



Apex Legends: What parents should know

If your child plays Fortnite, chances are they have already heard of its new rival Apex Legends — the newest player on the battle royale stage. Although the game is for a slightly older audience, it has become the new gaming craze of 2019. Here's what parents should be aware of if their child is playing Apex Legends.

What is Apex Legends?

Apex Legends is a free-to-play battle royale game in which the player, and the other members of their squad, must scavenge resources and eliminate opponents in order to win. Unlike other battle royale games, in Apex Legends players control their characters in first-person with a focus on strategy. Players can choose to be one of eight characters — each with its own unique skill set.

What do you need to be aware of?

- **Rated 16+:** Unlike other battle royale games, like Fortnite, Apex Legends has a PEGI 16 rating. There's more emphasis on gunplay and when a player is shot, a small cloud of blood surrounds them. Whilst not especially gory, you might want to view some gameplay before deciding if you're happy with your child playing it.
- **'Just one more':** The game is fast-paced and designed so that rounds last around 20-30 minutes — something that's useful to know if you're considering setting time limits for your child. If you allow them two hours gaming, for example, they'd be able to complete approximately four rounds. It's worth bearing in mind that the short format can make it tempting for children to play 'just one more' round.
- **Apex Packs and Coins:** Apex Legends is a free-to-play game, so it makes money from microtransactions. Players can buy Apex Coins with real money which can be used to buy Apex Packs. These are 'loot boxes' (virtual treasure chests) containing skins, weapon camos and banners players use to customise their in-game avatars. The developers have been criticised online for charging too much for items with some costing up to £8 each.

How can you keep your child safer?

- **Staying safer on chat:** Apex Legends gives players the opportunity to communicate through voice chat. Although this can be enjoyable for some children, it's not moderated and your child can be exposed to some foul language and bullying. Here are a few ways to help your child stay safer on chat:
 - **'Ping' system:** The game has a built-in system which lets the player give commands through button clicking. Using the 'ping' system lets players communicate effectively without having to use voice chat. If you want to switch voice chat off altogether, you can do this from your console's settings.
 - **Muting:** Make sure that your child knows how to mute other players if they are saying upsetting things. You can do this by pressing the speaker icon next to each player on the inventory screen.



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- **Setting up a private squad:** You can set up a private party if you'd prefer that your child only plays with people on their friends' list. You can do this from the game's lobby screen in-between matches.
- **In-game purchases:** Children may be tempted to buy a new weapon camo or character skin — or simply click the wrong button and end up making an accidental purchase. Avoid saving your card details on the system so that you don't get any nasty surprises when your bank statement arrives.

What reporting tools are there?

If your child experiences something problematic whilst playing Apex Legends, it's important that they know how to report the abuse and block the player responsible. The game's publisher Electronic Arts (EA) has instructions on how to report harassment on its website (<https://bit.ly/2Tj63iO>).

On PlayStation 4 and Xbox One you have to go through the consoles' own reporting mechanisms, while on PC you go through EA's reporting portal. Be sure to note down the username of the player you wish to report and try to include screenshots if you can.

Reporting on PlayStation 4: <https://bit.ly/2r8drnF>

Reporting on Xbox One: <https://bit.ly/2YaZpiv>

Reporting on PC: <https://bit.ly/2Tj63iO>