

Why age ratings matter: helping children stay safe online and in games

As children grow, technology becomes a big part of their world - from sharing funny clips with friends to exploring creative online games. While these activities can be fun and sociable, it's important for parents to understand age ratings and why they exist.

Age ratings aren't just about violence or bad language - they're there to help you judge whether the content, interaction and features are suitable for your child's emotional and social stage.

What are age ratings?

Age ratings are like guidance labels that show whether a game or app is designed for your child's age group. They take into account things such as:

- Language, violence or sexual content
- In-app chat and messaging
- Opportunities for strangers to contact children
- Pressure to buy add-ons or share personal details

They're not a measure of skill or intelligence - they're about emotional readiness. A game might look cartoony or harmless, but it can still include themes or online interactions that aren't appropriate for younger children.

How parents can support safe gaming and app use

Check age ratings

Look up PEGI or App Store ratings before downloading, so you know what's suitable for your child.

Explore together

Play or look at apps with your child. Use the experience to discuss what's fun, what feels safe and what's not okay.

Healthy boundaries

Set clear family rules about what can be used, when and for how long - and keep talking openly as your child grows.

Common age ratings for popular apps and games

App/game	Official age rating	Why it's rated that way
WhatsApp	13+	Disappearing messages can expose children to adult content.
Snapchat	13+	Disappearing messages, location sharing and public stories.
Minecraft	7+	Online multiplayer can include unfiltered chat and content.
Fortnite	12+	Cartoon-style violence and in-game chat. Turn off or monitor voice chat for younger players.