



Work Ready

Toolkit for parents and carers

Help your child get ahead with digital skills

Young people use tech every day, but they may not always connect it to future careers or understand how their hobbies can support real-world skills and future opportunities. Simple, open and curious conversations can go a long way in helping you understand what your child thinks, feels or needs when it comes to school, tech, and the future.

This toolkit is designed for parents and carers. It aims to help you guide your young person through the world of technology and digital skills. Here you'll find easy ideas, handy tips and fun activities to help you and your child explore their opportunities.

You and your child can:

- ✓ Find conversation starters to talk tech at home
- ✓ Complete a quiz together to find out your 'tech personality'
- ✓ Test each other in a mini digital challenge to collect points
- ✓ Use a checklist to assess your digital readiness





Why digital skills matter

First things first, digital skills aren't just for tech jobs; they're for all jobs. Whether your young person wants to be a fashion designer, nurse, or a future CEO, being confident with tech gives them a real edge. It's like learning to read; a skill that unlocks other skills.

What are digital skills?

Digital skills are more than just knowing how to use a computer or a smartphone. In today's world, they include a wide range of abilities that help young people succeed in school, work, and life. The digital divide is no longer just about who has access to the internet or devices. It's also about who has the skills to use them effectively.

To truly support young people, we need to go beyond just teaching technical skills. Research shows that the most effective digital learning includes a mix of:

- **Technical and operational skills:** Knowing how to use digital devices, apps, and platforms, from basic settings to coding or fixing problems.
- **Information skills:** Being able to find, understand, and think critically about online information.
- **Content creation skills:** Creating and sharing digital content like videos, blogs, or presentations.
- **Communication skills:** Using digital tools to connect with others, share ideas.

But that's not all. Employers are also looking for what are often called "human" skills – things like:

- **Critical thinking and problem solving**
- **Creativity and imagination**
- **Emotional intelligence and empathy**
- **Adaptability and a willingness to keep learning**
- **Understanding and using data effectively**

Together, these skills help young people become confident, thoughtful, and adaptable in a fast-changing digital world.

Did you know?

37%

of young people don't study a 'digital or tech subject' after KS3 and 42% do not think digital skills will be essential to their career. (Decoding The Digital Skills Gap, King's Trust, 2024)

Over 80%

of UK job adverts require digital skills (Government's Digital Strategy, 2024) and 82% of jobs require digital skills (No Longer Optional: Employer Demand for Digital Skills, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, June 2019)

"Digital skills are the new basics, like maths or reading. And the good news? Anyone can learn them."

Rich Marsh
Responsible Business Director, BT Group

How can I boost digital confidence at home?

When trying to boost your young person's digital confidence, here are some tips about how you can do this effectively at home.

Learn together: Try a new technology or let your young person take the lead on setting up a new device.

Mix in everyday tech: Talk about everyday ways you use tech, like paying bills online, shopping or booking holidays.

Celebrate effort: Trying matters more than getting it right first time.

Tap into passions: Music, gaming, art? There's a digital angle to all of them. Use what's important to them as a starting point.

“When I’ve been talking about potential tech careers with my children, I find it really helps to connect that with the things that they’re interested in and passionate about. My daughter loves Taylor Swift, so we saw her in concert last summer and with the music, the staging, the sound, the choreography, it’s all digital skills and digital tech.”

Vicky from BT Group Parent and Carer video

How can I start conversations about technology?

You don't need to have all the answers. Just being interested in your young person's world is one of the most powerful things you can do. Having meaningful chats about tech and digital skills helps build their confidence, opens their minds to career possibilities, and shows them that their ideas matter.

Conversation starters

Try these over dinner, in the car, or during a walk:

- “What opportunities do you have at school to help you figure out what you want to do in the future?”
- “Do you think your teachers understand how you use tech in real life?”
- “What have you learned about how technology impacts different subjects at school?”
- “What have you learned about how to use technology at school?”

Try asking them to teach you something, like how to use a new app, or what happens behind the scenes in their favourite video game. Letting them take the lead builds trust and shows them that you value their knowledge.

Top tip: Be curious, instead of correcting them. Let them explain their world to you.

“I find that it’s all about connecting tech to their world. My eldest loves palaeontology, so we talk about what tech innovations there could be in the future to help him... like scanning fossils to identify them with AI, or creating virtual 3D models.”

Marlon from BT Group Parent and Carer video



Quiz: What kind of 'Digital Explorer' are you?

This quiz is a great way to explore your attitudes to technology, finding out how you react in different situations and learning how you and your child might respond differently.

1. If something breaks on your phone or computer, you...

- a. Panic and call someone for help.
- b. Try switching it off and on again then give up if that doesn't work.
- c. Google it or look up a tutorial.

2. A new device lands in your hands. What do you do first?

- a. Feel a bit overwhelmed and hope someone else sets it up.
- b. Read all the instructions carefully before getting started.
- c. Dive in and start pressing buttons, you'll figure it out as you go.

3. Your favourite website has a totally new layout. You...

- a. Get frustrated and wish they'd left it alone.
- b. Take a few minutes to reorient yourself.
- c. Explore all the changes, new features might be cool!

4. Someone mentions a tech term you don't know (like "blockchain" or "quantum computing"). You...

- a. Tune out and change the subject.
- b. Nod along and make a mental note to look it up later.
- c. Ask questions, you're curious to understand it right away.

5. When you think about privacy online, you...

- a. Get overwhelmed and try not to think about it.
- b. Understand it's important and do the basics.
- c. Actively stay informed and help others be aware too.

6. You have a team project that involves using a digital tool none of you have used before (maybe it's video editing software, a presentation builder, or a new AI tool). How do you tackle it?

- a. You feel a bit stressed and try to find a simpler way around it, maybe switching to a software you already know, if you can.
- b. You start learning slowly but are happy to let others take the lead.
- c. You get stuck in, watch tutorials, experiment, and even start teaching others what you discover.

7. How do you feel about AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools?

- a. A little suspicious, it seems like science fiction.
- b. Curious, but cautious.
- c. Fascinated! You love to learn how they work and how to use them.

8. You need to make a digital decision (new app, password manager, device). You...

- a. Ask someone else what they use and go with that.
- b. Compare a few options and see what suits you best.
- c. Research deeply and you might even write your own pros-and-cons list.

9. Your Wi-Fi router is acting up. You...

- a. Immediately text someone for help.
- b. Restart it and try a few basic fixes and then call up the help line.
- c. Dive into settings, search forums, or run updates yourself.

10. Someone asks if you're able to find info about digital skills. You...

- a. Say you're not able to help, as you're not sure where to begin.
- b. Provide the detail that you already know and say you'd like to learn more.
- c. You offer everything you know and know where to look for more info.

Results

Mostly A's – The Careful Navigator

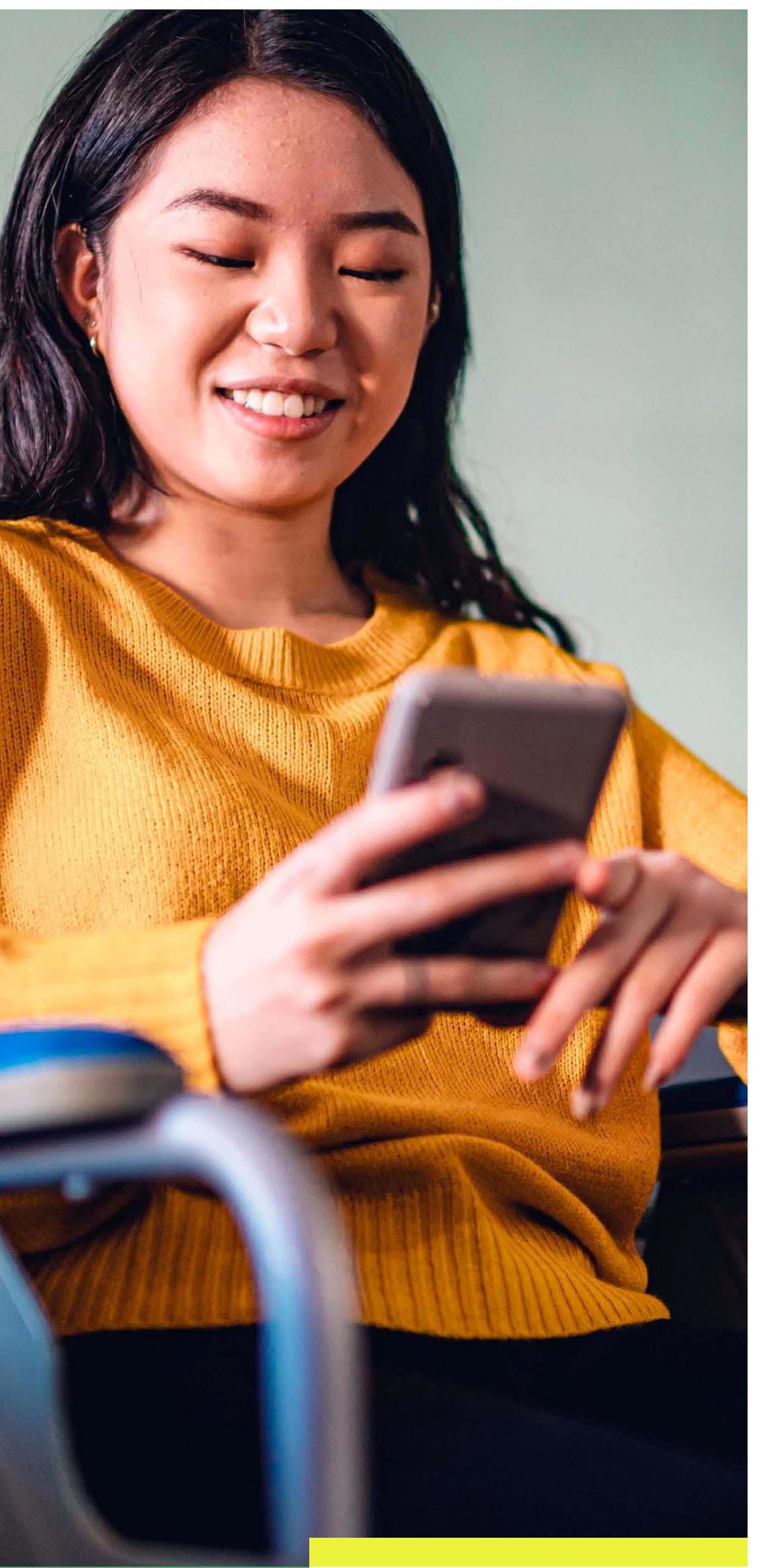
You're thoughtful and cautious, which means you avoid rushing into tech trends blindly. Your strength is knowing your limits and asking for help when needed — that's smart! But don't be afraid to get a bit more hands-on. Explore at your own pace and trust your ability to learn something new.

Mostly B's – The Growing Explorer

You're building confidence and developing digital intuition. You take a thoughtful approach to technology, balancing curiosity with caution. Keep testing new tools, asking questions, and taking small digital risks, you're well on your way to becoming a skilled navigator in the digital world.

Mostly C's – The Confident Trailblazer

You're fearless when it comes to tech! You're curious, adaptable, and often the go-to person for digital help. Your strength lies in your eagerness to explore and problem-solve. Just remember that not everyone learns as fast, slow down sometimes to bring others along with you.



Mini digital challenge game

We've designed this game with some simple and easy activities that everybody can do to familiarise themselves with technology, whatever your starting point.

Objective: answer questions and solve challenges to collect Digital Skill points, the first player to 5 points wins.

Questions / challenges

- 1 POINT: What shortcut do you press to copy and paste with the same formatting?
- 1 POINT: Can you draw / find on a keyboard the following keys: backslash, underscore, left curly bracket and percent sign?
- 2 POINTS: How do you take a screenshot of a selected area on Windows or macOS using a keyboard shortcut?
- 1 POINT: What do Ctrl+Z and Ctrl+Y do?
- 2 POINTS: What is multi-factor authentication and why is it more secure than just a password?
- 3 POINTS: What are cookies?
- 2 POINTS: Name 2 coding languages.
- 3 POINTS: What is a loop in coding?
- 1 POINT: Send an email with an attachment and a calendar invite. (Device only)
- 2 POINTS: Find which supermarket has the cheapest price for ketchup. (Device only)
- 1 POINT: Create a new document (e.g., in Google Docs or Word), rename it, and move it into a new folder in your cloud storage. (Device only)
- 2 POINTS: Log into your online bank and find what transactions you made three weeks ago. (Device only)
- 2 POINTS: Edit a Google Doc, then use the version history tool to view or revert changes. (Device only)
- 1 POINT: Turn off notifications for an app you don't use very often. (Device only)

Answers

- Ctrl+Shift+C or Ctrl + C (copy format), Ctrl+Shift+V or Ctrl+V (paste format)
- \ _ { %
- Windows: Shift+Windows+S or Print Screen/PrtSc| macOS: Command+Shift+4
- Undo and Redo
- MFA requires a second form of identity verification (e.g. clicking yes inside an app on your phone), reducing the risk of unauthorised access.
- Small text files that a website stores on your device so that the website remembers information about your visit, such as your shopping trolley contents, or login details.
- R, Python, HTML, CSS, Java, C, C++, SQL, Typescript.
- A loop allows you to repeat a block of code multiple times, either a set number of times or until a specific condition is met.

Checklist: How digital-ready are you?

Finally, you can see how digitally ready you and your child are using the checklist. It's a great way to build on the learning in this toolkit.

I have:

- Used a spreadsheet (Excel or Google Sheets)
- Created something digital (art, music, video)
- Created a presentation using software like PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Canva
- Managed my privacy settings on a social media platform
- Tried a coding game or platform (like Scratch, Code.org, or Python on Replit)
- Explored AI tools (like ChatGPT, image generators, or language translators)
- Participated in a digital collaboration (e.g., group project using Google Docs or Teams)
- Set up two-factor authentication on an account
- Tried editing photos or videos using apps or software
- Explored career paths in tech (watched a video, attended a workshop, etc.)

What's one thing you'd like to try next?





Extra resources

Need more help or want to explore further? Try these:

- Ⓐ [BBC Bitesize Careers](#)
- Ⓐ [Internet Matters – for online safety](#)
- Ⓐ [National Careers Service – job ideas & advice](#)

Final thoughts

By taking an interest in your young person's digital skills and having conversations about careers in the tech industry, you are showing them that learning is a lifelong endeavour and that their future is full of potential.

Remember, you don't need to have all the answers, just be curious, encouraging, and open to learning together. That's the best kind of role model there is.

So go on, explore, create, play and chat. The digital world is waiting. And it's more fun with you in it.

BT Group

