At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one issue of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents and Carers Need to Know about

APPLE GUIDED ACCESS

iPhones and iPads don't offer separate user accounts. So when you hand your Apple device to a child to play a game or watch a video, you're also handing them access to your email, the web, messaging and numerous other apps through which they could accidentally do something regrettable.

Apple Guided Access solves this potential problem by letting you restrict the iPhone or iPad to one particular app whenever your child uses the device. If they try and leave that app, they will be asked for a password or Face ID, meaning they can't access anything they shouldn't elsewhere on the device. Here, we show you how to find and set up the Guided Access feature, so you can confidently let your child borrow your iPhone or iPad.

How to set it up...

Step 1
To switch on Guided Access, open your Apple device's Settings – that's the one with the cog icon, normally found on the first of your home screens.

Step 2
In the Settings menu, scroll down and select Accessibility, then scroll down and select Guided Access.

Step 3
Enable Guided Access by tapping the toggle at the top. It should turn green, and a new series of options will appear.

Step 4
You can now customise Guided Access. Under Passcode Settings, for example, you can set a six-digit passcode that must be entered to turn Guided Access back off. You'll also find an option to quit Guided Access using Face ID if your device has that feature.

Step 5
There are audio options, such as scheduling an alert if you decide to set a time limit on Guided Access – to restrict gaming sessions to an hour, say. You can also set an alarm or spoken warning for when the time is almost up, so your child isn't suddenly kicked out of the app. It's a good way to avoid tantrums!

Step 6
Finally, you can alter the length of time before the device auto-locks. If your child is reading on the device's Kindle app, for example, you might want to stop the screen locking after only two minutes of nobody touching it – so they can read happily without interruption. You can select from pre-set time periods or disable the lock function altogether.

How to switch it on...

Step 1
When you need to start a Guided Access session, open the app your child wishes to use and then press the home/power button or side button on your device three times in quick succession.

Step 2
You can now select parts of the screen that you'd like to lock. If your child's reading on your Kindle app, for example, you could disable the icon that takes them to the main Kindle library – so they don't stumble across books written for an adult audience.

Step 3
The Options menu in the bottom right allows you to set a time limit for the session. Use the scrollable menu to specify the time limit in minutes or hours.

Step 4
Other options in this menu let you control access to settings such as the volume. So if your child's listening to music, you could lock the volume buttons (once it's set to a suitable level) so they can't damage their hearing by playing it too loud.

Step 5
When everything is set up how you want it, click Start. Your child will now not be able to leave that app. If they press the home button to exit, as usual, it will do nothing.

Step 6
The only way to leave Guided Access is to triple-click the home/power or side button (or double-click, if you set up the option to exit via Face ID). Without Face ID, you'll need the six-digit passcode to return to your home screen. Obviously, don't forget that code or let your child find out what it is!

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, Which?, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, Radio 5 Live and the *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has writes regularly about internet safety issues.

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