

MOVING ON - FACTSHEETS FOR PARENTS: CHILDREN - LIVING IN A WIRED-UP WORLD

PARENTS HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO KEEP SAFE

TOP TIPS

- Encourage other activities. Playing, reading, storytelling, kicking a ball about, running, walking or cycling helps to develop physical, mental and social skills that are crucial in a child's development. Encourage your son or daughter to keep up or start a hobby.
- Think about what you can do with your son or daughter and the rest of the family instead of watching television or playing on the computer. What about reading together, visiting a museum, a zoo, or library, or taking a walk in the park? If you make the activity fun, and do it regularly, you'll probably find the whole family will benefit. Not only will you be having fun, you will all be keeping fit.
- Establish guidelines as to how much time your child can watch television, play games or surf the web. It is generally recommended that children should not spend more than two hours a day in front of a screen (be it a television, computer or game machine).
- Make sure that all caregivers stick to the same guidelines. This includes grandparents, siblings and baby-sitters. The rules in divorced parents' households should be consistent.
- It's easier to set guidelines now (if you haven't already done so). As your son or daughter grows older, it will be more difficult to help them make choices.
- Suggest that homework and chores must be finished before your child can watch television, so that it appears more of a treat.
- Watch television, surf the web, play games and listen to music together as much as possible. Talk to your son or daughter about the things you see and hear, including stereotypical and violent images in the media, and help them to understand what is right and wrong.

- Guide your child in the direction of educational and appropriate material that does not contain violence, sex and offensive language. Discuss and explain the reasons he or she cannot watch certain programmes.
- Discuss the teaching value of a programme that explores the importance of sharing, giving, loving or doing an activity together. Use follow-up activities that further develop material presented on the programmes.
- Be aware of ratings and classifications given to films and video games that will help you determine if they are suitable for children.
- Limit the amount of violent content your child is exposed to, even in cartoons, and monitor their behaviour after watching scary shows, or playing video games.
- Be aware that letting your child have a television, computer or video game in his or her bedroom means they might use it when you think they are asleep (or when they think you are!).
- Try to stick to a set bedtime and evening routine.
- Parental controls on computers can be used to prevent your child accessing unsuitable websites such as pornographic sites and chat rooms.
- Remind caregivers such as nannies, baby-sitters and grandparents not to view inappropriate material in front of your child.
- As much as possible, have the television off during meals, when visitors arrive and during study time.