

A New Year has begun

It's time to help children
become active digital citizens



For parents



COUNCIL OF EUROPE





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Being online



Access and Inclusion

Digital technology can bring children together with family and friends in distant places all year long. However, it can also divide people by giving extra advantages to those who have and know how to use it, but depriving the less fortunate of many opportunities.

-  Differences are sometimes related to disabilities.
-  Get your children to choose a disability to research online, to show you how digital technology could help children with this disability live an easier life. But are such tools available and affordable for everyone?



Learning and Creativity

The start of a new year represents new beginnings, and is therefore an ideal time to encourage children to explore new topics. Digital technology can help boost their imagination. Explore with them and let them show you their digital skills.

-  Ask family members to do an online search to find out how the new year is celebrated in a country or region of their choice.
-  Compare results. It will liven up meal-time discussions and remind everyone that differences are exciting to discover.

Media and Information Literacy

While New Year resolutions are still at the top of everyone's mind, get children to think about the media they use and the way it can influence the things they want and do.



-  Choose a country that your children are interested in, and use the internet to find out how this new year was celebrated there.
-  Do the celebrations really reflect the way people live in that country? Remind them that appearances may sometimes be deceptive.

Well-being online

Ethics and Empathy



Families and friends often meet and give each other gifts at the end of the old year or the beginning of the new one.

Talk about gift-giving with children and get them thinking about ways other than gifts that they can show kindness and appreciation to others.

-  Ask your children to put themselves in the shoes of others who don't receive gifts because of lack of money or due to cultural practices.
-  Are they ready to offer one of their own toys to a child less fortunate than themselves?


Health and Well-being

Whenever children have time off school, they often spend more time than ever online. Remind them that physical exercise is really important too. This includes thinking about posture, and avoiding using screens for at least an hour before bedtime.

-  Make informed decisions about the online games your children play.
-  Visit [PEGI](#), the Pan-European Game Information, and enter a game title in the search field. For each game, results will display the minimum recommended age for players and content descriptors that symbolise the type of risky content in the game.

e-Presence & Communications



At the start of the new year, lots of online messages and greetings are exchanged worldwide. It is therefore the perfect moment to remind children that the messages they send and the things they do both online and offline contributes to the way they are perceived by others.

-  Show your children how they can use technologies to communicate effectively, appropriately and respectfully, differentiating for different types of audiences: family, friends, classmates, teachers...

Rights online


Active Participation

New Year resolutions are often about making the year to come better and brighter than the last one. Active participation is one way of making this happen. Children often need reminding that by working with others towards common goals, they are contributing to making the world a better place.

-  Choose a trendy global topic such as climate change, and have a family discussion about how this could impact lives in the future.
-  Ask your children to come up with one action (either online or offline) that you could implement as a family to contribute to improving life on earth.



Rights and Responsibilities

To start the new year on a good footing, encourage children to investigate whether their favourite online platforms really provide ample protection and respect their basic rights.

-  Take a close look with your children at the platforms they are using. Are they adequately protected against accessing harmful information, or receiving hurtful comments or contact requests from strangers?

Privacy and Security


During end-of-year celebrations, children often receive new video games, game apps, subscriptions to online gaming platforms, or internet-connected toys. This is a great opportunity to bring up the topic of privacy with them, and the many ways it can be infringed when using these gifts.

-  Check the data policy with your children on their favourite gaming apps or platforms. Are privacy and personal data adequately protected?
-  Be aware that many internet-connected toys collect data too, often without adjustable privacy settings or information about where users' data is stored.

Rights online

Consumer Awareness

Over the New Year, we tend to consume more than usual, and since the Covid-19 pandemic a lot of this spending is done online. Make the most of this opportunity to speak with children about ways that over-consuming can impact the environment, and things they should watch for when choosing items online.

-  Remind children of the true value of money: use the cost of an item they are familiar with (a bus ticket, an ice-cream), and get them to estimate how many such units they would need to buy a mobile phone or a tablet, or pay the family's internet and wi-fi subscription each month.

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Other Council of Europe publications on Digital Citizenship Education

- ▶ Educating for a video game culture – A map for teachers and parents (2021)
- ▶ Easy steps to help your children become a Digital Citizen (2020)
- ▶ Keeping young citizens busy at home during the Corona crisis (2020)
- ▶ Parenting in the digital age – positive parenting strategies for different scenarios (2020)
- ▶ Digital Citizenship Education Handbook (2019)
- ▶ Bullying: perspectives, practice and insights (2017)
- ▶ Internet Literacy Handbook (2017)

Further information available at:
www.coe.int/education

Authors:
Janice Richardson
Veronica Samara



PREMS 088722

ENG

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