

## A Parent's Guide to Setting Up Parental Controls on Gaming Consoles and PC

Ensuring a safe and age-appropriate gaming environment for your children is crucial. This guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to set up parental controls on popular gaming platforms: Xbox Series X, PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, and Steam.

### Xbox Series X | S:

Microsoft offers a robust suite of parental controls through the **Microsoft Family Safety app** (available on iOS and Android) and directly on the console.

<https://support.xbox.com/en-US/help/family-online-safety/browse>

- **Using the Microsoft Family Safety App (Recommended):**

1. **Create Family Group:** If you haven't already, create a family group with your child's Microsoft account. You can do this through the app or on the Microsoft website.
2. **Link Accounts:** Add your child's Microsoft account to your family group.
3. **Manage Settings:** Through the app, you can manage various settings remotely:
  - **Screen Time Limits:** Set daily or weekly time limits for Xbox and Windows devices.
  - **Content Filters:** Restrict access to games, apps, and movies based on age ratings.
  - **Spending Limits:** Manage purchase permissions and set spending limits for the Microsoft Store.
  - **Communication Limits:** Control who your child can communicate with via text and voice chat.
  - **Activity Reports:** Monitor your child's gaming activity and spending.
4. **Apply Settings:** Once configured in the app, these settings will automatically apply to your child's Xbox Series X|S console when they sign in.

- **Setting Controls Directly on the Console:**

1. **Sign In:** Sign in to your adult Microsoft account on the Xbox.
2. **Go to Settings:** Navigate to **Profile & system > Settings > Account > Family settings**.
3. **Manage Child's Account:** Select your child's account.
4. **Configure Options:** Here you can adjust:
  - **Content Access:** Filter content by age rating.

- **Communication & Multiplayer:** Control who they can communicate with and if they can play multiplayer games.
- **Purchase & Spending:** Require a passkey for purchases.
- **Screen Time:** Set daily time limits.

## PlayStation 5 (PS5):

Sony provides parental controls through **Family Management** on the PlayStation Network.

<https://www.playstation.com/en-us/parental-controls/>

- **Create Family Manager Account:** The adult account that creates the family becomes the Family Manager.
- **Add Family Members:** Add your child's PlayStation Network account to your family.
- **Manage Settings:**
  1. **Go to Settings:** From the PS5 home screen, go to **Users and Accounts > Family and Other > Family Management**.
  2. **Select Child's Account:** Choose your child's profile.
  3. **Adjust Parental Controls:** Configure the following:
    - **Play Time for Today:** Set daily play time limits.
    - **Games:** Restrict access to games based on age ratings.
    - **Blu-ray Disc™ and DVD:** Restrict playback based on ratings.
    - **Internet Browser:** Restrict or allow access to the internet browser.
    - **Communication and User-Generated Content:** Control who they can communicate with and whether they can share content.
    - **Spending Limits:** Set monthly spending limits for PlayStation Store purchases.
    - **Change Password and Login Settings:** Prevent your child from changing their password or login ID.
- **Set a Passcode:** Create a system restriction passcode to prevent changes to parental control settings without your authorization (**Settings > Family and Other > Family Management > PS5 Parental Controls > System Restriction Passcode**).

## Nintendo Switch:

Nintendo offers parental controls through the **Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app** (available on iOS and Android) and directly on the console.

<https://www.nintendo.com/au/nintendo-switch-family/parental-controls/>

- **Using the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls App (Recommended):**
  1. **Download and Link:** Download the app and link it to your Nintendo Switch by following the on-screen instructions on the console (**System Settings > Parental Controls > Parental Control Settings > Use Your Smart Device**).
  2. **Manage Settings Remotely:** Through the app, you can:
    - **Play Time Limit:** Set daily play time limits and receive notifications when the limit is reached. You can even set an alarm to automatically suspend gameplay.
    - **Restricted Software:** Restrict access to games based on age ratings.
    - **Communication with Others:** Control the ability to exchange messages and images with other users.
    - **Posting to Social Media:** Restrict the ability to share screenshots and videos on social media.
    - **Purchases in Nintendo eShop:** Restrict purchases without your permission (requires linking a Nintendo Account).
- **Setting Controls Directly on the Console:**
  1. **Go to System Settings:** From the HOME Menu, select **System Settings > Parental Controls > Parental Control Settings**.
  2. **Set Restrictions:** You can configure similar settings as the app, but managing time limits is less flexible.
  3. **Set a PIN:** Create a PIN to prevent changes to parental control settings (**System Settings > Parental Controls > PIN Input Settings**).

## Steam (PC):

Steam offers **Family View** to manage what games and features your child can access.

<https://help.steampowered.com/en/faqs/view/054C-3167-DD7F-49D4>

- **Enable Family View:**
  1. **Log in to Steam:** Log in to your Steam account.
  2. **Go to Settings:** Click on "Steam" in the top-left corner and select "Settings."
  3. **Navigate to Family:** Click on the "Family" tab.
  4. **Manage Family View:** Click on "Manage Family View."

5. **Select Content:** Choose the games and features you want to restrict access to (e.g., specific games in your library, the Steam Store, community features, friends list).
  6. **Set a PIN:** Create a 4-digit PIN to lock and unlock Family View.
- **Using Family View:** When Family View is enabled, your child will only be able to access the games and features you have selected after entering the PIN. To exit Family View and access everything, the PIN is required.
  - **Steam Family Sharing (Considerations):** While Family Sharing allows you to share your game library, parental controls apply to the entire shared library when Family View is active on the child's account.

## Key Takeaways for Parents:

- **Be Involved:** Play games with your kids! It doesn't matter that you're bad; meet them where they are!
- **Talk About Safety:** Talk to your children about online safety and responsible gaming habits.
- **Set Clear Expectations:** Establish rules and boundaries for gaming time and appropriate content.
- **Utilize Platform Tools:** Take advantage of the robust parental control features offered by each platform.
- **Review Settings Regularly:** Gaming landscapes and your child's maturity evolve, so review and adjust settings as needed.
- **Keep Passcodes Secure:** Don't share your parental control PINs or passwords with your children.
- **Monitor Activity:** Periodically check activity reports and spending to ensure compliance with your set rules.

By taking the time to set up and understand these parental control features, you can help create a safer and more enjoyable gaming experience for your children. Remember that open communication and ongoing involvement are just as important as the technical controls themselves.