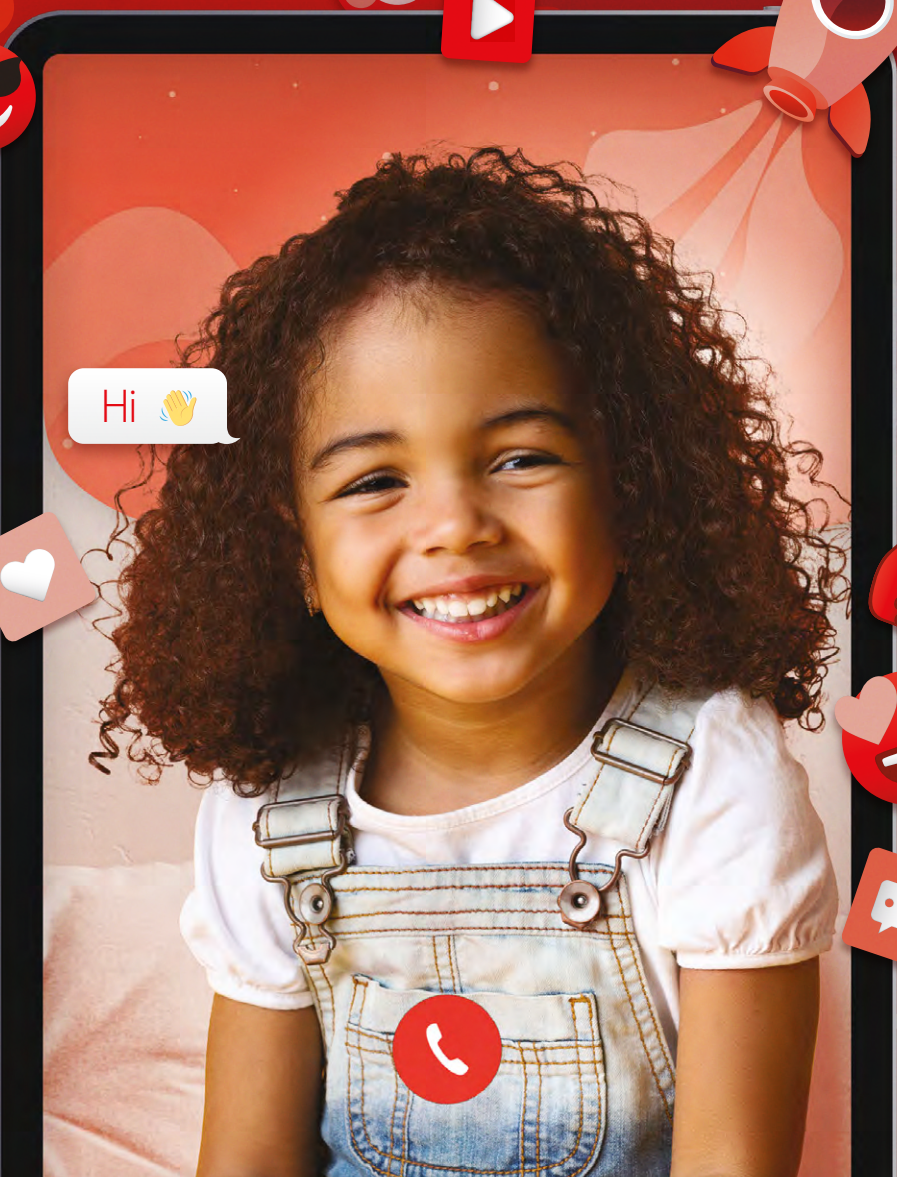




Digital Parenting

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



Hi 🙌





Helen Lamprell
General Counsel &
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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).

Welcome

to **Digital Parenting:**
Vodafone's guide to help
your family live a **happy**
and **safe digital life.**





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What are kids talking about?



At our wellbeing organisation, Digital Awareness UK, we speak to thousands of young people and parents every month about how to survive and thrive online.

As you might imagine, these conversations have shifted over the past year. The pandemic and resulting lockdowns have irreversibly changed everyone's relationship with technology. There's still much uncertainty around what 2021 will bring, but one thing we do know is how important it is for parents to feel on top of the latest online trends.



Video dominates in social media

Apps that allow young people to make, share and view short videos are growing in popularity among tweens and teens.

Many of you will be well aware of the lip-syncing, dancing, anything-goes phenomenon that is TikTok. But when TikTok (along with Instagram and Snapchat) had to move aside for new video-sharing app Triller to top UK app charts in summer 2020, video made its mark as a truly dominant force and continues to do so in 2021. You can find some great advice on how video-sharing apps like TikTok can be used safely, and how to have the right conversations with your children on Vodafone's Digital Families website vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting.



Video calls boost mental health

Many parents have been in a bit of a panic over the past few years about the negative impact technology might have on young people's mental health.

So it was promising to see in a survey carried out by mental health charity Young Minds that 72% of young people said video calls with friends helped to improve their mental health during the pandemic.

If you notice your child (whatever their age) is feeling isolated or needs a bit of a boost, it may be that a video call with a friendly face is the perfect antidote.

“ 72% OF YOUNG PEOPLE SAID VIDEO CALLS WITH FRIENDS HELPED TO IMPROVE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC. ”



Mindful screen time helps with tech overload

It was no surprise during lockdown and beyond that for many families 'screen time' soon became 'scream time', as they understandably struggled to manage tech overload during the pandemic.

Now more than ever, we have been encouraging families to protect those critical points throughout the day – like sleeping, eating, going for walks or reading bedtime stories. Try your best to make these tech-free times, but don't beat yourself up if you feel like it's an ongoing battle and you need to reach for the 'iPad nanny' once in a while. No parent is perfect when it comes to screen-time management (digital wellness experts included).

EMMA ROBERTSON is Director and Co-Founder of online safety agency Digital Awareness UK

5 terms every parent should know

01.

Deepfakes

AI-generated fake videos or images that allow people's faces or bodies to be swapped or digitally altered – commonly seen in celebrity pornographic videos, fake news and on face-swapping apps.

02.

Cancel Culture

On social media, this often refers to the withdrawal of support for public figures – e.g. Instagrammers – or companies we disagree with.

03.

Misinformation

False information that hasn't necessarily been created to intentionally mislead people – e.g. sharing a COVID-19 “miracle cure” without knowing if it's genuinely effective or not.

04.

Disinformation

False information that is intended to deliberately mislead people – e.g. writing a blog post that intentionally contains inaccurate news.

05.

Digital Activism

Using digital platforms – like social media – to encourage social or political change, as seen during the US election and Black Lives Matter movement.

Beyond the headlines:



Real children, extraordinary times

If anything important happens, we'll soon hear about it.

We might be on holiday, off the beaten track, but somehow news of tragedies, political resignations and celebrity scandals follow us wherever we go. Now we are living with a relatively new and dangerous phenomenon: **fake news.**



NICKY COX MBE is Editor-in-Chief of First News, Executive Producer of Sky News' FYI, and was part of the all-party parliamentary select committee on children's literacy and fake news.

As adults, we have the experience to question what we read – checking the source and its reliability. But children are not so savvy and there is much evidence (from the NSPCC and other bodies) that their mental health is being affected.

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.

All of the evidence suggests that children are growing more invested in and engaged with what is going on in the world around them.

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.

First News and FYI are not afraid to tackle any headline that is in the news – however worrying – because we know that children are hearing about it anyway. They deliver the facts truthfully to our young readers and viewers but without any of the sensationalist spin or bias of adult newspapers, or the internet.

TEACH CHILDREN TO ASK THEMSELVES THESE QUESTIONS:

- Does the story sound believable?
- Do other sites have the same facts and figures?
- Has it been reported on the radio, TV and in more than one reputable newspaper?
- Does the photo or video look normal?
- Does the website look professional or does it use poor quality graphics?
- Is some of the text written in caps – usually a sign of sensationalism – or feature lots of exclamation marks?
- 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.