

Do any of the children or young people in your care play FIFA?

THE QUICK GUIDE TO FIFA FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

If you've ever heard them talking about it, here's our quick guide to understanding the game!

FIFA is a simulated football game, where gamers can choose to play as their favourite real-life footballers in their favourite real-life teams. The first edition of FIFA was released by EA in 1993. Since then, a new version is released every year.

Each new edition of FIFA has a companion app released alongside it and both are highly anticipated by fans of the game.



What about Game Modes?

Gamers can play on their own offline. However, the culture of FIFA revolves around online competition, playing matches against other gamers online. There are multiple modes available to play, with the most popular being the FIFA Ultimate Team (FUT) - an "ultimate team" of their favourite players that each have their own FUT item and rating.

What is Cross-play?

EA has announced that a Cross-play test for FIFA 22 is coming soon to all players on PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and S and for the Google Stadia versions. It will allow players to play the game with others on different platforms. Cross-play allows for friends on different consoles to play together and for online matchmaking to occur between strangers across platforms, too.

Players will be able to add friends on other platforms and still have the ability to block or mute other players if needed.

How do I make FIFA safer for my gamers?



Talk and play together.

Ask your child or young person what they enjoy about playing the game. Show interest in what they are doing and ask if you can watch or play the game together. Ask them about who they play FIFA with and clarify how they know each "friend" they mention. Remind them that they do not need to accept friend requests from someone they don't know in real life.

Discuss the risks.

Talk to your child about the risks of playing online games and remind them that strangers they meet over FIFA are still strangers, even if they have the same interest in teams or clubs.

Learn together how to mute, block and report.

Show the child in your care how to report and block other players, ensuring they know this is a valid option if someone makes them uncomfortable or behaves inappropriately. Walk them through the "Mute Voice Chat" settings on their console or PC.



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Are there any risks?

All games can present risks to children and young people. While FIFA may appear "safe" there are still some significant risks found during gameplay.



Gambling Risks and In-App Purchases

Although FIFA can be played without making purchases, FIFA packs are available to buy. They contain things like new kits or logos or "pay-to-win" items that affect game progress and give players an advantage. Gamers can win them in events, purchase them with FIFA coins (the in-game currency), or buy them with real-world money. These packs are controversial, with many criticising EA for introducing gambling mechanics to children and young people under 18.

Persuasive Design

The desire to 'get ahead' in the game can overwhelm a child or young person who may not have a healthy concept of screen-time or offline responsibilities. They may stay up late or ignore homework to spend more time playing, especially if they keep their gaming console in their bedroom.

There are design aspects of the game that work to encourage longer gameplay which young people may be more susceptible to.

Explain the importance of protecting privacy online to your child.

Discuss what information should never be shared (full names, phone numbers, schools etc.) and why.

Enable FIFA Playtime.

This feature allows gamers to see an overview of the amount of time spent playing, the number of matches played, and the sum of FIFA points purchased. It also allows you to set limits on things like playtime and spending. Talk about spending money online. Make sure children in your care know to ask for your permission before purchasing anything. Suggest using pocket money as a way for them to learn the value of money and set realistic limits on monthly spending.

Establish Healthy Habits.

Gaming can be a good way for the child in your care to relax, connect with friends, and have fun, but it is important to establish healthy habits. Agree on a set of rules together (e.g., when to play, how long for, etc.) and regularly ask them about what they are doing.

Good communication is the best way to ensure your child stays safe while enjoying something they like.