Optus Digital Thumbprint

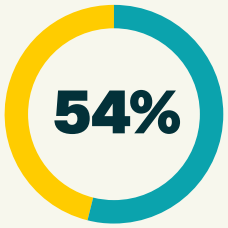
Let's talk gaming

Helping your child play, connect and game safely.



Gaming is more than just play. It's where young people have fun, build skills and stay connected.

While it can feel like a different language - servers, lobbies, voice chat and gamer tags just to name a few – you don't need to know every button or gaming term to get involved and create a safe environment for your child.



of Australian parents already play video games with their children to spend time together.[1]



A little curiosity goes a long way. Showing interest, starting conversations, playing, and staying curious can help you stay connected and support your child as they navigate gaming safely.

This guide will help you level up your understanding.

What you **need to know**

Not all gaming looks the same. Understanding how your child plays, who they play with and how they communicate is a great place to start.

1. Online or offline?

Offline gaming

Your child plays on their own or with someone beside them, without interacting with other players online.

What it looks like: completing challenges, playing through a story or racing against the computer.

Online gaming

Your child connects to the internet to play with or against other people. They might team up with school friends or play alongside people they've never met.

What it looks like: Competing against other players, teaming up with friends or joining multiplayer games with people from around the world.



yes OPTUS

[1] Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (IGEA), 2025. Australian parents embrace the power of play.

Did you know?

Around **89%** of young people play online games.[2]

40% of young people who play online games play with people they don't know offline.[3]

2. Public or private?

Online games have different spaces, known as servers, where players can connect and play together.

- Private servers limit access to invited or approved players, giving your child more control over who owns their game.
- Public servers are open to a wider group of players, including people your child may not know online.



3. How do players communicate?

Gaming can be social. Just like catching up at school or sports training, players often talk while they play. Two types of communication can include:

- Voice chat: Players talk through a headset or microphone. Depending on the game and settings, your child may hear from friends or people they don't know.
- Text chat: Players send written messages during the game. These might be shared with a group or sent privately between players.

Taking time to answer these questions and staying curious about your child's gaming world can help build understanding and open the door to conversations about staying safe.



Step into their world



Showing interest in your child's gaming world can help them stay safe online. By asking open-ended questions, sitting side by side when they play or having a go yourself, you can build trust and make it easier for them to come to you when something doesn't feel right.

Start with a curious mindset. Watching your child play is a great way to see what they enjoy and get the conversation flowing. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- ✓ "What's happening in the game right now?"
- ✓ "What do you enjoy most about this game?"
- ✓ "How do you know who you're playing with?"
- ✓ "What do you do when someone makes the game less fun?"
- ✓ "Can you show me how to play?"

Even spending a little time alongside your child, can help you understand how the game works, who they interact with and what the experience is like from their point of view.

Did you know?



Research shows that **58%** of all children report wanting to play video games with their parents more often.[4]

[2,3] eSafety Commissioner, 2024. Levelling up to stay safe: Young people's experiences of online gaming in Australia.

[4] Entertainment Software Association (ESA), 2025. What do kids want for holiday gifts? Video games, of course! They also want their parents to game alongside them.

Family activity:
Let them **be the expert**

Curiosity and co-play can go a long way. Ask your child to pick one of their favourite games and teach you how to play. It's a fun way to learn about their gaming world and explore how to stay safe online.



Have them show you:

1. **Watch:**
   Let them show you how the game works and what they love about it.
2. **Learn:**
   Ask them to teach you a few moves or explain how to play.
3. **Play:**
   Grab a controller (or join in on their device) and have a go together.

Remember: You don't have to be good at gaming to enjoy it together. Let your child take the lead and enjoy learning something new from them.

Steps to safer gaming

A few simple checks can help your child enjoy gaming while staying safe online. Here are fours actions you can do together.

1. Set up privacy settings

Open the game's settings together. Focus on four quick checks:

- ✓ **Keep profiles private:** Use a username without real names or locations. Enter their correct age so age-based safety settings apply.
- ✓ **Limit who can chat:** Restrict voice and text chat to approved friends. Agree to keep gaming conversations within the game.
- ✓ **Lock down purchases:** Turn on parental controls and require a password for in-game spending.
- ✓ **Secure their account:** Switch on two-factor authentication (2FA) and check privacy settings on both the game and console.

2. Choose games that are the right fit

Check the game's rating and features, including chatting with stranger's and in-game purchases (where players can spend real money on things like outfits, upgrades or access to extra levels). Talk together about what feels right for their age.

3. Know where to mute, block and report

Ask your child to show you how to mute or block another player and report inappropriate in-app behaviour. Practise finding these tools together so they know what to do if something doesn't feel right.

4. Keep personal details private

Agree on what information stays out of the game, including their full name, school, location, password and personal photos. Remind them to pause and think before sharing details in chats or gaming profiles.

These small steps can help your child build safer gaming habits, now and into the future.

What to do **if your child needs more help**

If your child needs support or experiences something unsafe when gaming, support is available:

- **eSafety Commissioner** to report cyberbullying, image-based abuse, and illegal and restricted content

If your child needs to talk to someone about their feelings or worries, they can contact:

- **Kids Helpline** on 1800 55 1800
- **13Yarn** on 13 92 76
- **Lifeline** on 13 11 14

About Optus Digital Thumbprint

Through our Digital Empowerment strategy and programs, Optus is enabling all Australians to achieve, thrive and belong in a digital world.

Optus Digital Thumbprint supports digital safety and wellbeing for young people and families. Find out more at www.digitalthumbprint.com.au

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