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## NSPCC Review of Fortnite Game

### Fortnite: all you need to know

The multiplayer action survival game, Fortnite: Battle Royale, has received a lot of media coverage recently due to growing popularity amongst children – and also emerging safety concerns. We've pulled together some information about the game and how to keep your children safe while playing it.

Players can currently play Fortnite: Battle Royale on a PC, Mac, Xbox, and PlayStation or download it from the App Store. Use of the game has grown rapidly amongst children and young people since the launch of the mobile game in March 2018. As of 2nd May, the app version is only available on iOS but an Android release is expected shortly. The game involves 100 players fighting each other in real time to be the final survivor.

### What features and risks are there on Fortnite?

Fortnite: Battle Royale has several features that can be fun, but there are also risks. These include:

- Players can add friends in the mobile game if they have an account with Epic, the game's developer. Friends can be added by username in the game's main menu.
- There is a chat feature in the game that allows users to contact each other using voice or text. You can disable voice chat in the game by selecting the 3 lines in the top right of the screen, select the settings icon, choose the 'Audio' tab at the top of the screen and go to the 'Voice Chat' option, where you can select 'Off'.
- There is cartoon violence in the game. You can use a variety of weapons to kill other players, such as guns and axes.
- There are in-app purchases, which can become expensive.
- Players can be reported to the **Player Support team** if you are concerned about activity or behaviour.

### Age ratings

Here are the recommended age ratings for the game:

- Epic Games: Fortnite Battle Royale says it does not direct the game to children under the age of 13 in the UK.
- The PEGI rating for this game is 12 years old. However, PEGI does not take chat features into consideration when rating games. You can find out more about age ratings on the NSPCC website.
- The App Store says that users must be 12+ to play.

**Follow NPCC TEAM tips to help keep your child safe online when playing online games:**

- **Talk** to your child regularly about what they are doing online and how to stay safe. Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen. You can use our [conversation starters](#) to support you when starting these conversations.
- **Explore** your child's online activities with your child. Understand why they like using them and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.
- **Agree** your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games. You can use our [Family Agreement](#) template to help you get started.
- **Manage** your technology and use the settings available to keep your child safe.

*If you'd like advice and support about keeping your children safe online, call our free O2 NSPCC Online Safety Helpline on 0808 800 5002.*

*Alternatively, you can [make a face-to-face appointment](#) with an O2 Guru in store - you don't even have to be an O2 customer. O2 Gurus can help you set up parental controls, such as privacy settings, on any device.*

*Finally, you can visit the NSPCC [online games](#) page to find out more about the risks of online gaming, and how to keep your child safe.*

Gaming can be a great way for young people to relax, socialise with their friends and have fun. Children can play on games consoles, apps or websites, and chat to other players or watch them play through [live-streaming](#).

But there are some dangers. And with so many games available online, it can be hard for parents to know how to keep their child safe.

That's where we can help. Our tips and advice will keep you up-to-date with the most popular online games, help you decide what's appropriate for your child - and help them play safely.

## **What are the risks of online games?**

- **Children may view inappropriate or upsetting content** if they play games that aren't suitable for their age. This could include sexual or violent material. It might be in-game content or produced by other players.
- **Some players can be abusive towards others** or try to exclude them from the game. Some players may also hack another user's account or try to steal and destroy their virtual possessions. This can be as upsetting for a young person as if it happened in real life.
- **Children may play with adults they don't know.** People of all ages play games. Some adults may exploit this and try to build an emotional connection with a child for the purpose of [grooming](#).
- **Some children may find it hard to stop playing games** or find that gaming is getting the way of them doing other activities.

## 5 ways to help children play safe

### **1. Check the game's content(Tab content expanded)**

- Always check age ratings but remember they don't cover everything. It's important to check the game out yourself before letting a young child play it. If you want extra information about the content of a boxed console or computer game, take a look at the Video Standard's Council's Additional Consumer Information (ACI).

### **2. Know how to mute, block and report(Tab content expanded)**

- Help children understand that people they meet online may not always be who they claim to be. Some games let you mute, block and report other users. Make sure your child knows how to do this if someone in the game upsets them or makes them feel uncomfortable. Childline has online gaming advice to help them do this. Remind your child they can come to you if they're ever worried.

### **3. Be Share Aware(Tab content expanded)**

- Remind your child not to give out any personal information, photos or videos to anyone online, even if they know them. If your child plays games with people they don't know, remind them not to take the conversation off the game, onto other social networks or into a private chat.

### **4. Activate safety settings(Tab content expanded)**

- Turn on parental controls on gaming consoles to help prevent children from downloading age inappropriate games or seeing harmful material.
- The Apple App Store lets you turn off in-app purchases on iPads and iPhones. And The Apple App Store and Google Play let you create a pin code that must be entered before you buy.
- You can also turn on privacy settings on some games to control what other users can see about you and stop strangers from contacting you. Contact the O2 & NSPCC Online Safety Helpline for free on 0808 800 5002 for advice on how to do this.

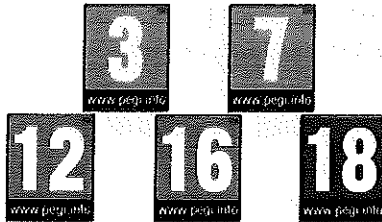
### **5. Keep the conversation going(Tab content expanded)**

- Have regular conversations with your child about staying safe online. Agree what games are suitable for them to play and help them understand why others are inappropriate. Talk to them about the types of games they may be watching on game streaming sites.
- Remind them they should tell a trusted adult, like a teacher or parent, if they see or hear something that upsets them when gaming. And they can talk to Childline for free 24 hours a day if they're ever worried.

## Choosing the right game for your child

- Finding appropriate games for children can seem confusing. But there are lots of games that have been created for children and families. Looking at games' age ratings can help you to work out what's suitable.

### Age ratings



All boxed games for consoles and computers within the UK are given a PEGI (Pan-European Game Information) rating of age 3, 7, 12, 16, or 18.

- These age ratings tell you who the game is suitable for based on the type of content you'll see when playing. Indicators on the game's packaging explain why it's been given its rating. For example, it'll say if the game shows violence, sex, or horror.
- Games on app stores also have age ratings. Google Play, Windows Store, Nintendo eShop and Oculus use the PEGI system. But the Apple App Store and Amazon Apps have their own age ratings. Most games distributors will provide information about the game's content so make sure you read before downloading.
- Age ratings are a helpful guide, but each child is different. So it's also useful to think about how mature your child is for their age and the kinds of content they'd feel comfortable with.

### Online chat

Age ratings are a valuable tool but they're only based on content. Even if a game is rated as 3 it may still let you talk to other players, including strangers, through voice chat or instant messenger. You may be connected with players in your local area or from around the world. Many gamers also talk through external gaming forums or chat sites like [Skype](#).

As well as using age ratings, it's best to check the game yourself to see what features it has and decide if it's suitable.