Story 4: Computer Games

PLAYSTATION

PlayStation

We have been a bit wary of allowing our child on the PlayStation because we have heard so many friends say how their children now spend hours on it and never want to do anything else.
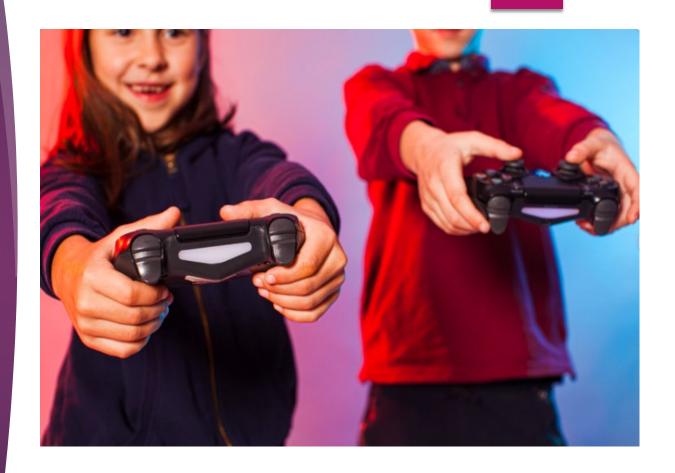
I think they are a bit addictive and it's just too easy for them to end up spending most of their spare time on it! I don't want her lose interest in other things.

Also, I know some of the games allow players to communicate with each other – including people they don't know.

PlayStation

But we also know that they can be a lot of fun! …We decided we would let her start playing on it, but with a few ground rules in place.

Obviously, we only let her play games we feel are suitable for her age and temperament. We do limit the amount of time she gets on it – it can be hard when they first start getting in to it because it's exciting and they ask to play it all the time, but clear rules help.

PlayStation

She does play some games where she can compete against other online players – but the settings we use mean they can't chat with each other, they can only select from certain pre-determined short messages – like a greeting or saying well done – so she can't ever find herself in a situation where she is giving away personal information.

PlayStation

We spoke with her about why we did this and she understood – it was another opportunity to talk about online safety.

She has had a lot of fun with the games and it has also turned out to be a really nice way for her to spend time with her Dad and her sister who enjoy playing too - they have a good laugh and get very competitive!

PlayStation

The winning and losing of games in a family environment like that has helped her to handle those moments better, and deal with the frustrations of trying something new for the first time – she has learned that it is always really tricky when you start playing a new game but that if you keep trying and don't give up you can get really good and she gets a lot of satisfaction from that.