Group Leader's Guide

Left to their own devices?

Care for the Family
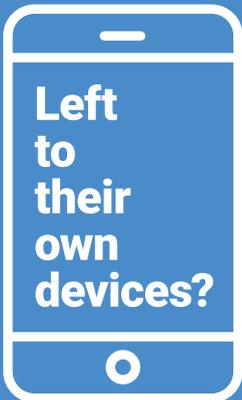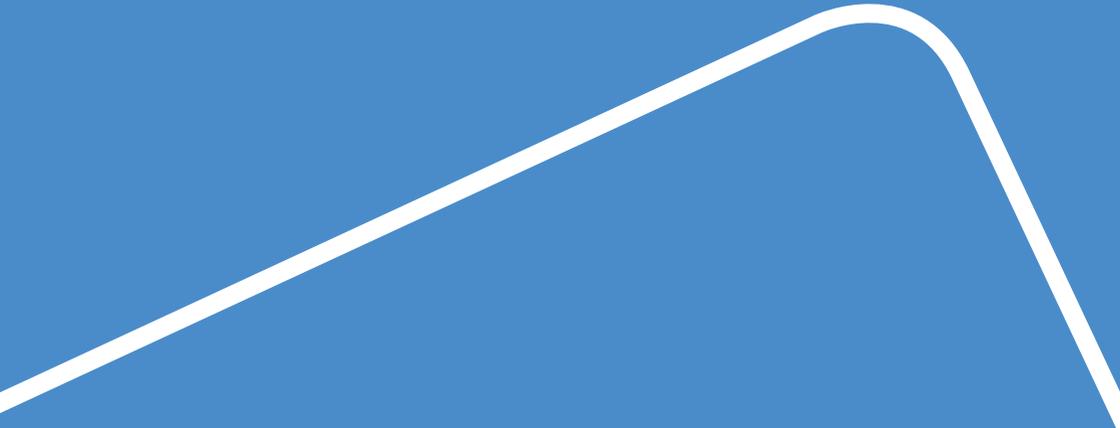
Welcome to *Left To Their Own Devices?*

Whether our children are using apps, online gaming or social media, digital technology has many benefits, including allowing them to build connections with other children and helping them to develop life skills in ways that were never previously possible.

Despite this, parents can feel out of touch with their child's online world. Many are concerned about how to protect their children from dangers such as online bullying and pornography and they worry over the sheer amount of time their children are spending on screens. Yet parents have a vital role to play in helping their children use the internet in a way that is a safe and positive for them and the whole family – they are in fact the biggest influence on their children's lives.

We trust that this resource will make a difference in families as parents are given confidence and ideas to help their children safely navigate the online world.

Context for use

Left To Their Own Devices? is a 90-minute session that is made up of film clips and discussion questions.

The resource is designed for use in schools or in the community with groups of parents and carers. The principles are relevant for parents of children of any age, but particularly children in the primary and teenage years.

It is a great way of bringing parents together to equip and inform them, giving them an opportunity to support each other and share ideas. When parents get together and share their experiences it is reassuring for them to realise that they are not alone when facing particular challenges. This resource can be used in the following ways:

- Parent workshops in schools or the community – gathering parents to work through the session together.

- Run as a session on an inset day to familiarise teachers with materials they may wish to use with parents.

- To train those who work with children and young people so that they can support parents with any concerns.

- The video clip on pornography may be informative for children and young people as well as parents.

Aims

This resource aims to provide parents with:

- Knowledge, confidence and practical ideas to help their child through the challenges of the online world.

- Information about the potential dangers of the online world.

- Strategies for using the internet together in a safe and positive way.

Group leaders

Anyone can run this session – everything you need is provided. The video content does the teaching and you simply need to get a group together and encourage the conversations. This resource gives some key learning and encourages parents to share ideas and support each other, so everyone learns together. You are not expected to be an expert or have all the answers.

Structure

The first part of the session looks at the online world and some of the common challenges that children experience. It then goes on to give parents practical ideas which they can take home and use with their families.

The presenter

Katharine Hill is the UK Director of Care for the Family. She is a well-known speaker, broadcaster and the author of a number of books including *Left To Their Own Devices? – Confident Parenting in a World of Screens*. She is married to Richard and they have four four adult children and two grandchildren.

The experts

Ian Henderson is the CEO and Founder of The Naked Truth Project which aims to educate people about the harmful impact of pornography and empower them to make healthy choices. Ian regularly speaks at conferences both nationally and internationally.

Andy Robertson is a journalist and broadcaster for the BBC, Guardian and Forbes, specialising in video games and families. His book, *Taming Gaming*, helps parents guide children to healthy play and digital wellbeing.

Running *Left To Their Own Devices?*

We have created this resource to be simple to run so that you can focus on hosting your group and encouraging discussion.

As a group leader you will:

- Plan the set up and logistics of running the session (venue, materials needed, etc.)
- Guide a group through the video material
- Introduce and facilitate the discussion times

You can find some helpful do's and don'ts of running a group at: **cff.org.uk/LTTOD**

Safeguarding

The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. If you are given an indication during the session that a child or adult has been abused, or is at risk, follow the safeguarding policy of the organisation you are running the session for. If there is no safeguarding policy in place, you can contact the NSPCC on 080 8800 5000 in relation to the safeguarding of children, or your local Safeguarding Adults/Children Board.

Resource materials

- **Group Leader's Guide**

  This booklet provides the full session outline, highlights the key teaching points in each section and provides you with questions for your group discussion times.

- **Session Notes**

  These booklets are for the parents who attend your session. They capture the key teaching points of the session and have space provided for parents to make their own notes.

- **Film clips**

  The core film clips you need for this session are on a memory stick when you purchase the pack, or they can be downloaded for free from our website.

Additional Group Leader's Guides and Session Notes can be purchased from our online shop or downloaded for free from our website.

If you have time you may like to show film clips from other organisations which look at specific issues related to children's online welfare. Links to other useful film clips can be found on our website along with the core materials for this resource.

Preparation

The outline below gives you the timings for a 90-minute session. You may wish to have an extended session in order to allow extra time for discussion or showing additional video clips. If you would like to run a shorter session, we suggest leaving out one of the interviews and reducing the discussion time.

We have included a range of questions for each discussion time to give a choice of topics to choose from, depending on the needs of your group. It is not likely that you will be able to cover all of these questions in the time allocated, so choose those that you feel will be most relevant to your group and have the others as a back-up only if they are needed.

Equipment

- The *Left To Their Own Devices?* film clips

- A large TV, laptop, or projector and screen for playing the film clips

- Speakers to boost the sound (if using a laptop)

- Session Notes booklet for each parent

- Paper and pens for note taking

- Post-it notes for activities

Session outline

In advance of your session, watch the video clips and become familiar with this guide and with the Session Notes for the parents.

If you are running the session for a large number of people we suggest you break into smaller groups for the discussion times and provide a leader in each group to facilitate the discussion. Alternatively, you could simply ask people to discuss one or two of the questions with the person sitting next to them.

Welcome

As people arrive, welcome them with refreshments and allow time for people to get to know each other before you start your session.

You might like to start the session with an informal icebreaker, particularly if those in the group don't know each other. This could simply be asking each person to share their name, age of their child/children and something they do to relax.

- Introduce yourself and anyone assisting you.

- Set parents at ease by explaining a bit about *Left To Their Own Devices?* and how it will be run.

- Emphasise that this session is not about telling them the 'right' way to do things. This is an opportunity for them to learn from material on the video as well as sharing their own experiences and ideas, and therefore also learning from each other.

- Reassure the group that they do not have to say anything if they don't want to. It is also a good idea to remind everyone to listen to one another, to be respectful of different ideas and experiences, and to respect confidentiality.

- Explain that the session involves working through the film clips and that there will be regular discussion times where they can talk about what they have heard.

2 mins ▶ **Out and about (film clip)**

We asked children and young people how they use the internet and how they see their parents using it.

8 mins ▶ **Confident parenting in a digital age (film clip)**

Key teaching points:

- There are some huge advantages of technology which can help family life.

- Spending too long on screens can have negative effects.

- Parents can help children regulate their screen time by being intentional about putting boundaries in place around screen time and being positive in how they use technology as a family.

10 mins

Expert interview: Gaming (film clip)

Andy Robertson talks about the world of gaming and what parents can do to help their children use gaming safely.

Key teaching points:

- Gaming is hugely popular and can help children socialise, gain skills and unwind at the end of the day.

- However there are also risks to be aware of, children may:

  o Be befriended by strangers

  o Run-up huge bills by buying add-ons

  o View inappropriate content

- Parents can help their children by learning about the world of gaming and by engaging with their child, so that they can talk to them about the risks and help them make good decisions.

- Gaming devices often have parental controls which can limit what money children can spend, who they chat to, and how long they spend gaming.

- Parents can help choose age-appropriate games based on PEGI ratings.

15 mins

Discussion

1. How do your children use the internet? Does this differ from how you use the internet?

2. What do you see as the biggest challenge of the internet for your child? Do you identify with any of the challenges that Katharine shared?

3. What social media apps does your child use? Discuss what you think are the advantages and disadvantages of these apps.

4. Have you tried limiting the amount of time your child spends on screens or gaming? Is there anything you have tried that you would recommend to other parents?

5. What games does your child enjoy and what are some of the concerns you have as a parent?

6. Andy shared some ideas about how we can engage with our children when they are gaming. Is this something you could try at home? How do you think your child would react?

7. One of the big concerns parents can have with video games is their level of violence. Have you noticed a change in your child's behaviour after they have played violent video games? How can you ensure your children are playing appropriate games?

4 mins

Contact, conduct and content (film clip)

Key teaching points:

- Contact – children could be connecting with people online that they don't know, which has its risks.

- Conduct – children can be put under pressure to act inappropriately such as sharing naked selfies or taking part in bullying, or they may be experiencing online bullying themselves.

- Content – children can easily come across pornographic, violent or other harmful content, which they may find upsetting and which could have a detrimental impact on their long-term relationships.

12 mins

Expert interview: Pornography (film clip)

Ian Henderson discusses the effect of watching pornography and how parents can help their children make good choices to prevent them from watching harmful content.

- Pornography is widely available online and can easily be accessed by children, either accidentally or intentionally.

- Pornography gives unrealistic views about relationships.

- Pornography may portray sex without consent, respect or commitment. It often includes abuse and violence; leading children and young people to think this is the norm in a sexual relationship.

- Regular pornography use can lead to addictive behavior.

- There is growing evidence that suggests that regular use of pornography can cause erectile dysfunction.

- Parents can help their children by talking to them about porn and healthy relationships so that they can make wise choices when they are out of the home.

10 mins

Activity

Use Post-it notes to write down the online challenges your children experience. Using one post-it per challenge, write as many challenges as you want. Now place the notes in the middle of the room/table for others to see. It may encourage parents to know that they are not the only one facing these challenges.

Discussion

1. What are some of the challenges your children face? Which concerns you most, contact, conduct or content, when you think about how your child uses the internet? (See page 5 in your Session Notes.)

2. How does talking about these things with other parents help you in your journey as a parent?

3. Are there any ways you can think of to start to address these challenges?

4. After hearing the interview about porn, are there things you are concerned about?

5. Ian talked about the importance of talking to our children about porn and healthy relationships. How do you feel about doing this? How might you bring this topic up with your child?

6. Share ideas on parental controls/internet safety sites that you have found to be effective.

6 mins

Practical ideas (film clip)

Key teaching points:

- Use parental controls on devices in the home.

- Set online limits.

- Turn off notifications.

- Create tech-free times.

- Create a 'Family Media Agreement'.

- Be a good role model.

15 mins

Activity

Use Post-it notes to write down ideas for how we can help our children keep safe online. Which do you think will work the best in your family? Make a note of these ideas in your Session Notes booklet.

Discussion

1. In what ways can we be role models for our children? What do you find most challenging about this?

2. How could you use the internet as a family, in a positive way?

3. What would you like to include in a family internet agreement?

4. We may try to avoid talking to our children about their internet use because we're worried that we won't have all the answers. Can you relate to this? How do you think you can get ready for these conversations?

5. How can we create an environment at home where our children are happy to begin to talk to us about difficult things like porn or sexting?

6. How can we have more quality time with our children that will create opportunities for talking?

7. What values do you personally have that you would like to pass on to your children?

1 min

Out and about (film clip)

We asked children and young people if they have ever stayed up late to go online, and if they have ever done anything online that their parents told them not to.

6 mins

Passing on wisdom and values

Key teaching points:

- Keep communicating – through everyday talking and listening.

- Intentionally create opportunities for our children to talk to us and to allow us to sow seeds of wisdom into their lives.

- We want to teach our children to learn to discern.

1 min

Discussion

End on a positive note. Ask the group to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes.

Discuss getting the group together again for a chance to share more parenting ideas. For ideas on materials you could use go to **www.cff.org.uk/parentalk**

Thank everyone for coming and for their contribution to the session.

Feedback

At Care for the Family we love to hear how our resources are being used and how we can improve them. We would be really grateful if you could complete the Group Leader's survey and encourage parents to complete the Participant Survey.

Group leaders

The Group Leader's form can be completed online at **www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LTTODleaders**

Participant Survey

You can download and print forms for your group from **cff.org.uk/LTTOD**

Please post surveys to: FREEPOST CFF (no further information is needed on the envelope).

Alternatively parents can complete the form online at **www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LTTOD**

Further support

See **www.cff.org.uk/LTTOD** for a list of helpful websites with further information on staying safe in the online world.

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