



**Cybersafe  
Families**

*Helping children  
grow safely in  
this world.*

# Multi-Player Gaming



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**Multi-Player Gaming is a popular form of children's entertainment that allows more than one player online at the same time and place.**

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These games have many positive aspects that can help children to build skills in strategy, planning, problem-solving, compromise, cooperation, teamwork and communication.

Online multi-player gaming is becoming the modern-day play date where children meet up with friends, make new friends and talk at school about what they will do over weekend, together – online.

Of course, as with any child's activity online there are associated risks.

It is importantly to be aware of what is happening in the online gaming space,

and to ensure that you know what children are playing and whom they are playing with.

Many multi-player games have open chat features, and these are not recommended for children under 12. Open chat is where players can either speak to each other through microphones and headphones or type messages. Children can invite others to play, and while they play they chat. This features sometimes invites negative and inappropriate language and content. If children are going to use chat features, it's important that they are playing with someone of their own age.



# Multi-Player Gaming

There are group and team features in many online games where groups can all chat at one time online. This can be a positive thing if a group of likeminded children are working well together fostering teamwork and competition. It is also another place where online bullying can occur.

The biggest risk posed by open chat features in online games is the possibility of meeting strangers online. Anyone can pose as a child online and strike up a friendship with a younger person. Unfortunately, online predators are using this platform to groom children.

## Some quick tips:

- Be sure to know what types of games are being played and sit and play them together, it's the best way to know what the game involves and also show your child that you are interested in their online world
- Check the list of friends to ensure they are all personally known. Sometimes children will connect with a friend of a friend etc.

- Set time limits
- Create an online family agreement that states shared online expectations for positive and safe online behaviour

## Lets talk about it!

Conversation starters and tips for discussion.

- What games are you playing?
- Who are you playing with? Have you met them before?
- Do you have any friends on your contacts that you have never met?
- How do you know these people are who they say they are?
- What do you talk about in your chat?



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