



Game on: Supporting neurodivergent young people in online games

Internet Matters | Roblox

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Internet Matters

Because children deserve a safe digital world

- **Build understanding** – Collecting insights from children and families about their online experiences, including through our regular research programmes, Digital Wellbeing Index and Internet Matters Pulse.
- **Support families** – Provide free, practical online safety advice and resources for parents, carers and professionals to help children get the best from the online world and stay safe online.
- **Inform policy** - Bring the experiences and views of children and parents into conversations with industry, policymakers, regulators and government.

My Family's Digital Toolkit

There are 7 questions
It takes approx. 8 minutes

Build your toolkit to get free, personalised online safety advice, giving you everything you need to keep your child safe.

HOW IT WORKS

START IT NOW



Free digital literacy lessons

Free digital literacy lessons

Resources for teachers and parents
Digital Matters is a free, award-winning online platform featuring free digital literacy lessons to help teach 9-11-year-olds online safety through interactive lessons and dynamic storytelling.

REGISTER FOR FREE



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TESCO
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Every little helps

Parental controls guides

Activate parental controls to manage children's devices, apps and platforms, to give them safer online experiences.

FIND A GUIDE

SEE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Like Share

Activate



Conversation starters to understand your child's online life

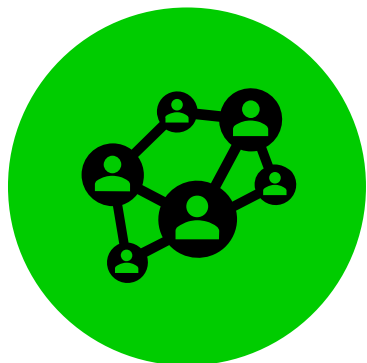
Having regular conversations with your child can keep them safe online. Help children deal with online issues and open up about their digital lives with these 4 simple tips.

DOWNLOAD TIPS



internet
matters.org

Children with additional needs online lives



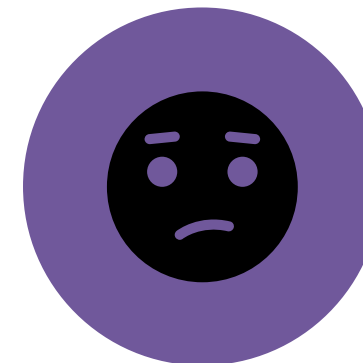
**Build friendships
and confidence**



**Support
participation,
learning and
creating**



**4 in 5 experience
harm**

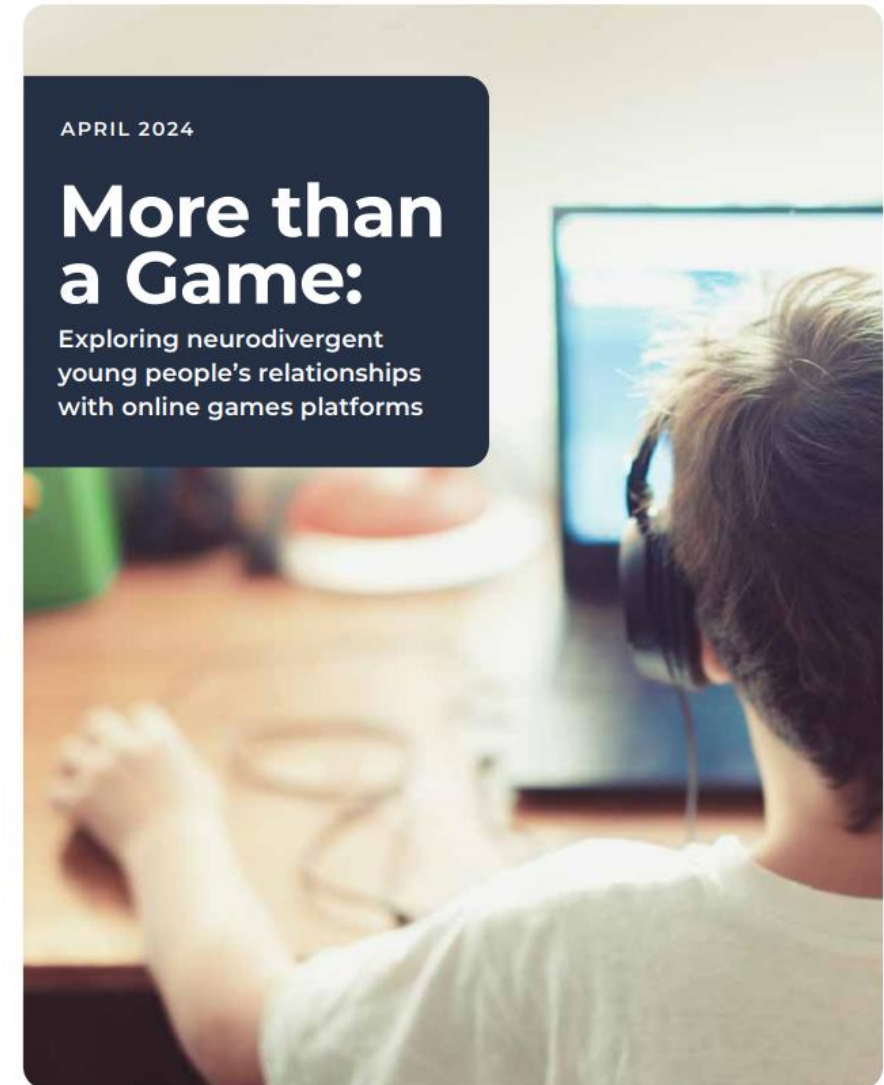


**Worry, isolation
and difficulty
disconnecting**

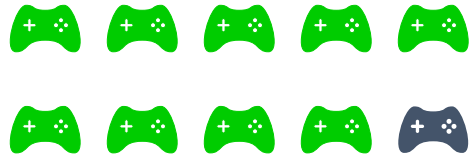
More than a Game: Methodology

- Conducted in the United Kingdom and the United States of America
- Focus on neurodivergent young people, specifically Autistic young people and those with ADHD, and their families
- Household survey of 480 12–17-year-olds and a parent or carer
- 9 virtual focus group with 20 young people and 18 parents

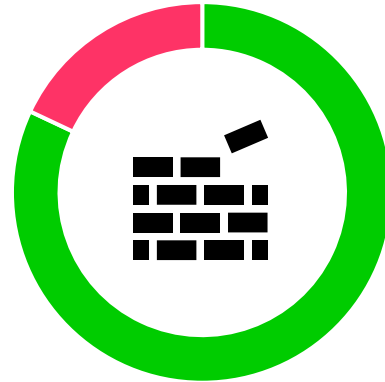
[Research link](#)



Playing games online builds friendship and community and supports creativity for neurodivergent young people



91% of young people play games with others online.



82% of young people are making their own content online.



51% of young people said playing games online helped them to develop friendships.

Playing games online also supports the development of life skills for neurodivergent young people



63% of parents reported playing games online supports problem solving.



59% of parents reported playing games online supports communication skills in a range of settings.

Challenges that come with playing games online



Two in five children report often seeing or hearing bad things when gaming.



26% of young people say they spend too much time gaming.

"Like summer this year I basically isolated myself because I was too addicted to my phone and Xbox and whatnot, and wasn't too great. But I am now getting better with sessions with others and I've got a nice little friend group I'm in".
(UK young person 15-17)

Challenges that come with playing games online



**52% of parents thought
their child spent too
much time gaming.**



**Half of parents thought
their child's behaviour
worsened when
gaming.**

Children want support from their parents to help them engage safely and positively online

- 67% of young people **thought that their parents were best placed to talk to them about being safe while gaming**. They also saw a role for others in supporting their safety while playing games including video game platforms and other young people.
- **Three in five parents talked to their child** regularly about being safe while gaming.
- Young people told us they would like help with knowing **how to talk to their parents/carers about issues that occur when gaming** (48%), how to **interact with others online** (44%) and how to **play games in a safe manner** (45%).

"Depends on the situation. If it was very bad, then I'd probably tell someone like a moderator or my parents. But if it wasn't that bad, then I'd probably move on quite quickly."

(UK Young Person, 11-14 years old)

"I've never felt unsafe on the platform before, but if I was to feel unsafe, I would definitely tell my mother or one of my family members about [it]."

(US young person, 15-17 years old)

Support for families



Tips to stay safe in online games

Guide for neurodivergent teens

Video games give people who are neurodivergent many opportunities to connect and learn. But there are also risks.

In this guide, see how you can spot these risks to protect yourself and enjoy gaming safely online.

Benefits of playing online games



We can practise
socialising with
others.



Games can help us
calm down or feel
less stressed.



Some games help
us improve our
coordination skills.



We can also be creative
with some games.



Games can also help
us learn new skills.

Supporting resources

Guide for young people

Teen guide uses style that is friendly for neurodivergent readers (i.e. monochromatic and simplified)

- 'Spot the Risk' style of engagement
- Uses concrete examples instead of abstract thoughts and feelings
- Focuses on the top harms neurodivergent young people are more likely to face online

Online gaming safety tips

Guidance for parents and carers of neurodivergent young people

Video games offer young people a range of benefits that are often amplified for neurodiverse communities. But that means potential risks and harms are also amplified.

This guide offers parents and carers advice on those specific risks and benefits to help you support your neurodivergent child as they play video games.



What the research says

Benefits



58%

of neurodivergent teens say gaming makes them happy



31%

of neurodivergent teens say gaming helps them feel part of a community



42%

of neurodivergent teens say gaming helps them relax

Challenges



23%

of neurodivergent teens struggle with accessibility of video games



1 in 4

of neurodivergent teens struggle with sensory aspects of gaming



22%

of neurodivergent teens say communicating with others in games is a challenge

Supporting resources

Guide for parents and carers

Parent guide highlights benefits and risks, signposting helpful resources

- Key research findings
- Video games challenges and suggestions
- Risks and resources

Topics include:

- Navigating contact from strangers
- Managing inappropriate content
- Considering the physical impacts of gaming
- Understanding the potential financial impacts of online games
- Benefits of playing video games

Thank You

Contact: rupert.meadows@internetmatters.org

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