

Gambling & young people

Advice for Parents
and Carers



The Gambling
Education Hub

in partnership with
BeGambleAware.org[®]



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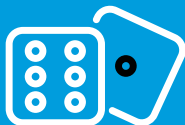
Talk to your children about gambling

Please consider talking with your children about gambling. Gambling is often normalised and seen as harmless, however it can become a problem. Although most children will never develop a gambling disorder, research shows that the younger someone starts gambling the more likely they are to have a problem with their gambling later in life.

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Find out more about gambling

Most common gambling activities



Private bets



Scratch cards



Fruit machines



Playing cards

Keep in mind that the most common gambling activities for 11-16 year olds are private bets, scratchcards, fruit machines and playing cards.

The minimum legal age for gambling in the UK is 18 for betting shops, bingo halls, casinos and online gambling, while it is 16 for the National Lottery, as well as playing lotteries and scratchcards online. Some gaming machines in amusement arcades (e.g. coin pushers, teddy grabbers, some lower stakes fruit machines) don't have a minimum legal age.



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Ask your child what they think about gambling

Ask your children what they think about gambling before offering your own opinion. This could be a good opportunity to find out what they know and correct any misunderstandings they may have.

Also, remember that the way you answer questions may affect how comfortable they feel approaching you in the future to talk about gambling.

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Talk to your child about the harms and risks of gambling

Only 34% of parents/guardians have spoken to their child about the potential problems that gambling can lead to. Discuss with your children the risks and consequences that are associated with gambling, but avoid using scare tactics, to enable them to make informed choices.

Help your children understand how gambling could have a negative impact on their wellbeing and friendships.

50%

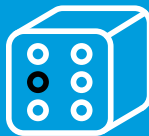
of young people have not been spoken to about the potential problems that gambling can lead to

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Let your children know that gambling isn't a way to make easy money

Talk with your children about how they spend their money. Explain that gambling should never be seen as a way to make money or recover lost money. Try and help them understand that any money spent on gambling should be considered the cost to buy the entertainment, not an investment to make a winning.

It may also be helpful to explain that, in the end, "the house always wins", meaning anyone that gambles is always more likely to lose than win.



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Be clear about your own gambling

Be aware of your own reasons for participating (or not) in gambling. If you do, help your children understand what it means to gamble safely.

For example, don't chase losses, make sure you set affordable limits on the time and money you spend on gambling, and stick to them.



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Challenge the adverts

Adverts tend to portray gambling as an activity that is always fun, exciting and cool. Children are constantly exposed to marketing messages: research shows that just over half of 11-16 year olds have seen gambling adverts on TV, 49% on social media and 43% on other websites.

When coming across gambling adverts, support your children in thinking critically about those messages and in understanding the influences of advertising.

Where do young people see gambling adverts?



on TV



on social media



on other websites



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Be aware of the possible links between gaming and gambling

Excessive gaming and internet use can be associated with being at risk of experiencing gambling harms. Many games also include loot boxes: these are items in virtual games that can be paid for with real-world money but contain unknown rewards.

Although paying for and opening loot boxes is not currently considered gambling, studies have identified a connection between certain forms of gaming and gambling.

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Set and maintain rules on gambling

Only 23% of parents set rules on gambling: consider discussing with your children online safety, screen time and access to gambling and gaming opportunities.

It is a good idea to encourage your children to agree and stick to limits to help them make informed decisions about their use of technology. If needed, you could consider installing on your computers and laptops blocking software that would restrict access to gambling websites.

Only 23% of parents set rules on gambling



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Support your children in identifying alternative activities

Help your children understand that gambling should not be seen as a coping strategy to deal with negative emotions or a way of feeling good about themselves.

Considering that gambling can lead to isolation and poor mental health, encourage your children to take part in alternative activities which support their overall wellbeing and promote their social and emotional development.

Find out more about gambling and the support available



Our website provides information on gambling and support services:

- fastforward.org.uk/advice-for-parents
- fastforward.org.uk/support-available

More information for parents and carers can be found here:

- parentzone.org.uk/article/how-talk-children-about-gambling
- nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe

For confidential advice, support, and information about yours or someone else's gambling:



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