

It is important to keep open and honest conversations with your child. We often talk about the potential harms of smoking, drinking etc but we do not always cover gaming and gambling.

Here we have identified some useful tips and reminders to help you have these conversations.

Chatting to your child

Listen to your child's opinions without judging

– Looking at issues from their perspective can provide you with an insight into how they view it. Sometimes coming in from our view can blindside us to other viewpoints and ways of looking at things. This can help to come to a mutual decision.

Come to a joint agreement over gaming

– Taking in both viewpoints can help to come to an agreement everybody is happy with.

Keep chats regular and short.

Children do not have long attention spans so try and keep conversations to 20 minutes.

Remember children and teenagers aren't prepared to balance emotion and logic to make healthy choices – they won't be considering the consequences of their actions.

Establish general safety measures and set general ground rules for ALL the family to keep to.

Speak openly about the dangers and talk about the topics just as you would with sex, alcohol, on-line safety issues.

Set boundaries – children like having them (even if they may at times try and break or move these boundaries).

Teach awareness for themselves and their friends – Sometimes using a third party and having a child look at others' behaviours rather than their own can help them identify behaviours/situations easily then if they look at their behaviour.



Topics

Joint agreements over gaming. To create a happy harmonious household.

Look into their interests – what do they like doing? Why have they chosen that game, how does it make them feel? Look at other interests they have outside of on-line activity as this can help for when they finish play or to provide them with alternatives.

Use news stories or local community stories to generate conversations with your children and get their opinions to help them to feel heard.

Teach them about the odds of gambling – how likely they are to win a game or to get what they want from a loot box. Or look into the odds of winning the lottery v being struck by lightning etc to help them to put odds into perspective.

Look at what else they could spend their money on – Rather than spending money on cosmetic

purchases, look at what alternatives they could get which are useful such as clothing, a day out, an activity etc. To help them think about the value of money compare it to what they money could be better spent on such as charity items, a meal for homeless etc. Sometimes looking at the value can help them view purchases in a different light.

Virtual currency v real money – does your child realise when they click a button on their game to purchase an item they are spending actual money? More importantly do they realise they are spending YOUR money??

Talk to your kids about their digital footprint – how everything is permanent, what they say, what they post etc Don't use it as a scare tactic but helping them to understand that future employers may look at their social sites before interviewing them can educate them with lecturing them.

Helpful hints

- Make time to have fun with your children – this can be on-line or off-line
- Find time for family time
- Work with your child to help them to understand on-line activities without going too far
- Understand their technology, the apps and websites they visit. It's ok to ask them to tell you but it helps if you know what you are talking about
- Use settings to turn off the WIFI at certain times so your children can't play/go on line
- Set rules with consequences

