

What parents & carers need to know about ... PLAYSTATION 5

The PlayStation 5 is the next-generation video game console from Sony. It offers improved graphics, sound and much quicker loading times. It also has a new controller with motion- and force-feedback features for a more immersive experience. Parents should note that there are two different versions available that support discs or digital downloads.

Safely setting up your PlayStation 5

PlayStation 5 Blu-ray

PlayStation 5 Blu-ray is the larger of the two consoles, although not by a lot. It enables you to play games on disc or by digital download. Although all new games are available digitally, the disc drive is still useful to watch movies from discs as well as play most existing PlayStation 4 games you own. It also enables you to purchase second-hand games on a disc, which is often much cheaper.

Family Settings

Both PlayStation 5 models offer important family controls that should be set up before your family starts using the system. Although this can take a little time, it ensures that children have their own accounts and sets limits on spending, interactions and age ratings. If done correctly, children cannot circumvent these controls that require the parent's password to alter.

Setting Limits on Play Time

You can specify how long, and at which times of day, the console can be used to play without needing a password. Talk to your children and agree how long is appropriate, then set this on their profile, so it's something they understand and accept. You can set different time limits on each of the users on the system.

Managing Spending

You can set a limit on spending via Parental Controls. This means that any additional purchase requires your password. Another alternative is not to put credit card details into your account and instead add credit as they need it using the book token-like cards in-store or online. A nice feature on the PlayStation is setting an amount of pocket money to spend on games each month.

Setting Age Ratings

You can set a limit that stops any older-rated games being played without a password being entered. This is not only a good way to ensure children are playing appropriate content but is a good chance to talk about the games they are playing.

PlayStation 5 Digital

PlayStation 5 Digital is slightly smaller as it doesn't contain a Blu-ray drive. This means the console is cheaper but can only run games you download via an internet connection. Unlike the Xbox Series X and the cheaper Series S, the digital-only PlayStation 5 is just as powerful as its more expensive disc-and-download counterpart.

Downloading the PlayStation App

The PlayStation 5 uses the same PlayStation app as the PlayStation 4. This is a super-easy way to tweak the user settings for your family without having to log on to the console. It's also a good way to keep track of what different people are enjoying on the system. The app can also be used as an easier way to log-on by scanning the QR code.

Creating Guest Account Password

An important step during the PlayStation 5 set-up is specifying the default settings for guest accounts as well as a passcode for your own account. This ensures that all users need to access the system with their own account and related limits and settings.

Managing Online Interactions

Another important area of the Parental Controls is specifying how and who your child can interact with online. Modern consoles enable players to share text, voice, images and video with each other. You can set whether they can do this, and also apply a password before they can add new friends.

Game Subscriptions

In addition to buying individual games digitally or in-store, you can also subscribe to services that offer access to hundreds of games for a monthly fee. PlayStation Plus is needed to play games online with other people and offers a set of games you can immediately download for the new system. PlayStation Now enables you to stream (and download) a wider set of games.

Types of Accounts

Set up Parent Accounts

Setting up a parents' account is important so you can manage the console for your family. After plugging your console in, connect to the internet and wait for updates to finish. Once updated, create a parent user account with an email address you regularly check and password specified.

Set up Child Accounts

Setting up child accounts are important to be able to limit play time, spending and apply age ratings automatically. Separate accounts for each child user can be set up. It's a good idea to specify a password for the guest account so children cannot access this also.

Meet our expert

Andy Robertson is a freelance family technology expert who often works for the BBC. He runs the Family Gamer TV YouTube channel and contributes to a range of national media on the topic of video games and family.



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