

Understanding Tech

The Digital Safety Dashboard: Use the tools you already have to spot patterns, set calm boundaries and keep family life online steady.

This isn't a single app. A "digital safety dashboard" is a simple habit: look at reports you already have — Apple Screen Time, Google Family Link, console activity, and your home router — together, once a week. You'll see trends, not one-off moments, and make small adjustments without battles.

Short answer

Pick one day a week, open your reports together, praise what's going well, and agree one tiny improvement. That's it. Over time, the tech follows your family rules — not the other way round.

What the built-in tools actually show you

Apple Screen Time (iPhone/iPad/Mac)

- Daily/weekly usage by app and category (e.g., Social, Creativity).
- Downtime (bedtimes), app limits, and communication limits.
- Ask to Buy for purchases — approvals go to the organiser's device.

Google Family Link (Android/Chromebook)

- App activity and time online; approve installs and in-app purchases.
- Bedtime schedules; content filters in Google/YouTube.
- Location (if enabled) with sensible privacy boundaries.

Games consoles (Xbox / PlayStation / Nintendo)

- Play time by game; communication and UGC (user-generated content) controls.
- Spending controls; friend/party privacy settings.
- Activity reports to your email/app on some platforms.

Your home router or mesh Wi-Fi

- Who's online, when, and for how long (by device or profile).
- House-wide schedules for bedtimes and homework.
- Content filtering and safe search options at network level.

How to read patterns (without overreacting)

- Look for trends: a week of later-than-usual bedtimes or long weekend sessions.
- Context matters: exams, new games, holiday routines can explain spikes.

- Ask curious questions: “What do you like about this game?” over “Why were you on so long?”.
- Adjust one variable at a time (e.g., bring bedtime forward by 15 minutes).

Your weekly 10-minute check-in (script)

- Open reports together. Start with praise: “I can see you took breaks — nice work.”
- Ask: “Anything annoying or pushy in chats this week?” (Listen first.)
- Agree one tweak: a small limit, a new app rule, or a headset-off time.
- Write it down. Review the same item next week and celebrate progress.

Quick setups that make life calmer

- Create profiles on your router (child’s tablet + console together).
- Use Friends-only voice/text chat in games; disable “friend-of-a-friend” invites.
- Turn on purchase approval (Apple Ask to Buy / Google approval) and remove stored cards.
- Give devices a bedtime (router downtime + device Screen Time / Family Link).

Privacy and trust

- Avoid secret monitoring. Co-view reports; make your rules predictable.
- No share zones: bedrooms after lights-out, bathrooms, and private chats with strangers.
- If a setting feels too strict, try a trial for two weeks and revisit together.

Helpful links (official & UK)

- [Apple Screen Time \(Family Sharing\)](#)
- [Google Family Link](#)
- [Xbox Family Settings](#)
- [PlayStation Family Management](#)
- [Internet Matters \(UK\)](#)
- [NSPCC Online Safety](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [CEOP Safety Centre](#)