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Online Safety awareness is critical, but at what age should we introduce it into the lives of our children and young people?

There can be no doubt that access to technology and the associated well-being of children and young people is crucial as they grow up online.

The online environment is of course a fantastic resource for learning and socialising and is advancing, technically, at an increased pace. However, there are many influences online which can impact us including, users adopting behaviours either endorsed or modelled by strong influencers, through to peer influence of friends, colleagues or online criminals that can affect choices, and disproportionally alter a person's behaviour, mindset and thought process.

Across many age groups, strong influences can affect the lifelong dynamic process of cognitive development, especially from early childhood.

So, as we become more involved and dependant with being online, it is vitally important we continue and improve our own awareness online but also to introduce online learning and awareness for those in their early years' development.

The Scottish Government created the Parent Club Scotland, informed by evidence and insight, recognising that when parents and carers need somewhere to turn for help, they had a space which would provide support.

The [Parent Club](#) have fantastic resources to support parents and carers of young people from early years through to pre-teen and teenagers. Their resource for [keeping children safe online](#) is excellent and easy to follow, allowing for the gentle introduction of early years online safety as soon as possible.

These resources will look at topics from setting parental controls, screen time, strong passwords, through to supporting parents and carers on more sensitive online issues.

If you have been a victim of crime, and it is not an ongoing emergency, you can report this to Police Scotland on 101.