



Digital Parenting

A guide to help your family live a happy and safe digital life by  **vodafone**





Helen Lamprell
General Counsel &
External Affairs Director

Our digital lives have never been more important than they are right now. Inextricably linked to everything we do, our phones, computers and tablets have been our lifeline since the pandemic struck. Like so many parents, I have gone from worrying about my teenagers' screen time and preoccupation with social media to wondering whether, perhaps, they were not spending enough of each day using their tech to stay linked to what really matters.

Over the past year, digital technology has enabled us to keep in touch with grandparents and friends through quarantine, to pursue education from the kitchen table, and to work from home in ways we might never have thought possible. As lockdowns around the world saw a rise in domestic violence and depression due to isolation, social media helped people in the most difficult of circumstances to connect and ask for help. Throughout this unprecedented time, technology has opened the door to a world of hope – from life-saving medical studies, to community building, to learning beyond the classroom.

The COVID-19 crisis has driven home just how crucial it is to spend our time wisely. There's never been a more important time to use technology to connect with the ones we love. We've seen our own relationships grow stronger, as our relationship with tech adapts to the world around us. This year's Digital Parenting magazine will help you get the most out of life today – whether it's finding an app that connects your family to the stars, or one that helps your child explore the skills they might need for a career in tech. Read on for ideas on how to have fun, stay safe and learn together.

We hope you find this guide useful. Let us know what you think by tweeting [@VodafoneUK](https://twitter.com/VodafoneUK).

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02. Welcome



04. What are kids talking about?



07. Beyond the headlines



10. Five superhero digital resources



12. Safety by numbers



16. Skills lab



20. Closer to nature

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5 terms every parent should know

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That's why my children's newspaper, First News, and my Sky News' children's programme, FYI, are more important now than ever – children need reliable sources of news they can trust.

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Children need to be protected because stories never disappear from the web. Clicks can represent big money to advertisers; if there is a juicy story, people will click and read. The news – true or false – is almost irrelevant. Even more confusingly, there are stories with a kernel of truth but which have biased reporting.

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"We've all learned how important online connection can be," she says. "Apps and games have brought people closer together over lockdown and brought real benefits."

"Whatever the future brings, the benefits of these digital tools should not be forgotten", she says. "They can be used to improve the mental and physical health of the whole family, from children to the elderly."

The tools opposite are five of the very best.



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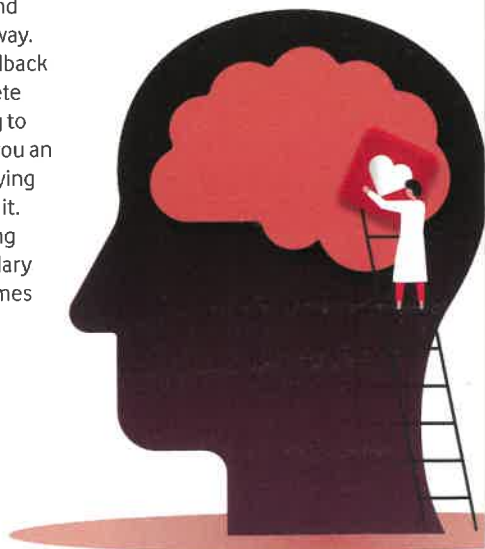
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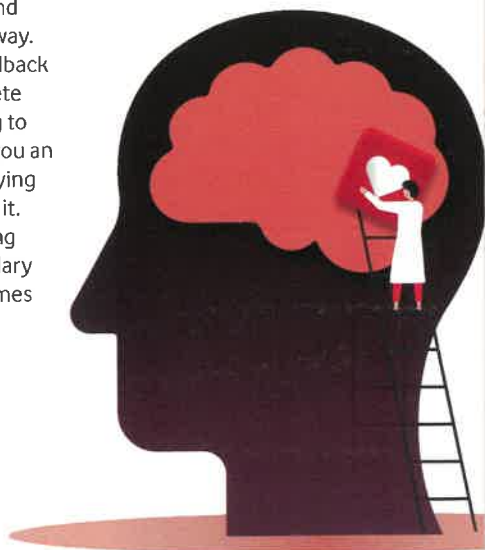
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- Does the website have an About Us or a Contact section?
- Does it have a standard address such as .org, .co.uk or .com?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'no', encourage your child to check the story again before spreading the word.

First News is read by more than 2.6 million children aged 7-14, and subscribed to by families and nearly half of all schools. FYI can be seen every weekend on Sky News, Sky Kids, and all week at first.news/fyi.

ELLA

FYI PRESENTER, 14



I think it's really important that kids have an understanding of what's happening in the world, so they can empathise and grow up with a global awareness and open-minded attitude. In my opinion, balanced news helps shape a person's view of the world and broadens their mindset.

JESS

FIRST NEWS REPORTER, 13



It's important for a child to know what is going on in the world so they feel included and know what's happening. My main interest is the environment. If I hadn't learnt so much, I might still be using plastic. I watch programmes about the environment – I think David Attenborough is brilliant.

BRAYDON

FYI PRESENTER, 11



Kids' news is very important, as it helps us understand what is happening in the world, but in a way that is much clearer than the usual adult news channels. I particularly enjoy the wildlife and natural world news that we report on, as well as 'fake news or fact?'.

RAAGHAV

FIRST NEWS READER, 13



I am passionate about technology and politics. It is no longer an option for young people like me not to engage with either – the two things are fundamentally linked! We have witnessed the power of platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Google influencing the Brexit referendum and the 2016 US election.



Five superhero digital resources that boost mental health

This year more than ever before, we all appreciate the crucial role the digital world can play in protecting mental wellbeing. Last year, when many physical options for connection closed to us, online apps and tools became a lifeline, says Andrea Chatten, Child Emotional & Behavioural Psychologist at unravelsupport.co.uk.

"We've all learned how important online connection can be," she says. "Apps and games have brought people closer together over lockdown and brought real benefits."

"Whatever the future brings, the benefits of these digital tools should not be forgotten", she says. "They can be used to improve the mental and physical health of the whole family, from children to the elderly."

The tools opposite are five of the very best.



For tween workouts: Sworkit Kids

Fitness app Sworkit requires a subscription if you want adult fitness content, but the good news is that the children's workouts on the app are totally free and offer strength, agility, flexibility and balance workouts to boost mental and physical health. You can select the length of the workout and the focus, and schedule a time for it too, so that the children are sent a notification. The app links with Spotify so tweens can work out to their favourite playlist.

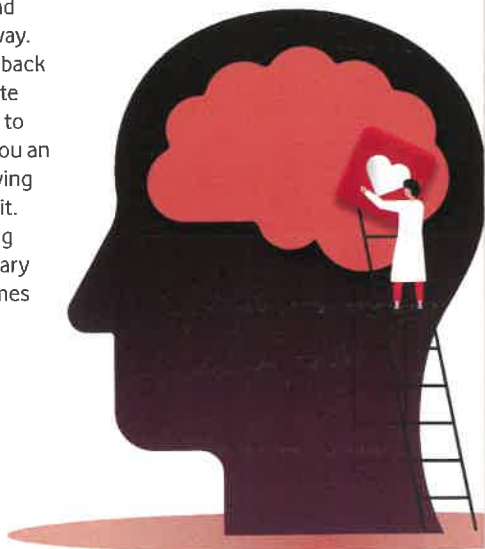
app.sworkit.com



For building resilience: Mind Moose

Used by schools and parents worldwide, Mind Moose takes 7-12 year olds on a journey through their own minds, developing resilience and coping skills along the way. As parents, you get feedback as your children complete Moose Missions relating to their wellbeing, giving you an insight into what's worrying them and how to tackle it. Particularly useful during the transition to secondary school, Mind Moose comes at a cost – £55 a year.

mindmoose.co.uk



For junior mindfulness: Smiling Kids

Aussie not-for-profit Smiling Kids helps everyone improve their mental health with this free app, which excels in specific meditations for kids and youth, with specific content for young people from the age of 3 and up. Whether it's a sleep meditation you need or ten minutes to consider your emotions, you can choose a meditation for your child or one suitable for the whole family.

smilingmind.com.au



For anyone struggling: Shout

24/7 text helpline Shout, launched by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in May 2019, is free on all major networks. By texting the word SHOUT to 85258, anyone in crisis can be put in touch with a trained volunteer who will chat to them in a series of texts. Shout is partnered with the mental health charity Young Minds, and texting YM to 85258 will connect to the service.

giveusashout.org



For senior fitness: Keep On Keep Up

Downloadable on the iPad, the new Keep On Keep Up app is one to share with elderly parents if you are worried about their sedentary lifestyle. The app was developed by the University of Manchester and gamifies the need to improve strength and balance to avoid falls. By increasing physical health, the app improves mental health, too, reducing the chances of isolation and withdrawal from society.

kokuhealth.com

The background is a solid red color. Overlaid on this are various semi-transparent, dark red icons. These icons include musical notes, thumbs-up gestures, speech bubbles, a video camera, a smartphone, and a heart. They are scattered across the page, creating a digital or social media-themed aesthetic.

Safety by numbers

We all worry about keeping our children safe online.

They grow up fast and the digital world changes even more quickly than they do, so getting the balance between giving them necessary online freedom and appropriate restrictions changes depending on age.



For toddlers

While some young children may have their own tablet (the most recent Ofcom survey suggests that a quarter of 3-4 year olds do), many others will be using a parent's phone or other device.

Activating safety features at every level is appropriate for this very young age group, starting with the safety settings on your broadband. It may be easiest to set up a separate profile for your child on shared devices, complete with apps and bookmarks that are age-appropriate, and a child-friendly search site such as Kiddle or Swiggle that will protect them from seeing anything inappropriate.

In a pinch, simply enable airplane mode on any device that you hand to your toddler so he or she can play safely offline, uncontactable by strangers.



For primary school children

Parental safety features are vital on devices for primary aged children, with apps such as Google Family Link and the iPhone privacy settings giving a large measure of control, backed up with broadband safety settings.

You should also disable in-app purchasing and geo-location on all apps.

Older primary school children are likely to request games that can be played socially, such as Roblox and Fortnite.

Check the PEGI rating (like a film rating for games) as well as the recommended age range. Add a parental PIN and lock-down the chat settings so they can only chat with known friends.

Make sure they know how to mute, block and report players if things do go wrong.



For tweens

Music and video-sharing apps are fun for hyper-connected tweens. But they can be a headache for parents, who must decide whether to allow children to defy the 13-plus age restrictions on many popular sites.

Safety stipulations should include ensuring accounts are private and accessible only to friends, so that no contact can be made with strangers and they can't be tagged.

Place time restrictions on individual apps and sites as well as restricting overall screen time for this age group.

Digital tools are no substitute for keeping the channels of communication open. Regularly stress that you are available to listen if your tweens experience anything that worries them and check their browser history and messages regularly.

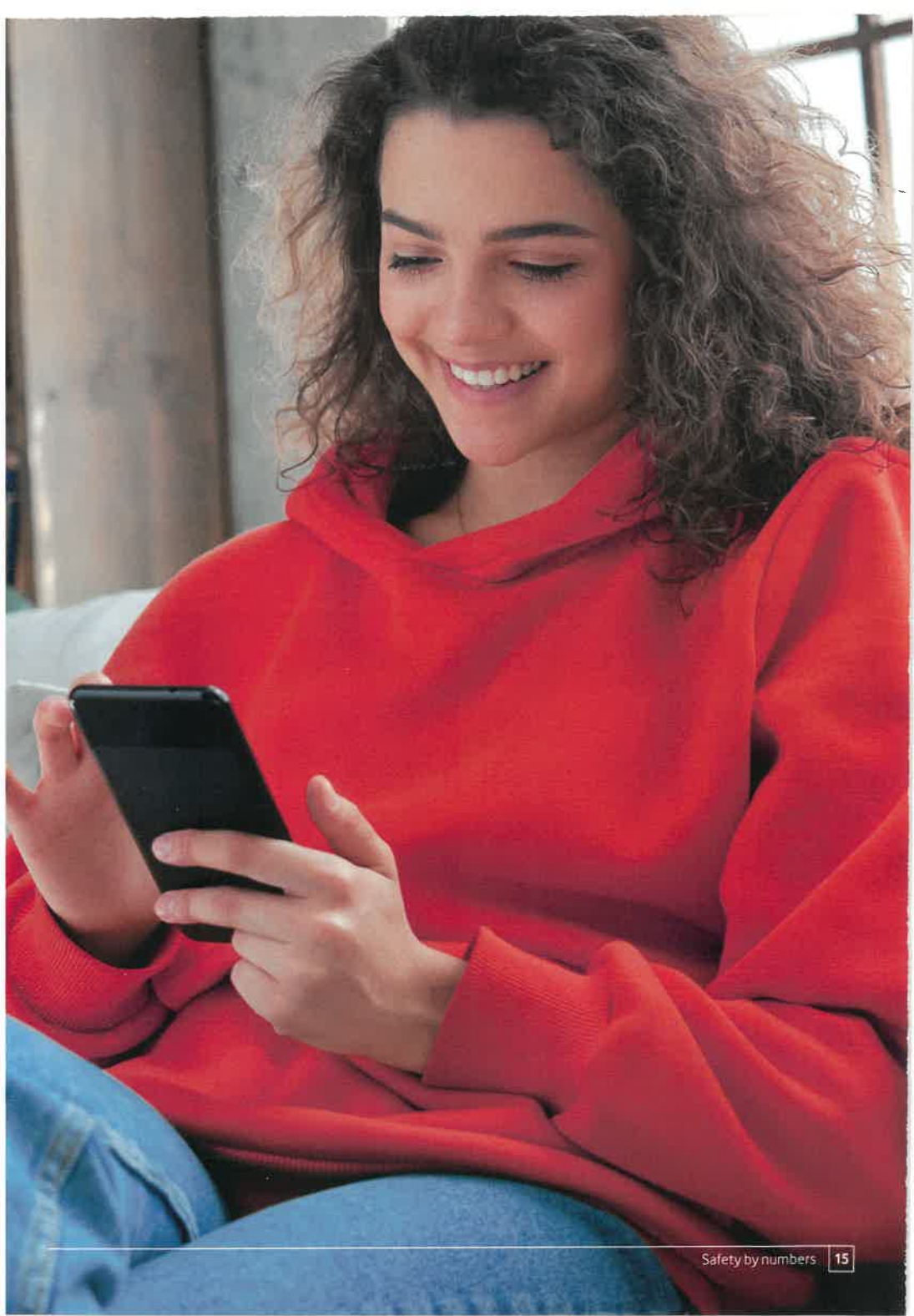


For teens

The whole digital world opens up for teenagers, but that doesn't mean they don't need protecting.

Private, rather than public, social media accounts are appropriate for those aged 13-plus, while understanding the pitfalls around digital reputation is key. Searching for their name regularly to check in on their digital footprint will help them to maintain good habits, while you should also check their browser history.

Regulator Ofcom says that parents of teens find it hard to control their children's screen time, but by discussing the subject of digital wellbeing and agreeing daily limits on individual apps before enforcing them on phones and tablets, your teenagers can enjoy their digital freedom healthily.



Skills lab

Here are the lessons
tech-savvy parents
are teaching their kids

Have you felt a little at sea when teaching your children how to navigate the digital world? Have you realised that some of your children's peers can programme robots, but you aren't quite sure how to help your kids navigate their way around the latest, age-appropriate tech tools? Welcome to Vodafone's skills lab.

We're all aware of how important tech is. Debates over the positives and pitfalls of screen time for kids can be confusing: while more time on screens is linked to lower language development, high-quality educational screen content is actually associated with better language skills. Meanwhile, a professor at NYU has developed three games proven to boost cognitive skills. "We want to show that... these kinds of technologies can improve your cognitive function and can improve your learning," said Jan L. Plass.



But how do you choose the right ways to play? Apple's App Store alone features over 75,000 apps marked as 'educational'. How is a busy parent supposed to shift the 'need to knows' from the 'nice to haves'?

Help is at hand. We've drawn up a list of the apps and programmes you need for each stage of your child's development. These are things they'll not only love, but also ways to play that will also teach them the digital skills essential for their futures. This is the way to ensure that your child doesn't just play video games, use memes, and watch music videos, but that they become expert creators of them, too.

AGE 1

Caribu



One of Time Magazine's 'best inventions of 2019', this app allows families to select a book to share over a Caribu call. Kids see Granny's face as she reads and the pages of the picture book too.

caribu.com

Free app with in-app purchases

AGE 2

Augmented Reality

Google
AR & VR

Does your child want a life-sized horse to join them in the sitting room? Click, learn and laugh as you amass a menagerie in your home.

arvr.google.com/ar

Free Google search application



AGE 3

Dream Learners



Inspired by research demonstrating that learning is most effective in the 90-minutes before sleep, and developed with Robert Winston, Professor of Science and Society at Imperial College London, this clever app contains animated bedtime stories to support the curriculum for 3-9-year-olds.

dreamlearners.com

Free app with in-app purchases

**The positives
and pitfalls of
screen time
for kids can be
confusing.**

AGE 4

Loopimal



Create your own music using the sounds and cute animated creatures in the app's building kit while learning about computer sequencing and music composition too!

yatatoy.com/loopimal

£3.99 app

AGE 5

Scratch Jr



Small children can make characters move, jump, dance, and sing through this app's colourful and visual programming language, meaning they can become master coders before they've even mastered reading.

scratchjr.org

Free app

AGE 6

Toontastic 3D



Got a mini Michelangelo on your hands? This Google app allows kids to draw, animate and narrate their own 3D cartoon.

toontastic.withgoogle.com

Free app

AGE 7

Stop Motion Studio



Group sequential photos together to produce your own stop frame. Enlist toys as actors, friends to supply voice overs or soundtracks, and suddenly you have hours of self-directed fun.

cateater.com

Free app with in-app purchases

AGE 8**Minecraft:
Education Edition**

Last Spring, Minecraft created a new Education category in the Minecraft Marketplace. Tour the International Space Station or even the inside of a human eye. Even better, most of these worlds are entirely free.

minecraft.net/en-us/marketplace/education

Free app with most worlds free

AGE 9**Scribble**

Banish boredom for good with this story-writing and illustrating app. Over 300 drawing tools, backgrounds, stickers, stamps and music, plus 35 'fill-in-the-blank' story starters are guaranteed to spark creativity.

app.scribblepress.com

£4.69 app

AGE 10**Google Cardboard**

Google's cardboard viewer is the perfect, affordable gateway into virtual reality. Download the free Cardboard app, slip your phone into the viewer, and immerse yourself in landscapes from the Arctic to Paris.

arvr.google.com/cardboard

Google Cardboard Viewer: £12.30. Cardboard app: free.

AGE 11**Inshot**

Perfect for mini movie-makers, this simple, colourful video editor enables kids to shoot and edit their own films, adding animated stickers and text, music and sound effects.

inshot.com

Free app with in-app purchases

AGE 12**Edu**

Not content to just view VR? How about building your own? CoSpaces' kid-friendly tools make it possible to build a 360-degree immersive environment, game or even interactive story. Sounds intimidating, but actually it's all drag-and-drop and there are tutorials on YouTube.

cospaces.io/edu

Free app with in-app purchases

**High-quality
educational
screen content
is actually
associated
with better
language skills.**



AGE 13

Ninja Jamm



This music-making app is simple and has a serious cool factor, since it was launched by the Ninja Tune label. Remix or create new tunes using drum, bass, vocal and melody samples from artists like Bonobo and Mr Scruff.

ninjajamm.com

Free app with in-app purchases

AGE 16

Touchcast Studio



A wannabe TV presenter or YouTuber's dream, this app gives you a TV studio on your iPad. Get to grips with green screen technology, virtual sets, teleprompters and more.

touchcast.com/studio

Free app

AGE 14

UL Xplorlabs



Think science is boring? Think again. Xplorlabs is designed to get young teens inventing solutions to real-world problems. In the 'Fire Lab' module, teens work with real scientists through videos and interactive tools, to investigate the cause of a blaze.

ulxplorlabs.org/all-modules

Free online platform

AGE 17

Codea for iPad



Some successful and popular video games have already been developed using this slick, iPad-specific coding app which employs the Lua programming language. Tutorials and sample programmes help to get the ball rolling.

codea.io

App, £14.99

AGE 15

Vidcode



Designed to appeal to teens, and especially teen girls, Vidcode gets them to code the things they love most (memes, Snapchat filters and music videos) using the tools they love most (their own photos and videos).

vidcode.com

Free online platform

AGE 18

MIT App Inventor



Launched by the venerable Massachusetts Institute of Technology, there's everything here you need to build your own sophisticated and world-altering app in less than 30-minutes. No excuses, now...

appinventor.mit.edu

Free, cloud-based tool

Can't tell a
hemlock from
an **oak**?





Here's how tech can help

Think of how your grandparents could identify any tree, and you're a bit fuzzy on the differences. What about your children?

Lucy Jones, author of *Losing Eden* and mother of two young children, writes about our nature knowledge loss and how to fix it.

Our disconnection from the natural world is at an unprecedented level. We spend between one to five per cent of our time outside. Three-quarters of children (aged 5-12) spend less leisure time outdoors than prison inmates. Fewer than one in ten children regularly play in wild spaces now and children don't walk to school as much or as freely as they did in previous generations.

This alienation from the rest of the living world means that we are losing knowledge that has been part of the human experience for millennia. Almost four in five children can't recognise a bumblebee or an oak leaf. Many of us can see

this pattern of the 'extinction of experience' in our families. My grandmothers had an inherent lexicon of the natural world and how it operates. My parents knew about birds, flowers and plants; names, timings and behaviours. I know maybe ten per cent of what they know, although I'm trying to rectify this knowledge gap.

As natural environments are destroyed and species decline, the cycle is set to continue. As fewer children connect with nature, it will follow that if they become parents, their children will have an even more tenuous connection with the natural world.





Expert help and advice

Tonnes of tips and resources, regularly updated to keep up with the trends



Digital Awareness UK

Views and advice from our expert partners on how to improve your digital wellbeing

Visit us online to join the conversation throughout the year.

vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting



Support for schools

Find out more about our work in schools to help parents and young people get more out of their lives online

Digital Family Pledge

To help your family set some house rules on using tech and behaving online



Parent controls and filtering advice

So you can manage what your kids see and do online for better peace of mind

For further help and support

Digital Parenting website

→ vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting

Internet Matters

→ internetmatters.org

The Mix

→ themix.org.uk

Digital Awareness UK

→ digitalawarenessuk.com

Think U Know

→ thinkuknow.co.uk

Child Net

→ childnet.com

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