Playing IT Safe

Advice for parents and carers: Talking to your children and establishing expectations about technology use in the home

This advice sheet is designed to work with the Family Technology Plan Interactive.

It is never too early to begin talking to your children about using technology. Talking to children at a young age about technology is important as it sets up family expectations and habits that make technology something we are open and transparent about.

Being able to talk to your child about how technology is used in your household is a key protective measure as they grow. By starting these conversations with prior to school aged children, and continuing them with children into primary and then secondary school you may find the challenges and issues with online gaming, social media, smartphones, become easier to manage.

At early learning settings

At early learning settings, educators constantly ask questions and talk to children about the world in which they live. Playing IT Safe helps them to do this around issues related to technology. Your child will be part of activities that help them think about how photos are shared or how messages are sent from different devices. When children learn these concepts, they are learning how technology works and when they understand this, we can then begin to help them think about how to behave in ways that are respectful and safe online.

Family Technology Plan Interactive

The Family Technology Plan Interactive on the Playing IT Safe website allows you to have a conversation with your child about how, where and what technology is used at home. It allows you to create a series of simple rules that the family can print out and stick on the fridge. The key with these rules is to begin a process where as a supervising adult you are aware of your child's online activities and technology is used in a positive way.

How to use this interactive

When you complete this interactive with your child, you should:

- Allow them to help set the rules, within reason.
- Make sure there is at least one rule for parents or carers.
- Consider implementing a rule that 'devices should only be used in a central area of the house, with parent/carer oversight'– setting this expectation now is important in the long term.
- Between 3-5 rules is recommended, children need it to be simple and manageable.

The purpose of the Family Technology Plan to start a discussion, making children feel they have a role in making rules about how technology is used. You can revisit the plan every six months. This short activity can assist in creating a longer term habit of talking and setting rules as a family about how you use technology.

Key questions you can ask your child

- How do you feel when you are on a screen for too long?
- Where should we not use phones?
- When should parents or carers not use their phones?