 year olds	2:16	5:13

Where do children play video games?

Parents of gamers tell us that the living room and bedrooms are the most popular locations for playing games. Consoles are placed in communal areas in an effort to maintain family time or so parents can join in the activity. The bedroom is the next most popular location, with almost half of these parents claiming their children play in their own bedrooms, especially those parents whose children are older. However there are more rules in place for this arrangement such as keeping the door open or handing in controllers when not in use. Also older children spend more time playing games in their bedroom than younger children.



of parents whose children play video games, say they play in the living room (61% for sons; 69% for daughters)

“His Xbox at his mother’s house is in his bedroom. The Xbox in my house is in the living room so we can play together”

Dad, with son aged 14

“We try to spend time as a family so the games consoles are in our family living room”

Mum, with daughter aged 7

“My son has a monitor in his bedroom now but has to hand over his controls to me in between use – my daughter doesn't want that she's happy to play downstairs in front of everyone as she is on a lot less”

Mum, with daughter aged 16

“Our eldest has his console in his room but must play with the door open, our other console is in the living room”

Dad, with son aged 15



of parents whose children play video games, say they play in their bedroom (64% for 11–13 year olds; 72% for 14–16 year olds)

Playing preferences change as children get older

Whilst the significant majority of parents say their children do game online, over a third of parents report their children prefer to play games on their own, particularly those with girls. A fifth say their children prefer to play with others locally (on the same console), while another fifth claim their children prefer to play with others online (on different consoles in different locations), particularly boys and children over 11 years old.

37%

of parents whose children play video games say they prefer to play alone (41% for daughters, 35% for sons)

23%

of parents whose children play video games say they prefer to play with others in the same room

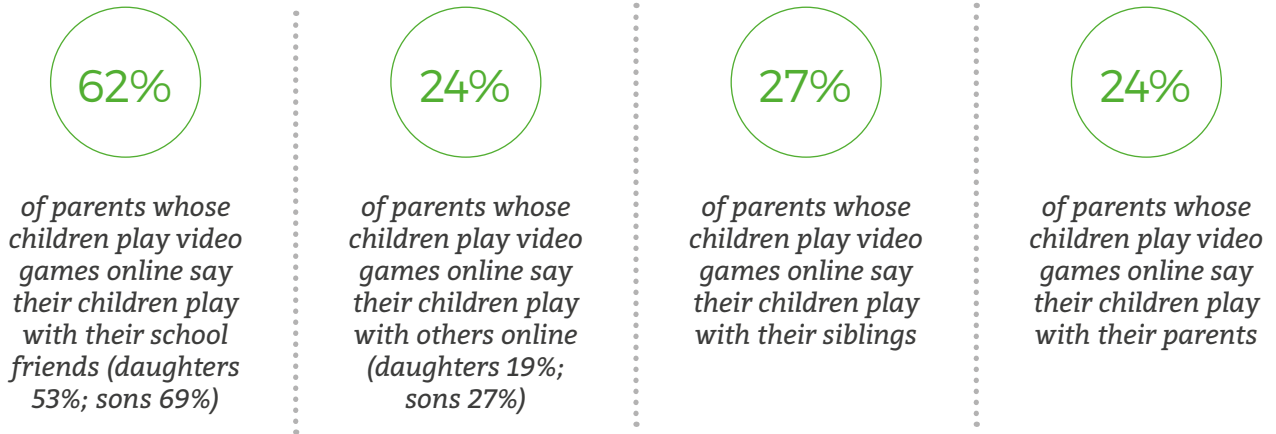
22%

of parents whose children play video games say they prefer to play with others online (14% for 4–10 year olds; 27% for 11–17 year olds)

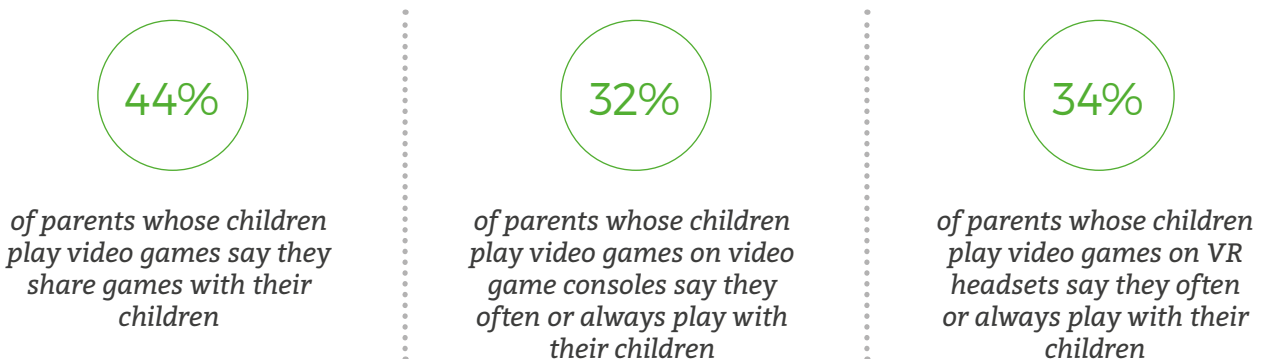
“They play several games with close school friends and sometimes with us – such as 8 ball pool when we use 2 devices”

Dad, with daughter aged 11

According to parents, children play online with a range of people but are most likely to play with school friends. A quarter of parents also claim that children play with other online gamers that they might not necessarily know in real life. Boys tend to play online games with these groups of people. Siblings are the most popular family members to play video games with, but a quarter of parents claim that their children do play with the parents too.



Although over 2 in 5 parents share their games with their children, the majority of parents do not often play video games with them. Video game consoles and VR headsets offer the most opportunity for parents to play video games with their children. We think this is because they are designed for interaction, whereas games played on mobiles are more likely to be single player games.



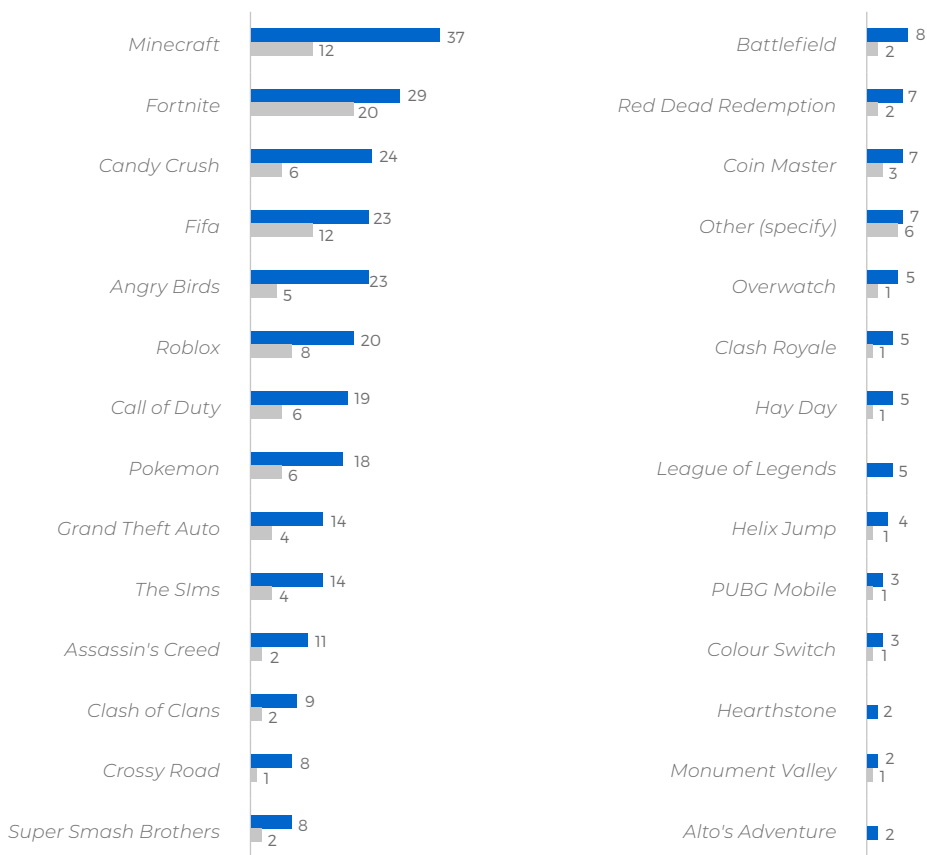


Games played, concerns raised

Minecraft, Fortnite and Fifa are the most popular games that children gravitate towards. A fifth of parents recognise Fortnite as one of their children’s favourite games. The majority of parents (83%) do not spontaneously mention any particular titles they are concerned with their children playing. However, of those who do talk about any titles, they are most likely to mention Fortnite.

% of parents who claim their eldest child always or often played online games on the following devices

■ Child plays either on mobile/PC/console ■ Child's favourite game



Q. Which games are you aware of that your eldest child plays either on mobile devices or on PCs and consoles? And which do you think are their favourite games at the moment? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play video games across any device (1892)

“Alfie plays Grand Theft Auto online at the moment and needless to say I’m not entirely happy with the adult content. I’ve resisted buying him the game for a number of years but he’s at an age now where all his friends have it and he’d feel left out if he didn’t have it.”

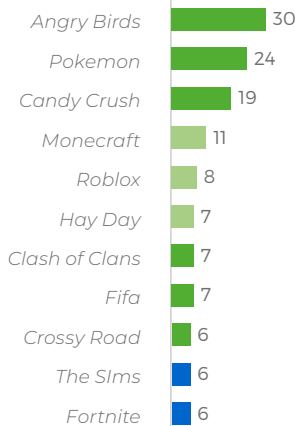
Mum with son aged 11

Games played by age

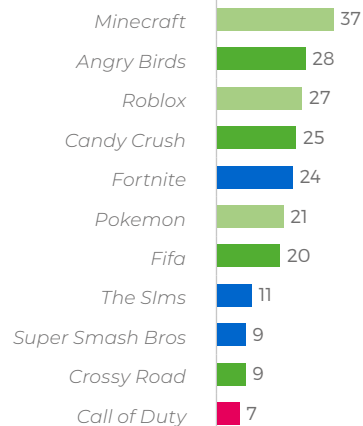
Taste in games change gradually as children get older. Younger children tend to play puzzle games that have a time span (e.g. Candy Crush, Angry Birds) and single player games (e.g. Pokémon). However as they get older, they opt for collaborative and competitive multiplayer and online games (e.g. Minecraft, Fortnite and Call of Duty).

■ PEGI 3 ■ PEGI 7 ■ PEGI 12 ■ PEGI 16 ■ PEGI 18

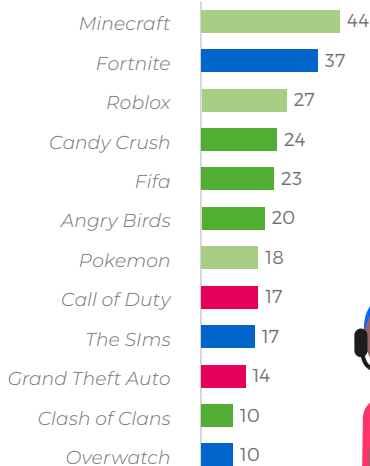
Eldest child is aged 4-5



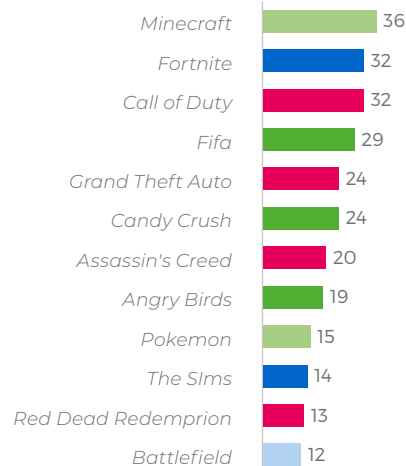
Eldest child is aged 6-10



Eldest child is aged 11-13



Eldest child is aged 14-16



Q. Which games are you aware of that your eldest child plays either on mobile devices or on PCs and consoles? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 5 play video games across any device (116), 6 – 10 years (564), 11 – 13 year old (490), 14 – 16 years old (722)

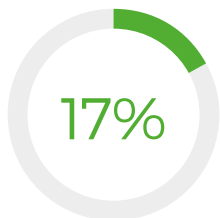


Games and age ratings

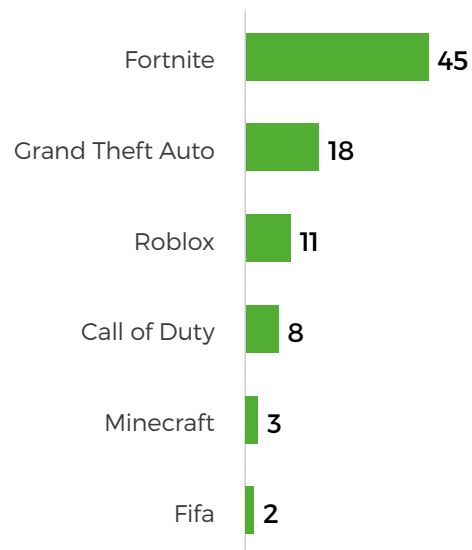
Parents note that younger children tend to play games with suitable PEGI rating but this isn't the case amongst older children, especially children over the age of 14. A third of parents of 14–16 year olds acknowledge their teenager plays Call of Duty and a quarter claim their children play Grand theft Auto, which are both rated PEGI 18.

A third of parents claim they are comfortable with their children playing games with mature content or that are designed for adults (e.g. Grand Theft Auto), and this goes up to 2 in 5 amongst those with 14–16 year olds. Parents tend to allow their children play such games because of peer pressure and the fear of being left out.

Specific titles parents are concerned about*



Spontaneously mention at least one title they are concerned with their children playing



*Only top mentions shown. All other titles mentioned by less than 1%

Q. Are there any games that you are concerned about your child playing? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play video games across any device (1892). Concerns about specific titles based on all mentioning at least one title (330)



“Recently, say the last 6 months, my son has been more interested in uploading and sharing gaming content on YouTube or other streaming sites.”

Dad, with son aged 13

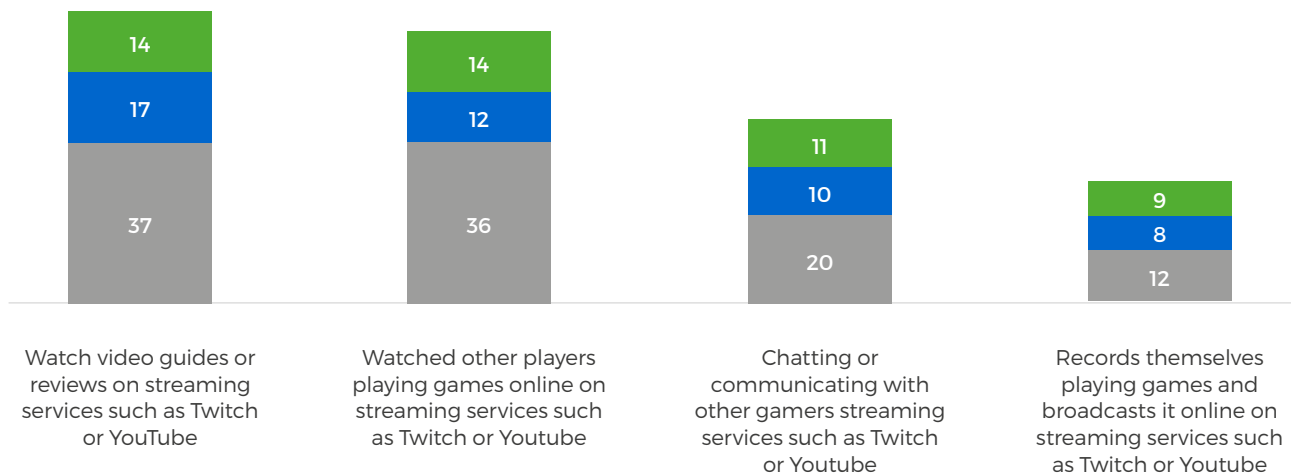
Beyond the game...

In addition to actually playing the games, almost half of parents report that their children also participate in other gaming related activities at least on a weekly basis (especially once the child is over 5 years old). Children are more likely to engage in passive activities such as watching video guides or reviews or watching other players play games on platforms such as YouTube or Twitch. However, almost 30% of parents say their children are recording themselves gaming and broadcasting online, at least once a month, with all of the associated risks that incurs. Regardless of whether these activities are passive or active they will contribute to an increase in screen time for these young people.



of parents whose children play video games engages in game related activities (other than gaming) at least once a week

■ % At least once a week ■ % At least once a month ■ % Less often



Q. How often are you aware that your eldest child does any of the following? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games across any device (1892)

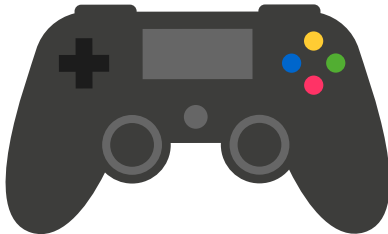
“It’s what all their friends do so I also worry that by not letting them play then my child will feel left out”

Mum, with son aged 13

The very nature of gaming has evolved and continues to do so...

What became apparent within the community is how parents feel both the nature and content of gaming has significantly evolved since parents were children and gamed themselves. For many parents gaming involved a single player handheld device or basic arcade games whereas children are now playing with a variety of devices, online, potentially with people from around the world. Parents therefore are having to adapt to these changes and continuously think about how to guide their children safely when navigating this new environment.

Parents have noticed a considerable shift from simple to complex games, and from offline games to online games as their children have got older in which the games are more challenging and complex, and where a greater skill set and enhanced creativity is required to play them. Parents within the community also recognised that the live element to game play has become particularly significant, where children prefer to be playing and talking in the moment with friends and feel left out if they are not able to take part in this.

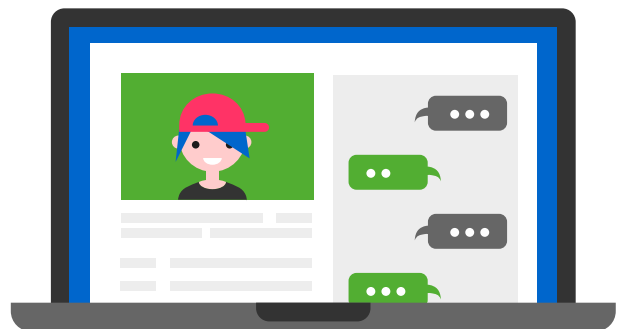


I think the YouTube influence has been significant to his behaviour and attitude to gaming. Seeing the success of YouTubers has given my son aspirations to follow suit, but like anything only a handful of people 'make it'

Dad, with son aged 13

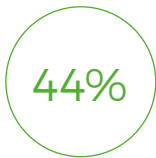
“I started playing online games about 4 years ago, I used to watch all these Youtubers online doing them and I was like I can’t wait till I’m older so I can start playing them”

Girl, aged 12

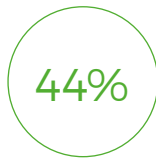


Mums and Dads – Different views

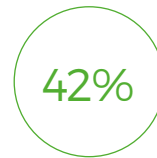
Throughout our community it became apparent that a gaming knowledge gap does exist amongst parents. For some family's, mums in particular feel out of their depth and simply not interested whereas dads are more engaged and are perhaps more encouraging of gaming. With some mums not actively playing the games either by themselves or with their child they often do not know how to play most of their child's games or find it hard to understand the attraction of gaming.



of parents agree gaming is a way to spend quality time together as a family (39% for mums and 49% for dads)



of parents agree they share their own games with their children (41% for mums and 46% for dads)



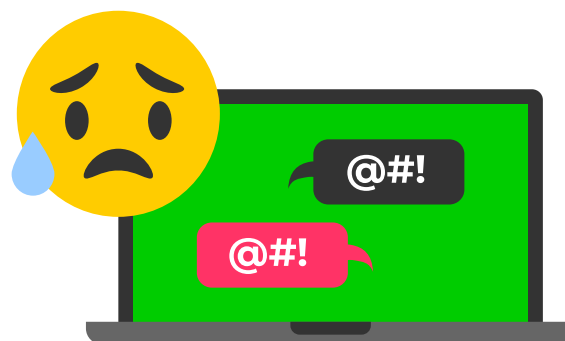
of parents agree they never play with child across any device (46% for mums and 38% for dads)



“My husband usually gives in and joins in with them playing a FIFA competition. So this distracts from family quality time as I feel left out as I have no interest in the PlayStation”
Mum, with son aged 13

Parental Concerns about Gaming





To understand the online safety concerns specific to gaming, we asked parents to rank a series of potential risks.

In gaming, as in all online activities, online grooming was the top concern with 55% of parents identifying this as their priority. However, the next three issues all ranked at half of parents being concerned are specific to gaming. Parents being concerned that their children are becoming addicted to gaming may reflect the challenges of getting them off games for meals or bedtime, and the duration of time spent playing. It's also

possible that this level of concern was influenced by the recent WHO recognition of gaming addiction. Interesting too that personal data is a concern for half of parents – as the collection and use of data by commercial organisations has been newsworthy – so this may be a topical concern. The level of concern about exposure to excessive violence is of note, especially given the data on the relaxed attitude to PEGI ratings.



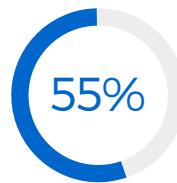
Q. Here are some things that parents have said in relation to their concerns about their children playing video games or mobile games. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement? Base: All parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games across any device (1,892)

“...my biggest worry is that whom they are playing against aren't who they say they are, that they are there to gather private information or to groom your child.”

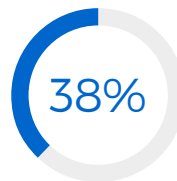
Mum, with son aged 12

Online Grooming

Strangers contacting a child through gaming is the most prominent concern for over half of parents, rising to 58% for those with children between the ages of 6-13. At this age they will most likely start playing games with people they do not know and may therefore be more vulnerable. The anonymous online aspect and the opportunity to play with people you have never met is something parents worry about frequently. Additionally with increasing awareness of online predators and catfishing, parents are worried about grooming and exposing their children to negative influences. Parents are also concerned when their child plays with friends of friends as it may be someone they have never met in person.



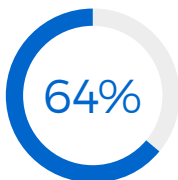
of parents agree they are worried about strangers contacting their children (58% for 6-10 year olds and 11-13 year olds)



of parents don't know who their child is playing online with (43% for dads and 33% for mums)

“Definitely who they play with and understanding that just because a friend is friends with someone, that doesn't mean that person is ok and to not trust that their friends or friends' parents have the same rules that we do.”

Dad, with daughter aged 13



of parents agree they see online gaming as posing the same risks to my child as using social media

“I personally feel social media apps are a lot more dangerous than gaming as by searching for items like 'self-harm', 'bulimia' 'porn' children can find themselves in a whole new world...social media seems to be about portraying your 'best life'...post from the most exotic place and generally seems fake.”

Dad, with daughter aged 14

Social media, Gaming and a hierarchy of risk

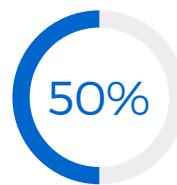
Two thirds of parents acknowledge that the risks associated with online gaming are similar to that of social media. However, some parents within the community said they were generally happier for children to play games rather than use social media. This is due to their view of the damage that fake lives often portrayed as real on social media can have and the content available to young children. For some parents, gaming feels more self-contained compared to social media where their children may be more likely to be found by trolls and bullies. Gaming was also recognised as more inclusive as it can fit in with family time if families play together.

“I find it hard to put games down at dinner time, lunch time, bed time, bath time and homework time because I really enjoy playing Roblox and I just love it.”

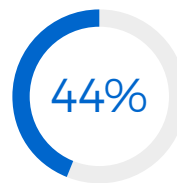
Girl, aged 7

Obsessive gaming

When it comes to the amount of time spent playing games, parents do worry about the obsession and addictive behaviour gaming can trigger. Many children in our community told us they find it hard to put down a device mid-game or if they are close to winning. The nature of live play games means that pausing it means they are unable to finish, which again fuels children's struggle with putting a game down if their parents ask them to. Some parents also notice their child losing track of time when playing a game or failing to complete tasks they were asked to do earlier. This can also detract from family time for many, with gaming frequently impacting everyday activities. It's no surprise then, that families are concerned about 'addiction'. This is especially true of parents of boys, 56% of whom are concerned about this and 50% agreeing their sons spend too much time playing games.



of parents agree they are worried about their child becoming addicted to games (higher for those with sons 56% vs. 44% among those with daughters)



of parents agree “My child spends too much time playing games” (higher for those with sons 50% vs. 37% among those with daughters)

“Because I am not with them playing the games it would be good to receive information on gaming crazes so I would have more of an idea on what they are talking about and the risks so I know what to be aware of.”

Mum, with daughter aged 13



“I worry about my son not thinking he’s sharing personal information, even things like saying where he is or it may be someone who knows where we live and he tells them we’re away or we’ve gone on holiday.”

Mum, with son aged 12

Personal data

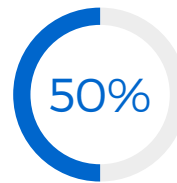
Half of parents said they were worried about their child's personal data being collected by online games. When delving into this further within the community parents were concerned about games collecting data to push more in game purchases and pop ups, as well as data being used to gain personal information about a child. Parents were also especially concerned about their child sharing personal information about themselves with strangers they may be playing with including where they live and which school they go to.

“I don’t like violent games, which is why we don’t let my daughter play Fortnite anymore, there’s a worry that gaming and reality could be blurred with the violent games!”

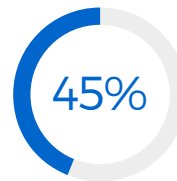
Mum, with daughter aged 10

Violence within games and changes in behaviour

The violent content within games and the impact parents perceive this has on a child is a concern for half of parents. Parents who participated in the community research spoke of their fears that exposure to violent content has the power to desensitise children to extreme violence, blurring the idea of what is ‘normal’ behaviour in everyday life. Moreover, 45% of parents share concerns around the impact violence within games can have on their child’s attitude towards gaming and agree that playing games can have a negative impact on their child’s behaviour. They cited examples of children increasingly demonstrating angry and aggressive tendencies when a game doesn’t go their way or if they have to stop playing



of parents agree “I am worried about my child being exposed to excessive violence when playing games” (54% for 11–13 year olds and 44% for 14–16 year olds)



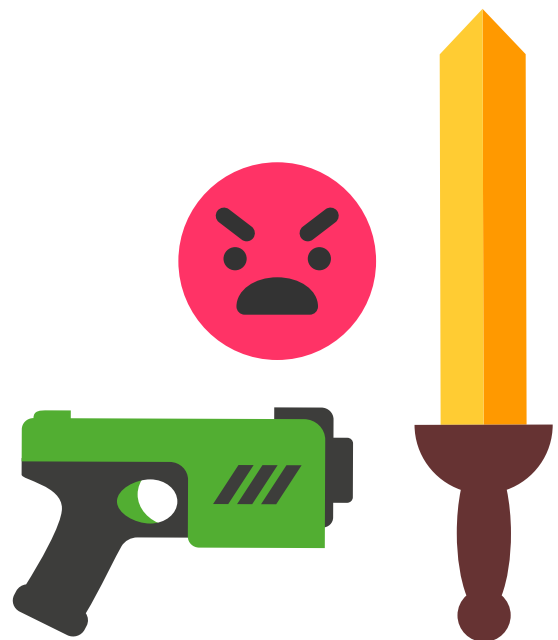
of parents agree: “I feel playing games can have a negative impact on my child’s behaviour”

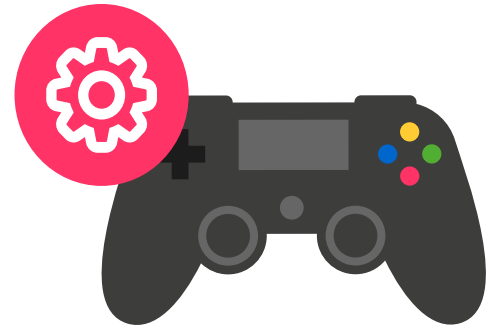
“He is obsessive over game playing, it does affect his attitude and behaviour as nothing else takes priority!”

Mum, with son aged 16

“My son I feared was getting addicted as he was having mood swings and being aggressive when he was told he couldn't use the Xbox or that he had to come off it”

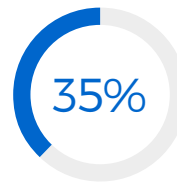
Mum, with son aged 14





Spending money on games

Children who game on video game consoles are most likely to spend money on video games. However, spend changes across devices, as children that play on consoles and computers are more likely to spend money on games than additional content but those that play on smartphones and tablets are equally likely to spend on either content. Asides from boxed or downloadable games, in-game currency and additional characters are the main 'additional' content bought for across all devices. The in-game economy is a new and fascinating parenting challenge, as, parents (especially non gamers) can fail to understand the importance the gamer in their life places on these in game, virtual, purchases.

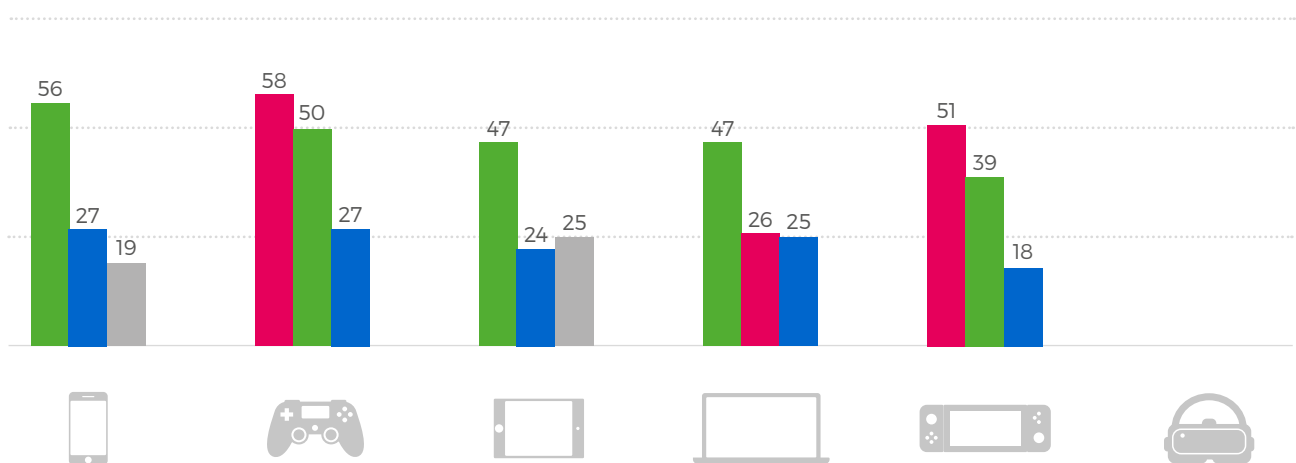


of parents whose children play video games on video game consoles spend money on video games



Top three purchases overall

■ Downloadable games
 ■ In-game currency
 ■ Additional characters
 ■ Boxed games



Q. What type of games or game content does your child buy from the following devices? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 who say their child downloads games/content on the following devices – smartphone (230), PC/laptop (225), tablet (180), video games console (539), handheld games (125), VR headset (35)



Who pays for video games?

Parents are reluctant to pay for games and other related content as they perceive games as having a short shelf life and know children are quick to move onto other games. As such, children use their own allowance and savings instead. For younger children, purchases must go through parents to avoid overspending but older children have more control over this, using their own debit cards to foot the bill.

In the community, we talked to parents in more detail about specific concerns around in app purchase. Three key areas were uncovered:

Normalisation of gambling behaviours

The mimicking of betting and gambling behaviours through consumable items such as loot boxes, where you do not know what you're getting until it's been paid for, was identified as a concern for parents. The nature of these purchases means children are being introduced to a form of gambling at a very young age. Parents worry about the implications of normalising these purchases and the kind of betting behaviours this could encourage for their child in the future.

"Again, loot boxes are very common in Fortnite and 'packs' in FIFA are a similar product. It's down to chance how good the contents are which effectively is a form of gambling."

Dad, with son, aged 13

Overspending

A significant amount of money can be spent on these games and with many children yet to understand the value of money there is an expectation to make these purchases regularly. Some parents struggle to keep up with these costs especially if peers are buying them more frequently.

"I think that kids who have the means to continuously purchase via mum/dad's debit card are in danger of being affected and, they may not fully understand that there's not an everlasting pot of money they can dip into."

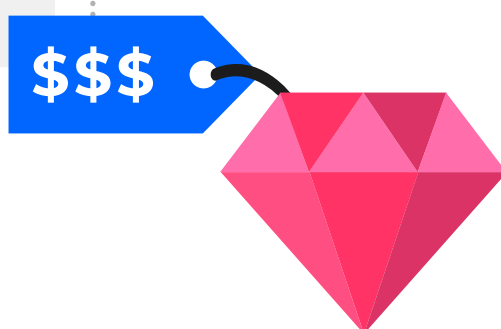
Dad, with son aged 16

Intangible assets

Most in game purchases are not physical items and therefore only exist within the game, for some parents spending on these games can be seen as waste of money. Not having something tangible can be an unusual concept for parents to accept.

"They also concern me as I see them as dead money. At the end of the day you spend a lot on them and have nothing to show for it."

Mum, with daughter aged 15

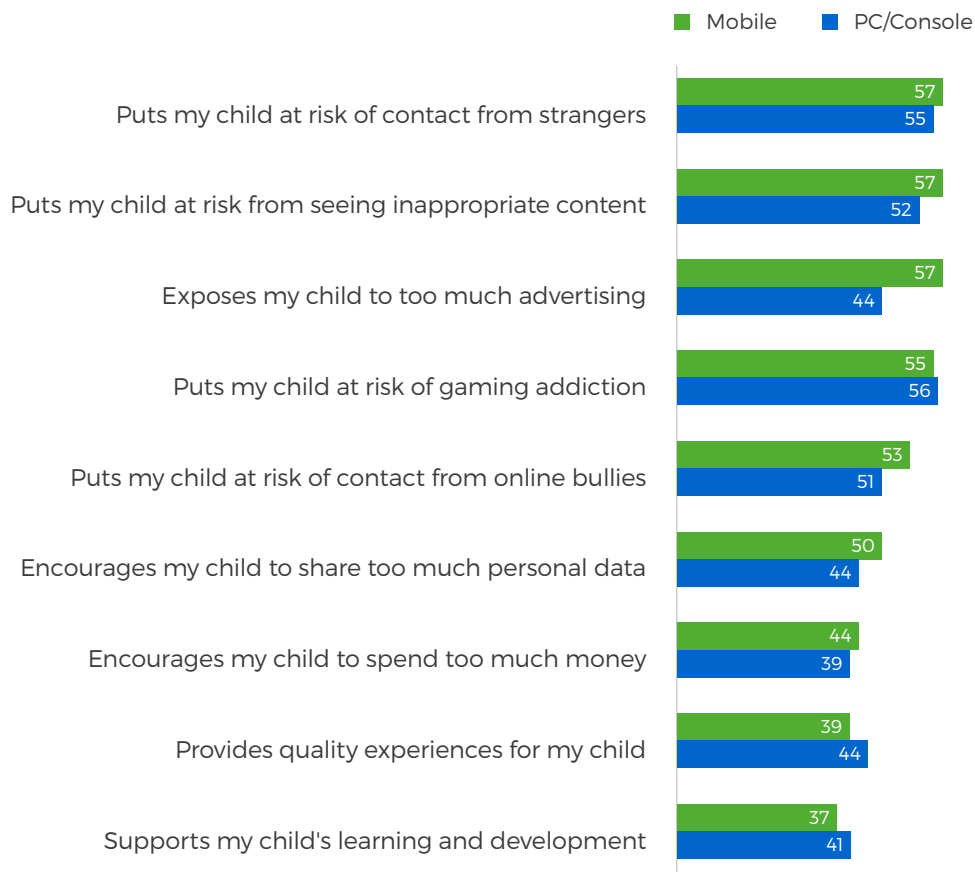


“If he's playing on a mobile device it tends to be for shorter periods, 10 to 15 minutes maximum. Probably more because the apps he plays are more suited for a short term, quicker fix.”

Dad, with son aged 13

Attitudes to risk changes by device

Parents have slightly nuanced views about gaming across different devices. They believe mobile devices can pose greater risks with regarding to oversharing personal data and being exposed to inappropriate content, too much advertising and opportunities to buy in-game purchases than computers and consoles. However, some parents felt mobile gaming to be less risky than PC/console gaming due to the fact that they tend to be more single player games so children are less likely to come in to contact with strangers online and because they are also usually played for much shorter lengths of time for quick fixes, the risk window is shorter. However, parents see consoles and computers in a more positive light and are more likely to agree that these platforms provide better quality experiences and better support their children's learning and development than mobile devices.



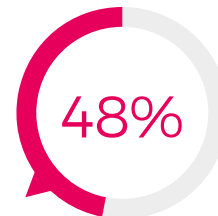
What's great about gaming?





We asked parents to tell us what benefits they saw to letting their children game. Many of the answers were around skill development.

- It provides a source of entertainment for children, this is something parents value as it gives them more free time, it helps their child to combat boredom and can be a way for their child to wind down and relax after a busy day
- The problem-solving skills children develop when gaming is a clear benefit for some parents. The mental processing, strategic and tactical thinking is seen as a way of stimulating the brain, this is particularly true for puzzle games
- Gaming is also seen as an educational tool for some parents with the rise of games being used in school to encourage learning, helping them to develop in subjects such as Maths and English due to their fun and interactive qualities
- The social skills developed via gaming is perceived as a benefit for parents. Especially children building and maintaining relationships with friends and family and working within a team to reach a common goal whilst helping their child to build confidence
- The creative outlet some games provide is seen as an important way for children to express themselves; creating and designing different elements within a game
- Parents understand that gaming embraces technology and in an increasingly technological world, becoming familiar and confident in using the latest technology is a valuable part of their child's development
- The growth of the gaming industry has led to an insurgence of gamers, with parents now recognising that a career within the gaming sector is a credible career option for children

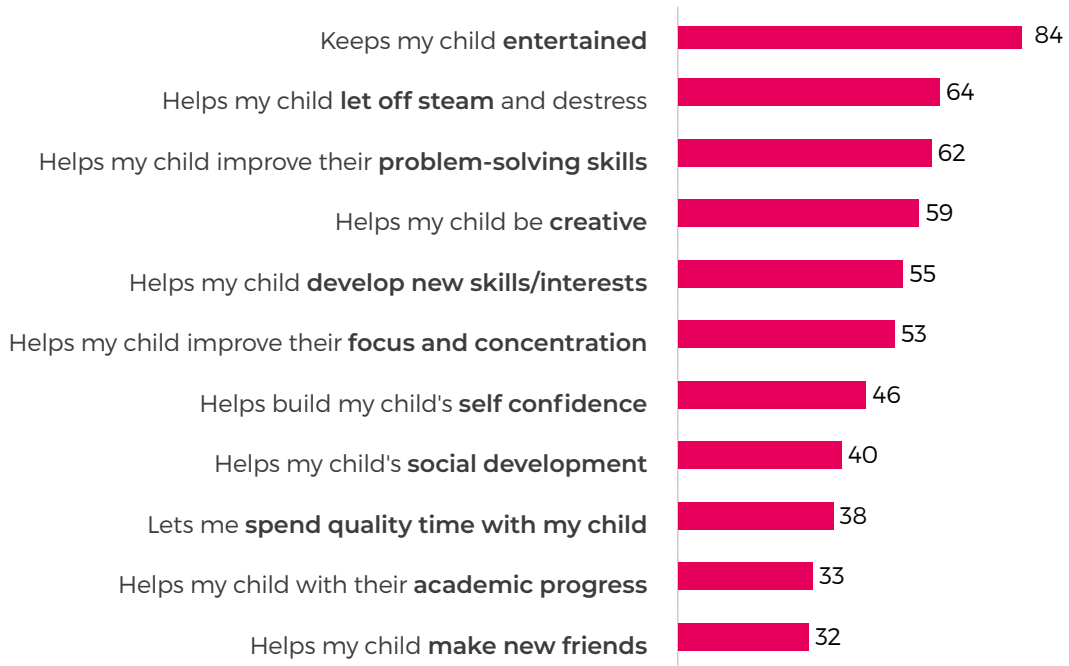


48% agree they would be happy for their child to have a career in gaming (50% for Dads and 45% for Mums)



“The school encourages them to use education city which I think definitely helps them develop their numeracy and literacy skills.”

Dad, daughter, 11



Q. Here are some things that parents have said about the benefits of their children playing games on video game consoles and mobile devices. Thinking about [INSERT NAME OF ELDEST CHILD], to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement? Base: All parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games across any device (1,892)



“...my child is very tech savvy and embracing technology can only be a good thing. In every walk of life things evolve with technology and the more you are comfortable with it, the better I think you will fare in the world. I’m very happy with the types of game my child plays, they promote a competitive attitude, which I think you need to succeed nowadays.”

Dad, with son aged 16

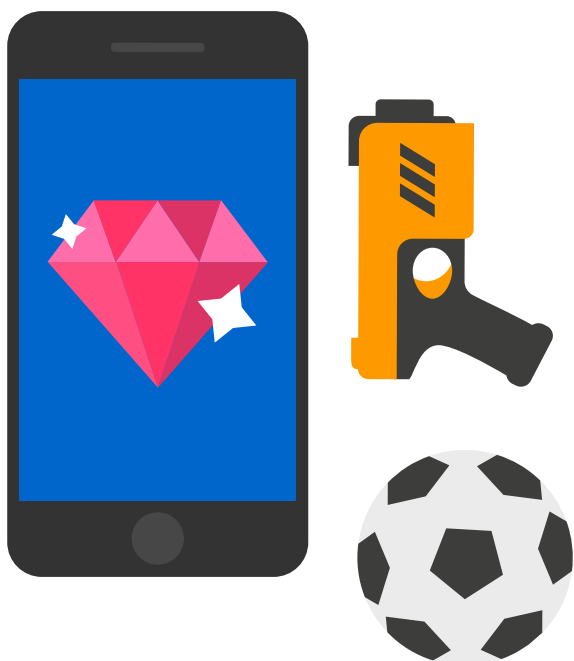
“Playing online games makes me feel happy and excited as I tend to be playing with my friends. I have learnt from playing online video games how to have good communication skills talking to my friends and being a good team member as you tend to play in groups.”

Girl, aged 13

The view from the console....

We asked the children who participated in the Community what they loved about gaming. Their answers came back in four main areas:

- Gaming provides the opportunity for children to play and interact with their friends which bring them much enjoyment, children recognise that they develop their communication skills through doing this
- For many children gaming allows for some much-needed down time. It's a period when they can relax and escape from reality, helping them to let off steam and destress
- The sense of achievement when doing well within a game is another benefit children identified, the competitive nature of gaming and winning is something many love to experience
- Children within the community feel they are acquiring key life skills, such as communicating with fellow players and being a good team player. Gaming is social currency in the playground, so being able to participate in the game of the moment is key to friendship groups and social standing at school
- For all the positives children identify in gaming, they also told us that FOMO (fear of missing out) was one of the key drivers for children's continuous desire to game, keeping up with the latest game and playing at the same time as their friends is very important to most children



I enjoy gaming because they give me a place to escape from most situations in reality. “

Boy, aged 14

“They help me to relax, if I’m having a hard day at school I can think about coming home and playing these games and it can help me concentrate at school knowing that I can come home, chill out and play all these games.”

Girl, aged 14

Parenting the Gaming Generation



“I watch his behaviour and if I feel there are issues, I ban it for a certain time. At times I see him get anxious and cut it off”

Mum, with son aged 15

Triggered to take action

Almost half of parents are concerned about the negative impact they perceive playing video games has on their children’s behaviour. Behaviours such as failing to demonstrate self-control or arguing or showing signs of anxiety, tends to be the key trigger for parents to intervene, which mostly means restricting the access to gaming and gaming devices.



of parents whose children play video games are concerned about the negative impact gaming has on their child’s behaviour

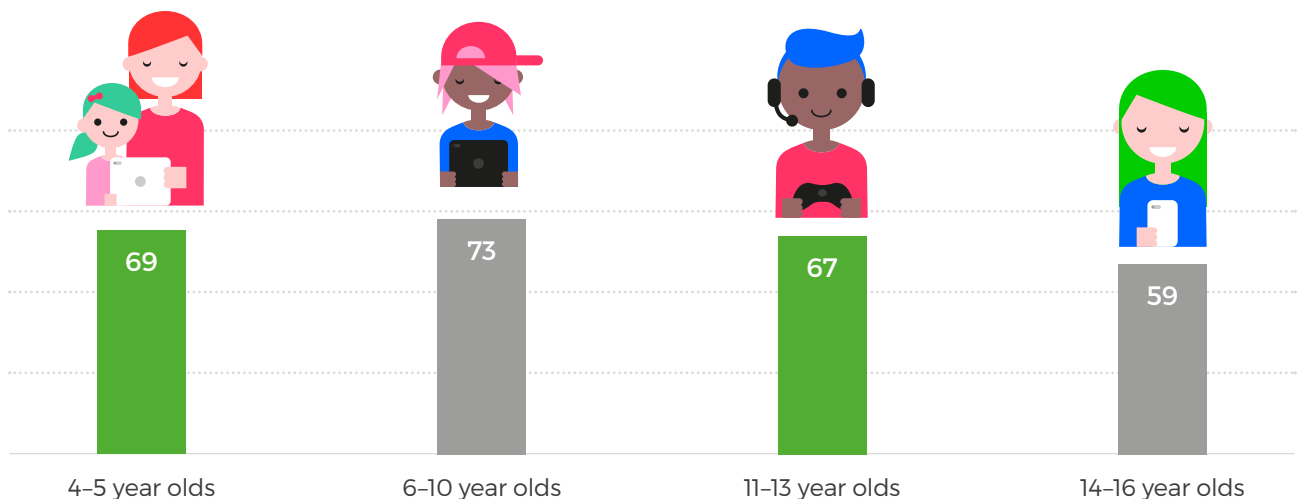


of parents agree they have clear rules and boundaries for how long their children can spend gaming

Games, screens, times and strategies

Two-thirds of parents claim to have clear idea on how long children can spend gaming. This is especially the case amongst those with children aged 6–10, though boundaries begin to blur as their children reach their teenage years. However more than half of parents with tweens and teens believe they have a firm grasp on what their limits are for gaming time.

% of parents with clear rules and boundaries for how long children can spend gaming



Q. Here are some other things parents said about gaming. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement? “I have clear rules and boundaries for how long my children can spend gaming” Base: All UK parents of children aged 4–5 play video games across any device (116), 6–10 years (564), 11–13 year old (490), 14–16 years old (722)

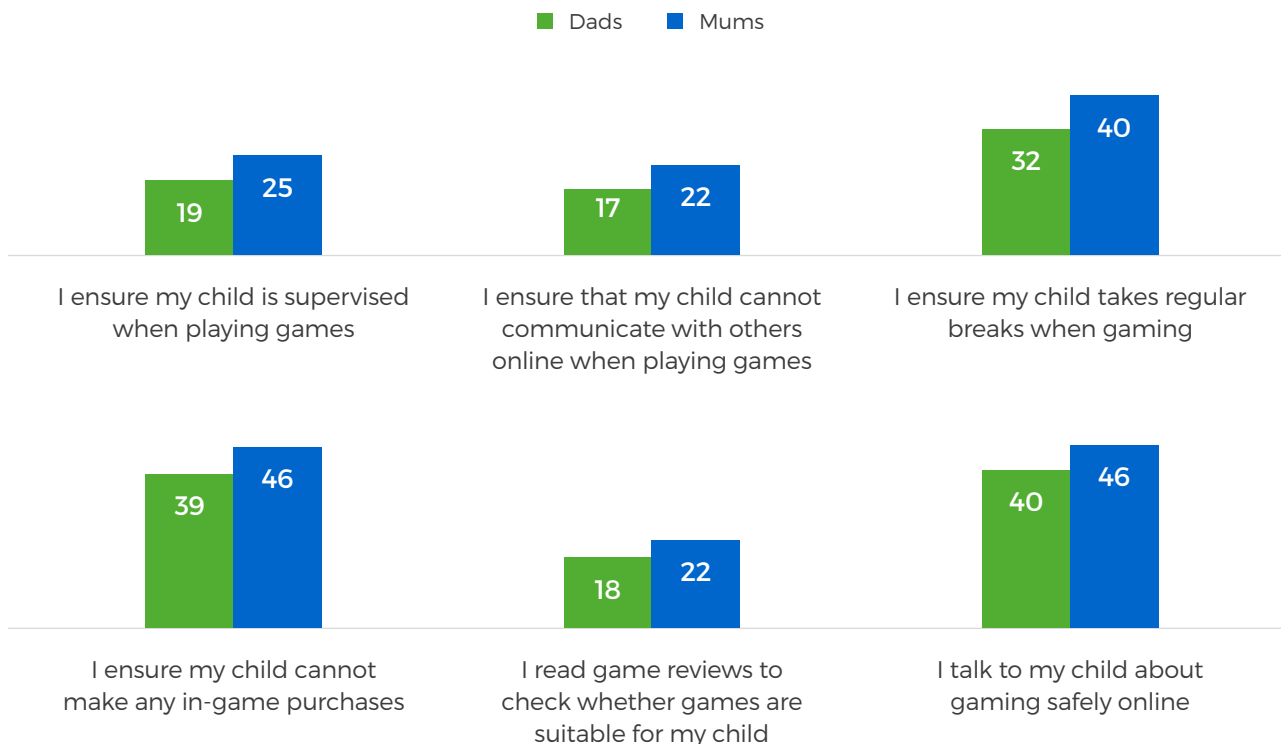


Rules of the Game – Differences between Mums and Dads

Mums are more likely to say they talk to their children about online safety. They also claim to be more likely to intervene by supervising and reminding their children to take regular breaks and applying restrictions to in-game purchases and online communications. They also appear to be more stringent with game content than dads, perhaps trying to compensate for their lack of knowledge about gaming. Despite that lack of knowledge and

sometimes interest, Mums often lead the supervision and discipline around gaming. Given the percentage of children that game, the time they spend and the lower level of interest and engagement from Mums it's little wonder that some parents feel they have no idea what their child does online.

A key action that the gaming industry could take to improve this would be to engage Mums in the benefits of gaming and perhaps do more to promote the rich variety of games that exist, rather than an almost exclusive focus on 'blockbuster' games which may be inappropriate for children.



Q. What kind of action are you taking at present to keep your child safe when they play video games or mobile games? (By Mums and Dads). Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games across any device (1892) – mums (985), dads (907)

The Rules of the Game – Parental plans

Parents have multiple strategies in place to keep their children safe online. One of the top methods is discussing with children the key risks posed by playing online, for example, warning them against contact with strangers and oversharing personal information. Implementing restrictions is another key technique parents use to protect their children when gaming, such as time limits or blocking in-app purchases.

However, parents recognise they can do more to report inappropriate behaviour online. Whilst there was a long list of things a significant number of parents thought they should be done, the top 5 actions were:



Q. What kind of action are you taking at present to keep your child safe when they play video games or mobile games? And what do you think you should be doing? Base size: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games across any device (1892)



Rules of the Game – As children get older

Parents are taking several steps to prevent their children facing online risks through gaming. Inevitably these interventions change as the child grows up, but there are some consistent themes. For younger children, between 4–10, parents are keen on educational games (over 40% of parents encourage them to play these games). Parents in this age range also restrict the time children can game (over 46%, rising to 50% at age 6–10) and between 45 and 50% of parents ensure that they cannot make in game purchases. The focus moves to talking to children about online safety once they become 11, with 46% doing this and 43% warning their children about sharing personal data. Rather than restricting time playing games, parents of older children spend more time encouraging them to take regular breaks, with 40% doing this, declining to 34% as the teenage years progress.

Parents all had views on what they should be doing – with restricting the time played always the most popular option across the ages, where between 42–48 % of parents wanted to do this. Also high on the list of what parents thought they should be doing was talking about safety, not sharing personal information and restricting purchases all deemed as important.



“If I interrupt her during a game she moans and whines however I do reprimand her and remove the iPhone for 24hrs”

Dad with daughter aged 12

“If we are going out to dinner or we want to sit down and watch a film together this interferes with his game”

Mum, with son aged 13

“He wants to be treated like an adult but if he spends too much time on it and has work to do then I disconnect the internet”

Mum, with son aged 12



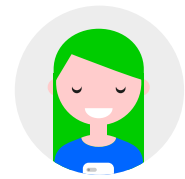
4-5 year olds



6-10 year olds



11-13 year olds



14-16 year olds

Currently do:

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage them to play educational games 48% • Restrict the time they can play 46% • Ensure supervision 45% • Ensure they cannot make in-game purchases 45% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they cannot make in-game purchases 50% • Restrict the time they can play 50% • Talk to my child about gaming safely online 41% • Encourage them to play educational games 41% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to my child about gaming safely online 46% • Ensure they cannot make in-game purchases 43% • I warn my child against sharing personal info 43% • Ensure they take regular breaks 40% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to my child about gaming safely online 46% • I warn my child against sharing personal info 43% • Ensure they cannot make in-game purchases 36% • Ensure they take regular breaks 34% |
|--|---|--|--|

Should be doing:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage educational games 48% • Ensure supervision 45% • Restrict the time they can play 44% • Ensure they cannot make in-game purchases 41% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict the time they can play 48% • Talk to my child about gaming safely online 47% • Ensure they take regular breaks 45% • Ensure they cannot make in-game purchases 44% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict the time they can play 46% • Talk to my child about gaming safely online 44% • Ensure they take regular breaks 42% • I warn my child against sharing personal info 40% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to my child about gaming safely online 46% • I warn my child against sharing personal info 45% • Restrict the time they can play 42% • Ensure they take regular breaks 38% |
|---|--|--|--|

Q. What kind of action are you taking at present to keep your child safe when they play video games or mobile games? And what do you think you should be doing? All UK parents of children aged 4 – 5 play video games across any device (116), 6 – 10 years (564), 11 – 13 year old (490), 14 – 16 years old (722)

Playing Fair – What parents want and need





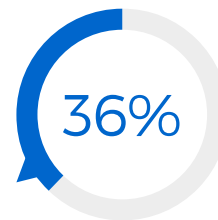
In line with other research, parents generally feel it is their responsibility to ensure their child is aware of the risks involved with online gaming and to make sure those risks are minimised. However, they also have great expectations from the industry.

Parents believe that the gaming industry should have a greater level of responsibility and do more to keep children safe when playing games. A third of parents expect support from the video game manufacturers and software developers, in particularly mums.

Gaming companies should note that Mums, who are more inclined to feel more out of their depth when it comes to gaming, tend to have a much higher expectation of the gaming industry to tackle the range of online safety issues compared to dads.

Parents are keen for gaming companies to have easier and more effective content filters on adult content and on in-game purchases. Parents also want games to have better and more moderation, to remove upsetting comments and abusive gamers. Parents would like to see game makers prompting breaks, either through in-game messages or by providing more chapters.

Many of the tools that parents claim they would like to see already exist on some platforms. This suggest that there are a number of parents who are simply not close enough to their child's gaming experience to appreciate and make use of the settings and tools available to them already.



of parents whose children play video games expect support from video game hardware manufacturers to provide support and resources to help keep children safe while playing video or mobile games (40% mums; 32% dads)

"I do think they can get lost in a game, shouting at the telly, getting angry if they lose or get killed – they do go into their own world and nothing else seems to matter but the game."

Mum, with son aged 13



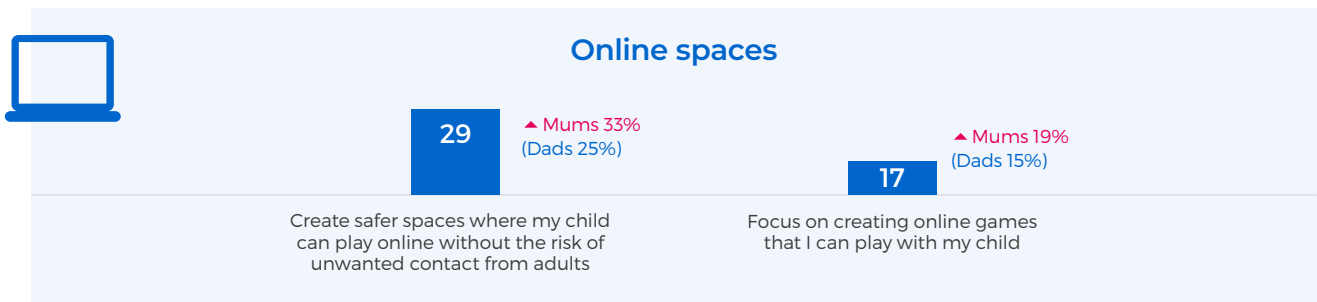
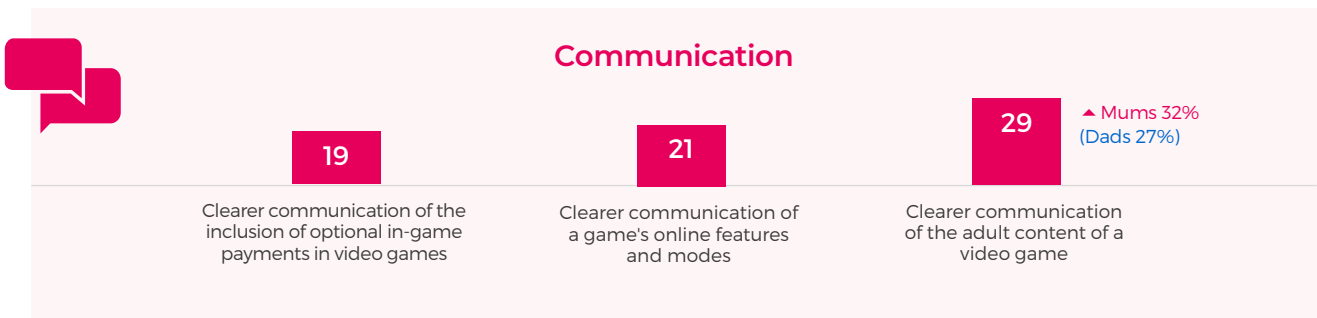
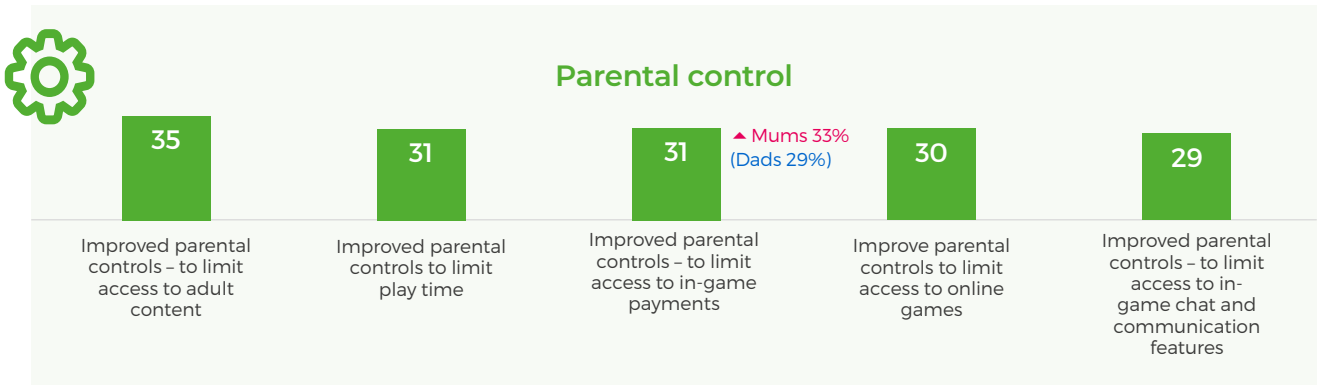
“Whether it’s artificial whether its human, for me the more the better, I think that’s where the online community could be kept a lot safer by making sure there’s not vicious or bullying comments being made. I would definitely like to see that being developed further!”

Dad, with son aged 16

The long list of things that parents want the gaming companies to help them with echoes the elements of gaming that they are most concerned or frustrated by. It's no surprise therefore to see parental controls – in a range of guises – restricting access to adult content, limit in game payments, limit play time, limit access to online games, limit access to in game chat and communication features would be welcomed.

Also, parents would be keen to see better communication on the adult content of games and the online features and modes.

Finally, it's interesting to note that whilst 29% of parents would like to see the creation of safe spaces where their child can play online without coming into contact with strangers, only 17% expressed a wish for online games they can play with their children.



Q. What action would you like to see games companies take to help keep your eldest child safe when playing video games or mobile games? Base: All respondent (1892), mums (985), dads (907)

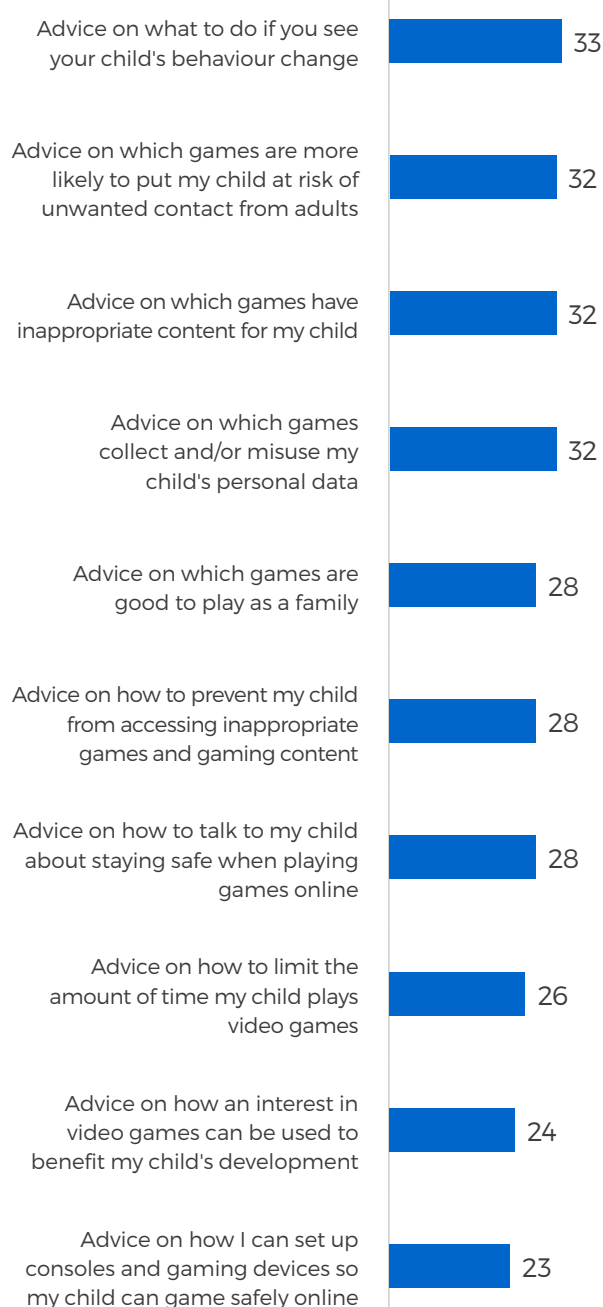
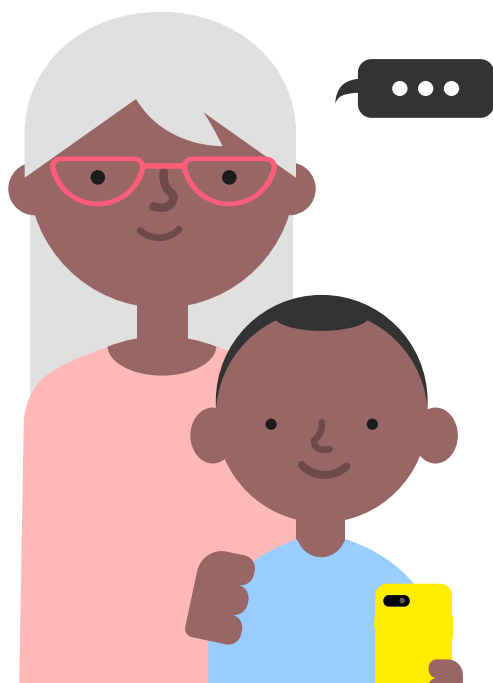
"I think there should be more groups/areas to search and give advice to parents on the internet for this it would be great if the said game had an approval link that was sent to parents email to verify that child is allowed to play or download the game in question or like a TripAdvisor parents forum for the games."

Mum, with daughter aged 14

Game changers or changed gamers?

Parents told us they would welcome advice across a range of potential issues with video gaming. The priority area is advice around what to do when they notice their children's behaviour change. This could be in the form of tell-tale signs to look out for and interventions to handle behavioural issues.

Though parents take a proactive approach when it comes to deciding what games are appropriate for their children, parents also welcome advice in this area, particularly as the gaming market and crazes evolve rapidly. Unsurprisingly the priorities reflect the concerns so advice about what to do if you see your child's behaviour change, stranger danger, inappropriate content and personal data score highly. Interestingly 28% of parents to keen for more information on games they can play as a family - which might reflect a desire from parents to have a window on the world their child inhabits.



Q. What kind of resources and support would you be interested in in keeping your eldest child safe as they play video games or mobile games? Base: All respondent (1892)

“Parents constantly talk to each other about how to deal with gaming and social media but the problem is that you think you have rules in place and everything is sorted and then they grow up a little and these rules are suddenly all wrong so you have to reassess again.”

Mum, with daughter aged 16

Regardless of age, inappropriate content and games that put their children at risk (such as collecting/misusing data or putting them in contact with strangers) is a concern for a significant number of parents. However, there are nuanced differences in parental needs to cater for their children as they get older and their behaviours and desires evolve. Parents of younger children are more concerned about the content of the video games and are more likely to welcome advice about family friendly games. As children grow older, parents want to know about to handle deteriorating behaviour as a result of gaming, which takes priority when they reach their teenage years.



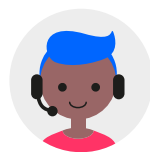
4–5 year olds

- Which games are good to play as a family **34%**
- How to limit the amount of time my child plays video games **30%**
- How to talk to my child staying safe when playing games online **30%**
- Which games are more likely to put my child at risk of unwanted contact from adults **29%**



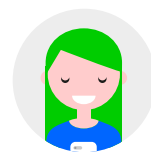
6–10 year olds

- Which games are appropriate content for my child **39%**
- Which games collect and/or misuse my child's personal data **35%**
- Which games are good to play as a family **35%**
- What to do if you see your child's behaviour change **35%**



11–13 year olds

- What to do if you see your child's behaviour change **33%**
- Which games are more likely to put my child at risk of unwanted contact from adults **32%**
- Which games collect and/or misuse my child's personal data **31%**
- Which games have inappropriate content for my child **31%**



14–16 year olds

- Advice on which games collect and/or misuse my child's personal data **32%**
- Advice on what to do if you see your child's behaviour change **32%**
- Advice on which games are more likely to put my child at risk of unwanted contact from adults **31%**
- Advice on which games have inappropriate content for my child **31%**

Q. What kind of resources and support would you be interested in in keeping your eldest child safe as they play video games or mobile games? Base: All UK parents of children aged 4 – 16 play games across any device (1892), 4 – 5 year olds (116), 6 – 10 years old (564), 11 – 13 years old (490), 14 – 16 years old (722)



Conclusion





Gaming in all its forms and formats is here to stay. Gaming will continue to be a significant part of our children's and therefore our families' lives for a long time yet – so whilst crazes and fashions will wax and wane, gaming as an activity will not.

The challenge for parents, policymakers and providers of advice is how to embrace the best of gaming so that it remains a net positive for family life, society and online activities.

There are clearly concerns that parents have – for parents of the most enthusiastic gamer it can become something that might be endured and resented as it encroaches on family time, and with the pressure from friends to play games designed for adults, there is inevitably a concern about the impact of the content they are regularly exposed to. And of course, there is the risk that the communication platforms that surround gaming can present opportunities for inappropriate contact. Together there is more that can be done to match the expectations of support from parents.

The pressures children and young people face to be part of something communal and the fear of missing out may explain why parents are grappling with this challenge. Internet Matters has created a new gaming hub at internetmatters.org with age specific resources to help parents support their children to game well and to reap the many rewards that gaming has to offer.

Let us hope the contribution of this research, which highlights the desires of parents, the delight of children (and some of their parents) and much more besides, plus the work of the Information Commissioner's Office on age appropriate design will fast track us to a world where children can enjoy the positives of gaming, and they can continue to become the next generation of game changers.

Download resources: www.internetmatters.org/online-gaming

The image displays a collection of resources from internetmatters.org. At the top, there are three main guide covers: 'Parents' guide: Gaming advice to support pre-school children', 'Parents' guide: Gaming advice to support pre-teens', and 'Parents' guide: Gaming advice to support teenagers'. Below these are several smaller cards under the heading 'What to think about:'. These cards include:

- Research what games are available:** A card with a smartphone icon and a green checkmark, advising parents to research games and check age ratings.
- Review the cost of game purchases:** A card with a red diamond icon and a price tag, advising parents to check for hidden costs and return policies.
- Ways games can benefit children:** A card with a graduation cap icon, advising parents to encourage games that develop life skills like problem-solving.
- Be aware of game content and themes:** A card with a handgun icon, advising parents to stay on top of what themes are featured in games.
- What to talk about:** A large green card with an elderly woman and a child icon, containing several key points:
 - Discuss what they enjoy playing:** Have regular conversations about games to create a supportive environment.
 - Talk about potential risks:** Help children understand the importance of keeping personal details private.
 - How to cope when things go wrong:** Help children understand the importance of seeking support from a trusted adult.
- Other cards:** Several smaller cards with icons for social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), a balance scale, and a person with a headset, providing advice on social media safety, game balance, and reporting issues.

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