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About...



**FORTNITE** is one of the most popular online games in the world at the moment. The Game begins with 100 players leaping out of a plane on to a small island who then fight each other until only one is left. Hidden around the island are weapons and items, including cross-bows, rifles and grenade launchers, and players must arm themselves while exploring the landscape and buildings. The last survivor is the winner.

#### **Why is it so popular with young people?**

Well, it's free (to begin with), it's fun and can be very entertaining. The game has very bright, almost cartoon-like graphics as well as loads of entertaining items and costumes, such as space suits and dinosaur outfits. You can also pull a variety of dance moves during the game, and some of these have taken on a cult appeal in school playgrounds around the world. It's also possible to team up with a friend, or group of friends, and compete as a duo or a squad. This adds a social element, and participants are able to chat as they play using headsets and microphones. Many children are now forming FORTNITE teams, and spending a lot of their free time playing and practising the game together.



#### **What are the risks for my child?**

There are concerns that this game can be very violent and addictive. The NSPCC has warned that the voice and text chat systems available in the game are leaving children open to being contacted by strangers. There are also concerns around the amount of money children can spend in the game.

For more information or to talk through any concerns you can contact our Parent and Carer Worker on [wise@ymcadlg.org](mailto:wise@ymcadlg.org)





# YMCA WISE PROJECT

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to stay safe in their relationships

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## Why is chatting to strangers in online games a cause for concern?

Gaming platforms can be used by adults seeking to harm young people. Playing games can be exciting and consuming and sometimes this can mean that children can become a little less guarded when considering who they talk to and what they share. It may also be seen as more 'normal' to talk to adults in a game – especially if children can learn from them – than it would be to talk to an adult on another social media platform. Some offenders seek to exploit this and encourage children to chat with the aim of building a relationship with them. Offenders may also try to encourage a child to move from a game to a private messenger platform to have one-to-one conversations with them. These platforms help offenders to build a relationship with a young person quickly, and are often harder to moderate than group chat within games.

## Top tips for parents and carers

- ◆ It's a good idea to set definite play sessions of, say, an hour or 90 minutes using a timer. If your child is playing on an Xbox or PlayStation you can use the parental controls to set time limits
- ◆ It is advised that parents and carers turn off the voice chat system in the game to ensure children avoid inappropriate contact.
- ◆ Children should be encouraged to play with people they know rather than strangers
- ◆ The text messaging system within the game can **not** be turned off and it is advised that parents talk to their children about the messages they are receiving, the potential risks of talking to strangers online and what to do if they receive messages that they feel uncomfortable with.
- ◆ As it is possible to make in-game purchases it is advised that parents and carers have an overview of how much money their child is spending.

For more advice and tips on how to keep your children safe online:

[www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org)

[www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)