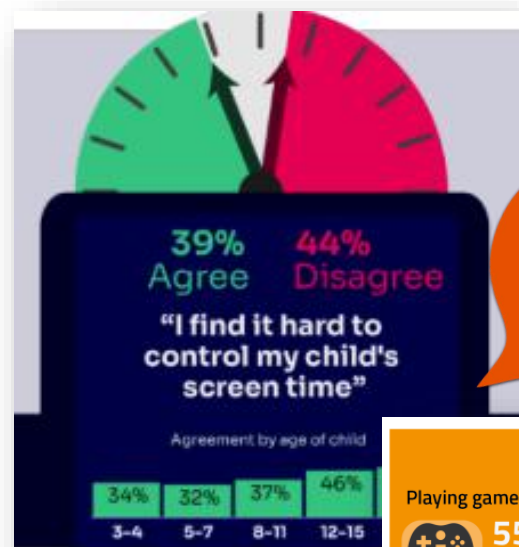


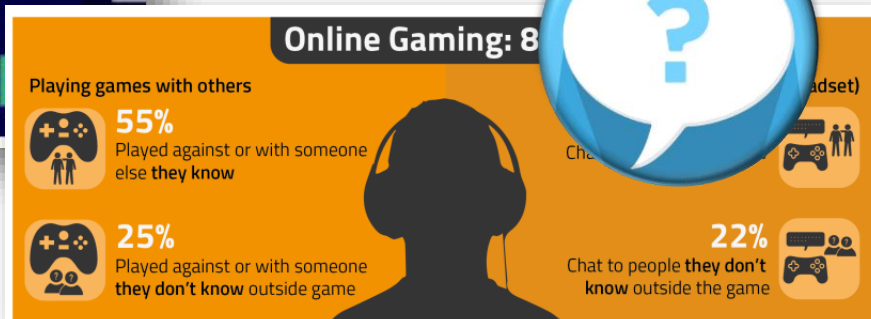
NEW
for
2025

ONLINE SAFETY Part B

Information and Guidance for Parents and Carers



DID YOU KNOW?



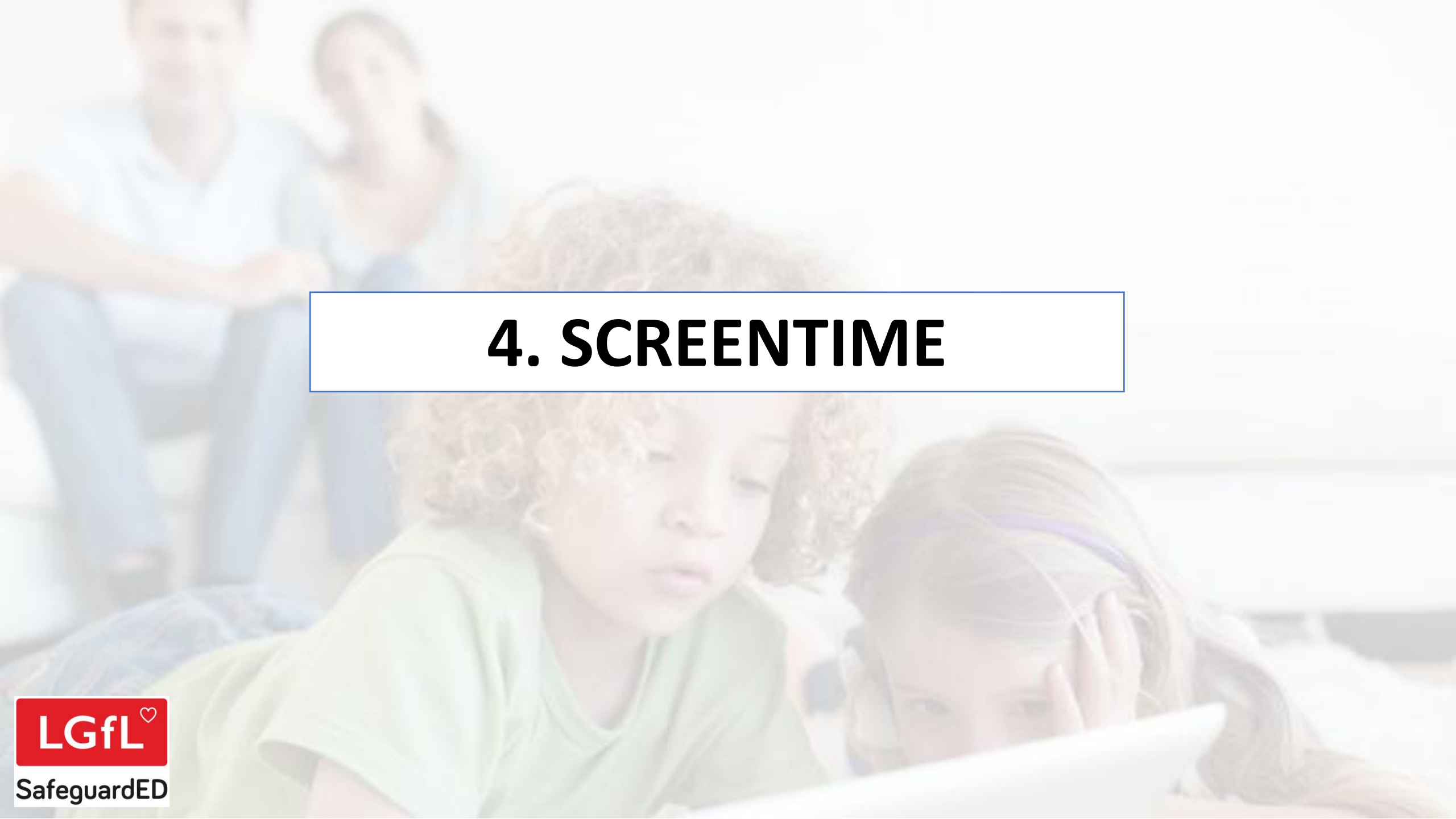
ONLINE SAFETY

Information and Guidance for Parents and Carers

Part B

- 4. Screen time
- 5. Social media and gaming
- 6. Age requirements





4. SCREENTIME



WORRIED about their **SCREENTIME**? How do you **MANAGE** this?

Know **HOW LONG YOUR CHILD SPENDS** online daily?

DID YOU KNOW?

"I've been told is that when I get off my screen, I'm less fun to be around. ..And like I can also feel angrier for like no reason."



- Children spent an average **3 hours 5 minutes per day** accessing the internet via smartphones/tablets/computers
- **Four in ten (39%)** parents of children aged 3-17 report finding it **hard to control their child's screentime**



Visit parentsafe.lgfl.net/ for advice and tips to manage screentime

SCREENTIME

Lots of parents worry about it, but we don't think you should worry about screentime - it's not **how long** they are online but **what and when they are doing** that counts (and the same goes for grown-ups, like in the Will Ferrell video above). You can use the control settings near the top of this page to regulate screen time in general and on specific apps, but beyond that we recommend you follow the Children's Commissioner's 'Digital 5 A Day' and help your children to aim for each of the targets in this pie chart ↪

Children's
COMMISSIONER



Digital 5 A Day
Simple steps to a balanced digital diet and better wellbeing

The UK Chief Medical Officers agree - check out [their version of what counts](#).

UK Chief Medical Officers' advice for parents and carers on Children and Young People's screen and social media use

Technology can be a wonderful thing but too much time sitting down or using mobile devices can get in the way of important, healthy activities. Here are some tips for balancing screen use with healthy living.

Sleep matters

Getting enough, good quality sleep is very important. Leave phones outside the bedroom when it is bedtime.



Sharing sensibly

Talk about sharing photos and information online and how photos and words are sometimes manipulated. Parents and carers should never assume that children are happy for their photos to be shared. For everyone - when in doubt, don't upload!



Education matters

Make sure you and your children are aware of, and abide by, their school's policy on screen time.



Keep moving!

Everyone should take a break after a couple of hours sitting or lying down using a screen. It's good to get up and move about a bit. #sitlessmove more



Safety when out and about

Advise children to put their screens away while crossing the road or doing an activity that needs their full attention.



Talking helps

Talk with children about using screens and what they are watching. A change in behaviour can be a sign they are distressed - make sure they know they can always speak to you or another responsible adult if they feel uncomfortable with screen or social media use.



Family time together

Screen-free meal times are a good idea - you can enjoy face-to-face conversation, with adults giving their full attention to children.



Use helpful phone features

Some devices and platforms have special features - try using these features to keep track of how much time you (and with their permission, your children) spend looking at screens or on social media.

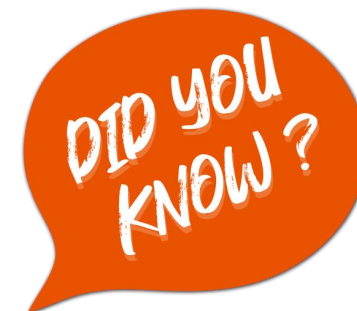


LGfL

SafeguardED



How does your child feel about **YOUR SCREENTIME vs THEIRS?**



52% of 8-11s feel that **their parents' screentime is too high**

33% of 8-17s feel that **their own screentime is too high**

MAKES YOU THINK...

Talk to your child about their device use, but remember yours, too



SafeguardED



SafeguardED

Source: Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2025





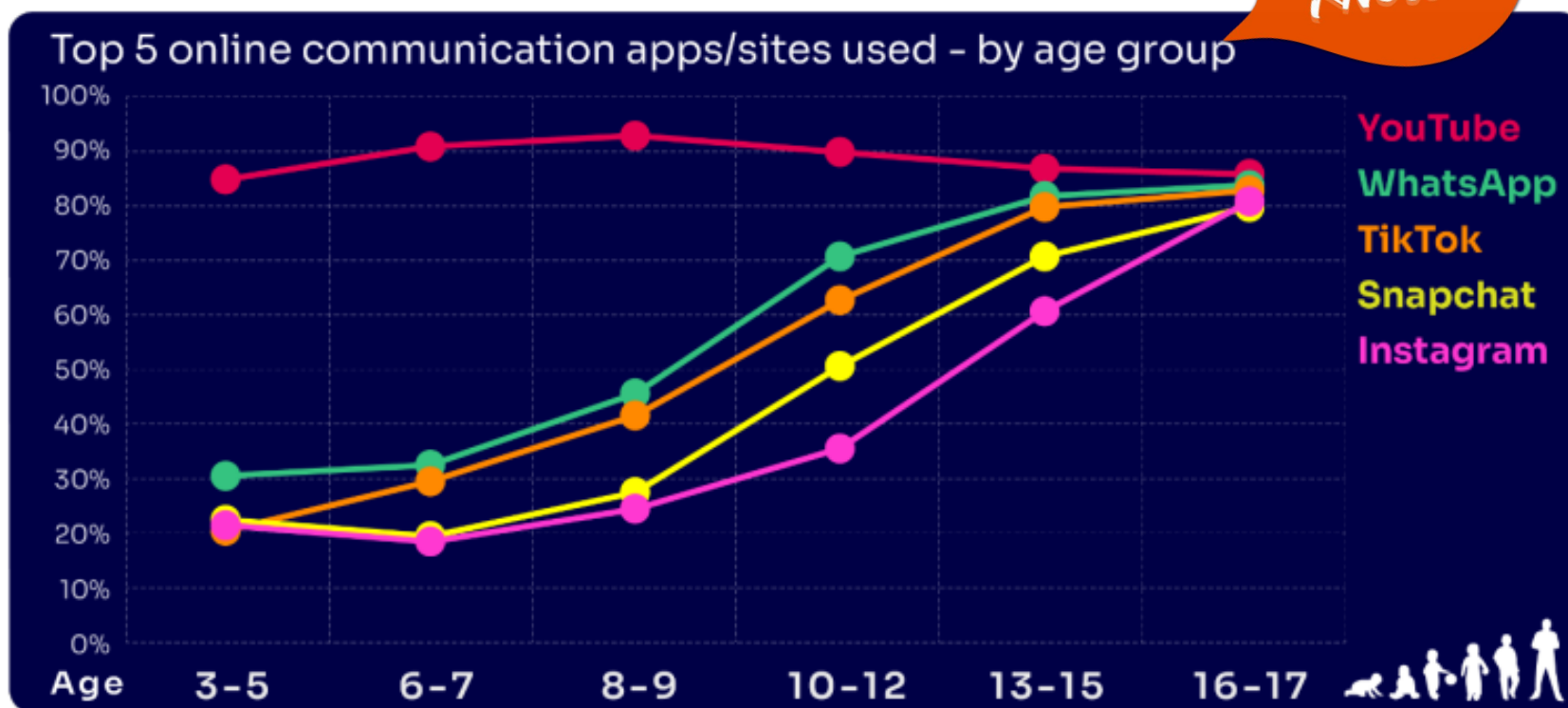
5. SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMING



Are you **FAMILIAR WITH THE APPS** and **GAMES** your child is on?

YouTube is the most popular, but the appeal of many social media platforms varies by age

DID YOU
KNOW?



- The two most popular apps for 3 – 7 yr-olds are **WhatsApp** (2 in 10) and **Snapchat** (3 in 10)

- The proportion of 8-9s with an **Instagram** profile increased from 8% in 2023 to 14% in 2024

- 13-17s are most likely to have profiles on **WhatsApp**
- (62%), **Snapchat** (62%) or **TikTok** (61%)



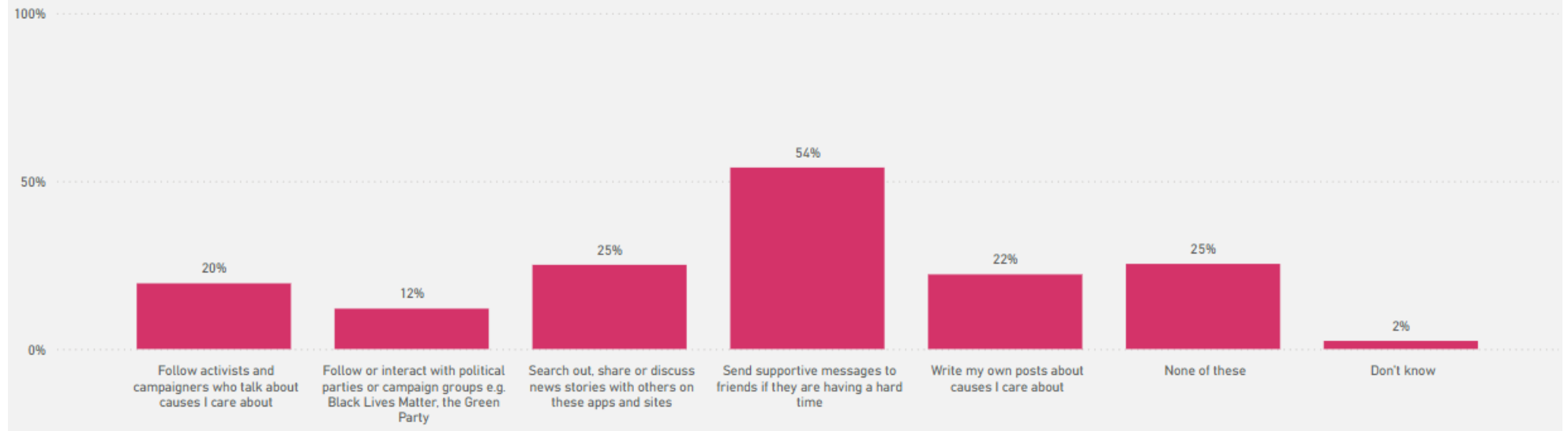
KNOW WHAT THEY DO on social media?

Eight in ten (81%) of all children aged 8-17 **use at least one social media app/site for following friends, people and organisations, reading, liking or sharing content**

TikTok was the most favoured platform to message and communicate with friends.

QC18. Still thinking about social media and messaging apps and sites - like Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok... Which, if any, of these things do you ever do on social media or messaging apps or sites?

● % of respondents





WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Young people can **get around age restrictions** on apps and websites, increasing the risk of them coming to harm online

Addictive algorithms can make it **harder to take a break** and maintain a healthy balance between time on and offline



Algorithms can also **target content** similar to what you've already selected/liked/shared

This can prevent you from finding new ideas and perspectives, create **misinformation** and **reinforce stereotypes**

What might they NOT BE TELLING YOU?

DID YOU
KNOW?

Nearly six in ten (56%) 8-17s use **multiple profiles** on at least one social media platform:

(23%) said it was because one account was **just for parents/family** to see

15% said one account was **for the 'real me' and another contained edited/filtered posts** or photos



WHY is this 'RISKY'?

DID YOU KNOW?



40% had engaged in 'risky' behaviour!



What about **WHATSAPP**?

Do you know the **minimum age** to use this? What are the **risks**?



Unwanted contact

to contact somebody on WhatsApp, all you need is their phone number, which could expose you to unwanted messages or calls

Inappropriate content

messages are end-to-end encrypted which means that the content cannot be monitored. This means that your child could see or hear harmful or upsetting content e.g. pornography or violence.

Location sharing

live location feature means that your child could reveal their current location to others

Cyberbullying

children could be bullied, feel left out or deliberately excluded or removed from groups

Oversharing

privacy features, such as disappearing and 'view once' messages, might mean that your child feels safe to reveal private or risky information or images. However, there is always a risk that this could be copied and shared



What can you do?



WhatsApp
safety guide for
parents

internet
matters.org

13+
WhatsApp's
minimum age
in the UK

58%
Kids aged 3-17
who use
WhatsApp

37%
Kids under 13
who use
WhatsApp



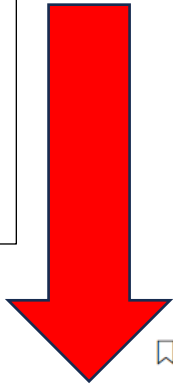
5 tips to keep kids safe on WhatsApp

-  **1 Review privacy settings** WhatsApp has a range of privacy and security settings to keep users safe. Customise groups, app access, live location and more.
-  **2 Customise contacts** Show your child how to report and block unwanted contacts. Then, work with them to add their friends and family. Review and talk about their contacts regularly.
-  **3 Talk about personal information** Make sure your child understands what personal information is. Talk about the importance of keeping that information private on WhatsApp.
-  **4 Show them where to get support** If something goes wrong or they see something worrying on WhatsApp, make sure they know to come to you, and talk about other sources of support.
-  **5 Check in regularly** Once you've done all of the above, check in with them regularly to review settings and how they use WhatsApp.

Find ratings and reviews for parents on apps, games and social media at commonsensemedia.org



Movies	TV	Books	Games	Podcasts	Apps	YouTube	Parent Tips and FAQs	Celebrating Co
By Age			By Topic			By Platform		
Preschoolers (2-4)			Screen Time			TikTok		
Little Kids (5-7)			Learning			Snapchat		
Big Kids (8-9)			Social Media			Minecraft		
Pre-Teens (10-12)			Cellphones			Roblox		
Teens (13+)			Online Safety			Fortnite		
			Identity and Community			Discord		
			More ...			More ...		



See full review



APP
Snapchat
✓ age 16+ ★★★★★
Send moments in photos, watch curated content; use wisely.
Devices: iPhone , iPod Touch , iPad , Android (2011)



APP
Discord
✓ age 13+ ★★★★★
Voice and video chat; slick features, some mature content.
Devices: iPhone , iPod Touch , iPad , Mac , Android , Windows app (2017)

See full review



Do you know the **DIFFERENCE** between an '**ONLINE**' **FRIEND** and a real one? How does this differ from your **CHILD'S VIEW**?

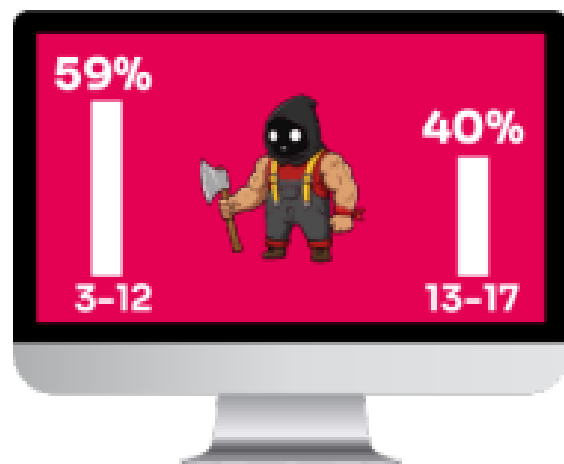
- Are you familiar with who they are in **contact** with whilst playing games?
- Have you asked about the **chat** facility?
- Do you know the **content** and **age restrictions** for these games?





What are **YOU** most **WORRIED** about?

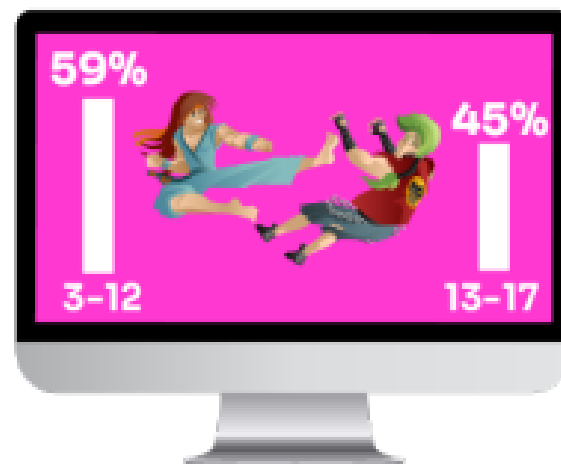
Parental concerns about gaming (% of parents of children who game)



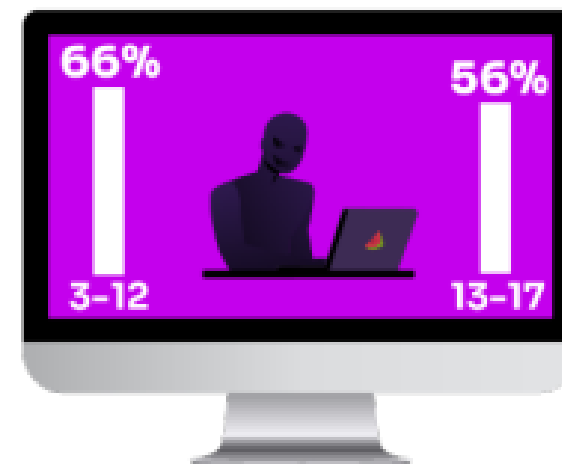
The content of the games like violence, bad language, disturbing content, etc



Pressure to make in-game purchases, e.g. access to upgrades, skins, loot-boxes, in-game currency, etc



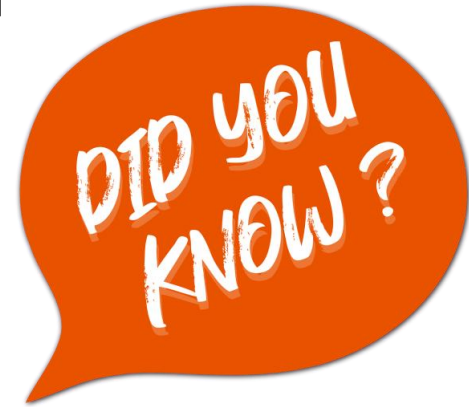
The possibility of them being bullied by other players



The possibility of them talking to strangers while gaming (within the game or via chat)

Research finds children's online spaces "saturated" with **gambling-like** content and advertising:

"They make it look like a game, it does not look like gambling."



Risks are not understood by children due to the blurred lines between gambling and gambling-like activity such as loot boxes



Do you **DISCUSS THIS** when you talk about **MONEY** to your children and how gambling is made to **LOOK ATTRACTIVE** and likely that you would **WIN**?

https://www.gambleaware.org/media/hbcp3qgd/exploring-the-lived-experience-and-views-of-gambling-among-children-and-young-people_final_0.pdf

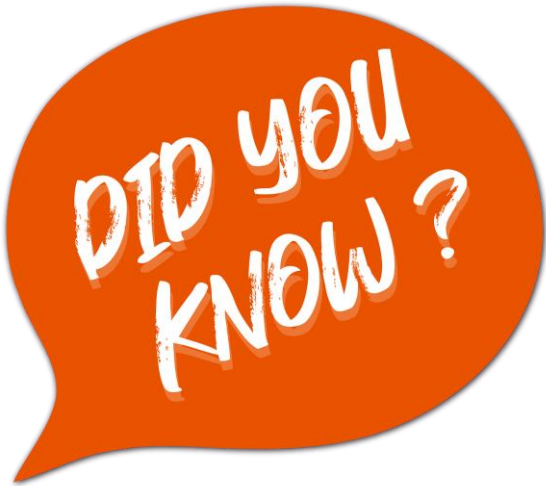
How can **YOU GET INVOLVED?**



- **ASK** what type of games your child enjoys – are they **age-appropriate**?
- **PLAY** games together - keep the tech in **shared spaces** rather than bedrooms
- **TALK** about **who they are playing** with - what **information** are they sharing?
- **EXPLAIN** what is/isn't **appropriate to share**, e.g. personal details to identify them/location
- **AGREE** how they will spend their **money** online
- **DISCUSS** what they would do if they were **bullied** online, and what steps to take
- **DECIDE** **how long is appropriate** to play in one session - how many sessions a day
- **SETUP** these restrictions in **parental settings** with your child

PEGI helps parents to make informed decisions when buying video games:

- The age rating confirms that the game content is appropriate for players of certain age
- It considers the age **suitability** of a game, **not the level of difficulty**



TWO LEVELS OF INFORMATION AS A GUIDE : THE PEGI AGE LABELS



THE CONTENT DESCRIPTORS





6. AGE REQUIREMENTS



Are **YOU** aware of the **MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT** for social media?

83% of parents of 3-17s are aware of a minimum age requirement to have a profile on social media apps

**BUT ONLY
33% of parents knew the
correct age requirement
(13 yrs)**

More than a third (37%) say they would allow their child to have a profile on sites or apps before they had reached the minimum age.

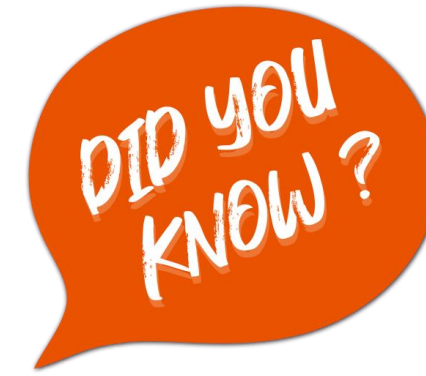
What about YOUNG PEOPLE?

- Three quarters **(75%) of children are aware of minimum age** requirements
- A third **(33%) of 8-17 yr-olds admit to giving a fake age online** to access a new app/site
- Up to a **quarter had changed their date of birth** on their profile since initially setting it up
- **25% of 8-12 yr-olds were more likely to change it on Snapchat**



WHY is this **WORRYING?**

SECRET



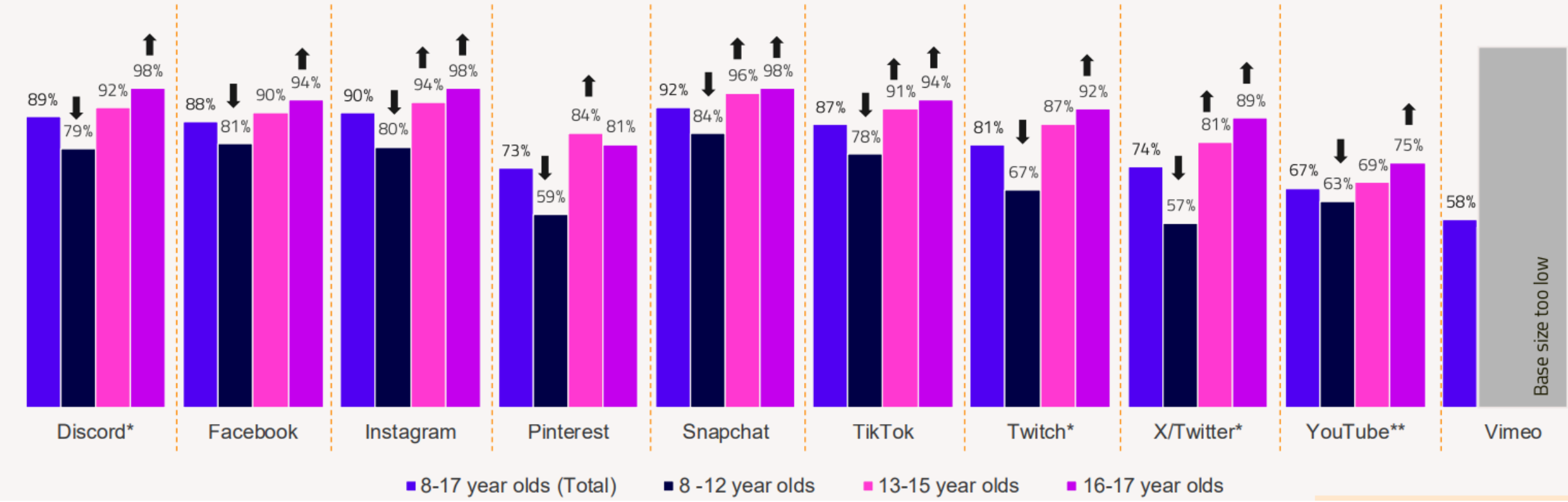
Four in ten under-13s have a profile on social media apps or sites...

- YouTube/YouTube Kids (44%)
- WhatsApp (23%)
- TikTok (23%)
- The proportion of 8-9s with an Instagram profile increased from 8% in 2023 to 14% in 2024

Despite there being a minimum age requirement of 13 for using most social media apps, over half of 3-12-year olds (55%) were reported as using at least one social media app or site, an increase on last year, when 51% of these children did so.

The majority of online service users (e.g., social media) in each age group have their own profile on at least one online service, with the likelihood of having a profile generally increasing with age. This pattern has remained consistent with Jan/Feb 2024 (W2).

Proportion of **children 8-17** who use each online service that have their own profile – by age group of child (Wave 4):





Do you know what they **SHARE**?

16% of children who have a social media profile include a **photo of themselves** which **anyone can see**

Type of profile picture used (among those with a profile)





Why does this **MATTER**?

- Young people **can get around age restrictions** on apps and websites, **increasing the risk of them coming to harm online**
- To understand the **extent to which children are bypassing age checks**, Ofcom researched **how many children have online profiles that make them appear older than they actually are.**

