Protect Children

Online Gaming Platforms Parents Should Know About

Introduction

Online gaming platforms play a significant role in children and young people's lives. They can encourage communication, support skill development and help manage certain difficult emotions. These spaces offer **creativity, community and connection**, but they can also expose children to greater risks such as misinformation, cyberbullying, harmful content and interactions, etc.

This guide provides an overview of popular gaming platforms used by children, highlighting their features and potential risks for parents to consider. Platform popularity and use may vary between countries, age groups, communities, and devices.

Overview

Approximately 96 % of children and teens aged 10-19 play digital games.*

- Most online games have communication features
- Children and young people who game often use other gaming-related platforms
- Many gaming platforms include privacy features and age restrictions

Tip: Staying involved in gaming platforms your children use is an important factor in enhancing their digital safety.

*Kinnunen, Jani – Prykäri, Satu – Mäyrä, Frans, Pelaajabarometri 2024: Seurapelaamisen vastaisku. Tampereen yliopisto 2024, s. 37.

Roblox

Age limit: 5+

Roblox is a free-to-play online game.

Features:

- Multiplayer games that are player created
- Free-to-play
- In-game purchases
- Age-based content and communication restrictions
- Age verification features.
- Devices: mobile, computer or console

Risks:

- Strangers might be able to contact child
- Most games rely on player-to-player communication
- Player-created games raise risk to get exposed to harmful content
- Child might try to get verified into an older age group
- Adults and children are mixed in games
- Most games filled with strangers

Fortnite

Age limit: 12+

Fortnite is a third-person shooting game that involves building elements.

Features:

- Multiplayer
- Voice and text chat
- Free-to-play
- In-game purchases
- Devices: mobile, computer or console

Risks:

- Toxic behaviours
- Playing with strangers
- Children and adults playing together

Minecraft

Age limit: 7+

Minecraft is an adventure and building game.

Features:

- Single and multiplayer
- Text chat
- One-time purchase to own
- Devices: mobile, computer or console

Risks:

- Toxic behaviours
- Playing with strangers
- Children and adults playing together

Protect Children

Online Gaming Platforms Parents Should Know

Valorant

Age limit: 16+

Valorant is a first-person online shooter game.

Features
- Multiplayer
- Voice and text chat
- Free to play
- In-game purchases
- Devices: computer or console

Risks:
- Toxic behaviours
- Teams have strangers
- Children and adults playing together

Steam

Age limit: 13+

Steam allows users to buy games and connect with other players.

Features:
- Storefront and community features
- In-game purchases
- Communication features
- Devices: computer or mobile, content only for computer

Risks:
- Access to children's profiles
- Strangers might be able to contact children
- Age-inappropriate content and games available

Discord

Age limit: 13+

Discord is a messaging, voice and video chat platform, especially popular with gamers and online communities.

Features:
- Text and video chat, livestreaming capabilities
- Servers that are joinable communities
- Can be private, invite-only or open access
- Some chats might be age restricted and require age verification
- Devices: mobile, computer and console

Risks:
- Strangers might be able to contact children
- Harmful content on servers
- Users often anonymous and use usernames

Twitch

Age limit: 13+

Twitch is a live-streaming service where users can watch people broadcasting live videos.

Features:
- Live-streamed content
- Many genres: from video games to political and in real life (IRL)
- Free-to-use
- Users can support creators by subscribing to their channels and donating money
- Devices: mobile, computer, console and smart TV

Risks:
- Harmful content available

Parental Controls

Parental controls can help families create safer and healthier digital experiences. Download our Parental Safety Control Guide for more help on how to use some of the most common parental tools, what they can help with, and their important limitations.