

Buying Technology at Christmas

We know that many young people are likely to have gadgets on their Christmas wish list, such as tablets, phones, or gaming consoles.

Receiving a new device can be thrilling for them, but it also be daunting and worrying and brings considerations for parents and caregivers.

These helpful tips can guide you in preparing to give your child a device while fostering ongoing conversations about how they use it responsibly.

Research the Device

Before purchasing, explore reviews and feedback from other parents and caregivers online to understand the device's impact on children. [Common Sense Media](#) is an excellent resource for evaluating games, apps, and services for age-appropriateness.

Check for parental controls and privacy settings to ensure you can customize the device's safety features.

Set Up the Device in Advance

To give your child the best start, set up the device before they receive it. After researching, charge the device and activate safety settings and parental controls.

For second-hand devices, reset them to factory settings to remove existing apps or settings and start fresh. This also gives your child the opportunity to make it their own by customizing the device so its exactly how they want it to be.

To restrict screen time, to manage app use and block inappropriate content you can use [what content can be downloaded in Google Play](#), for Android and for Apple [Content & Privacy Restrictions in Screen Time](#),

While these controls are important, they should complement—not replace—open discussions with your child about online safety.

Establish a Family Agreement

Creating a Family Agreement helps set boundaries and expectations for device and internet usage. It's an opportunity to discuss how the entire family uses technology and can be updated as new devices are introduced or habits evolve. Use the agreement to outline rules for where and when devices can be used, how long, and guidelines for downloads or purchases. You can download a template for a Family Agreement from [Download and print the Childnet Family Agreement here.](#)

Start a Conversation

Ensure your child knows they can come to you if they encounter anything online that confuses, worries, or upsets them.

While parental controls help, they can't block all inappropriate content, so it's vital to teach your child practical safety strategies. Show them how to report or block unwanted content and encourage them to switch off the device and talk to you when needed.

Regular check-ins create a safe space for them to share their experiences.

Remember to approach these discussions with curiosity, not anger, so they feel comfortable seeking your help in the future.

Ask about their favorite apps and sites, and engage with them online to maintain an open dialogue.

By following these steps, you can make giving a device a meaningful and safe experience for your child.