



# Helping Children Navigate Ads and Digital Content

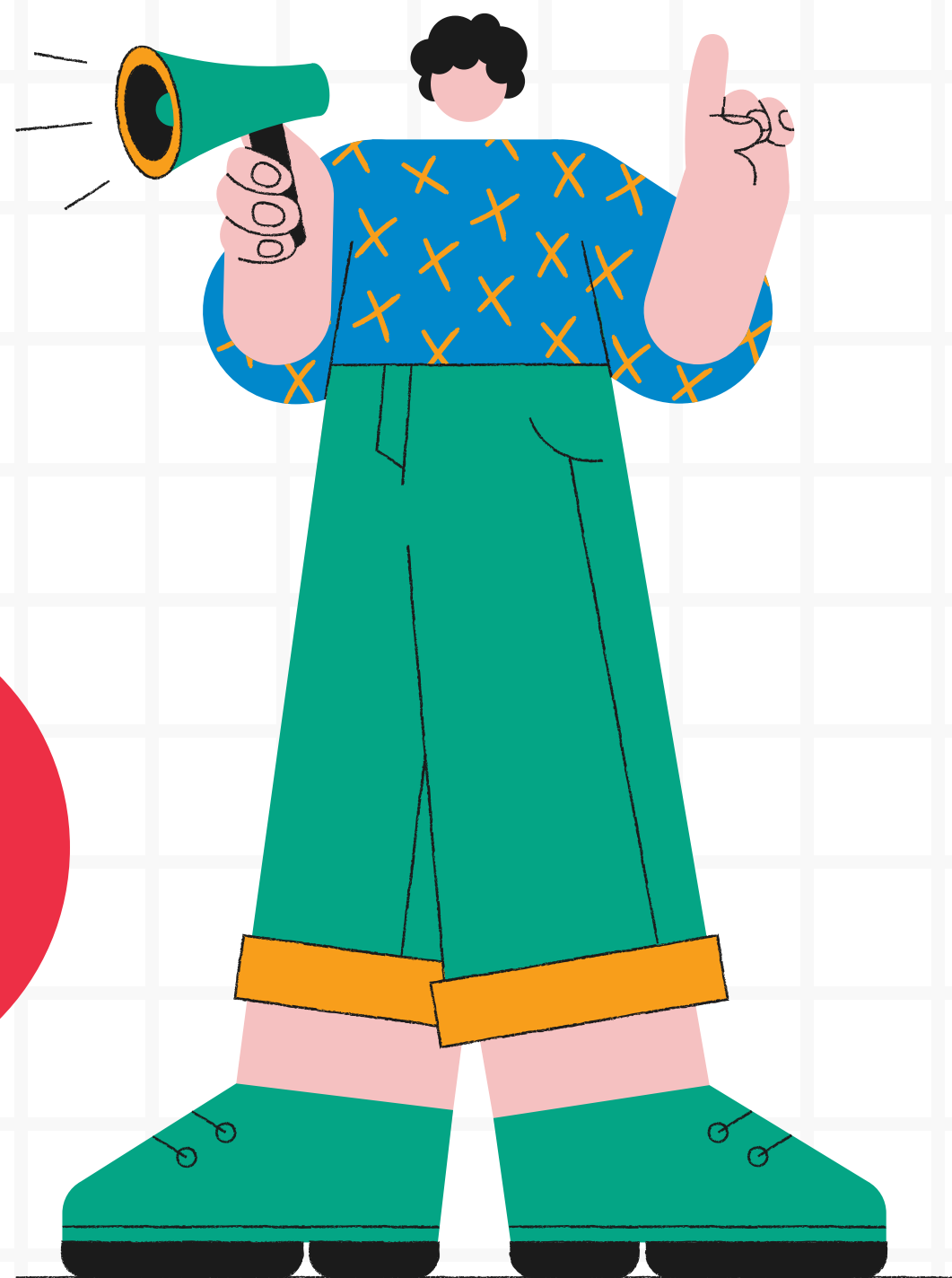




# The Changing Scenario

Children today are growing up in a world where advertising is part of almost everything they see online from the games they play to the videos they watch. While ads can sometimes be helpful, such as letting us know about new products or funding free content, they can also be harder to spot than ever before. Many are hidden inside entertainment or presented by people your child trusts, like influencers or favourite game characters.

**Our goal is to give you practical tools to guide your child in understanding and thinking critically about the ads they encounter.** This is not about setting rules or telling them what they can and cannot see it is about helping them make sense of the digital world so they can make safe, and smart choices.



# What are Ads?

An advertisement is a **message** designed to make someone **want to buy, try, or engage** with something. It might appear as a **TV commercial**, a **sponsored post** on social media, an **offer in a game**, or even as **part of a storyline** in a show or movie.

Some ads are clearly labelled — with tags like **#ad** or **paid partnership** — but others are more subtle.

For example, a favourite YouTuber might talk about how much they love a particular toy without mentioning that it was sent to them for free.

Helping your child recognise what's an ad and what's regular content is the first step to helping them make informed choices.

# The SMART Approach

In our school program, we teach children to use the SMART tool to think about advertising. You can use this same method at home when watching videos, playing games, or scrolling through social media with your child.

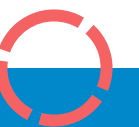
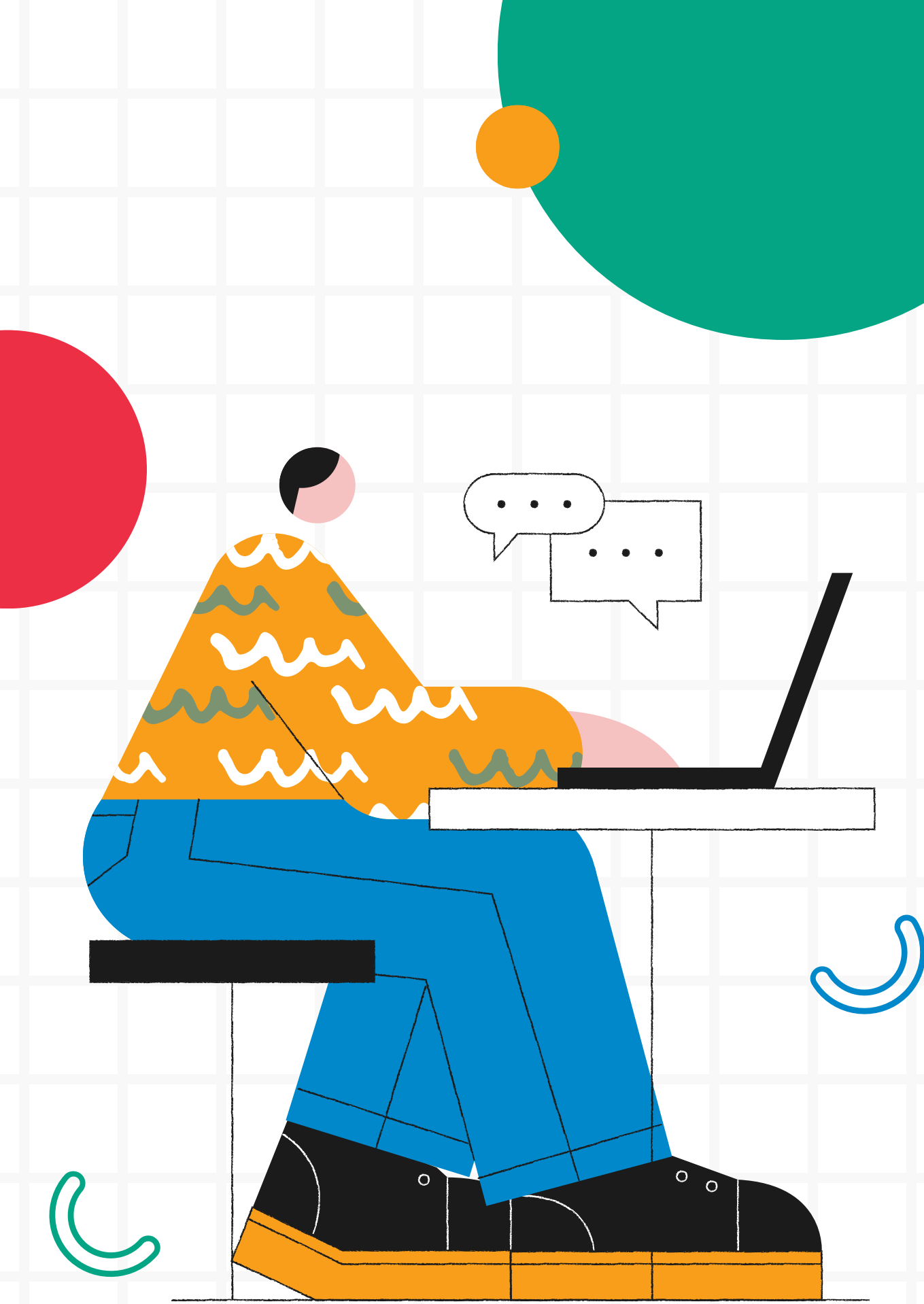
**Spot the Ad:** Is this content trying to sell something?

**Make clear choices:** What does it want me to do or buy?

**Ask questions:** Does the message seem realistic?

**Recognise the tricks:** Disguised ads, scams, misleading claims, or “Only today!” messages designed to grab attention.

**Talk to someone:** Ask a parent, teacher, or trusted adult before clicking, sharing, or buying.





# Encouraging Awareness Through Everyday Moments


Spotting ads can be a bit like solving a puzzle. You might watch a video together and pause to ask: **“Can you find where the ad is?”** Look for clues like special offers, logos, small print, or sudden mentions of a product.

If your child enjoys unboxing videos, influencer reels, or gaming streams, you could ask: “Do you think they were paid or given this product for free? Does that change what you think about their opinion?” These questions encourage reflection without making it feel like a lecture.



# Staying Safe in Digital Spaces

One of the biggest risks with online advertising is how it can lead to unsafe clicks or oversharing of personal information. Your child should:



**Never share names, addresses, phone numbers, or photos without checking with you**

**Avoid clicking on pop-ups or suspicious links**

**Be careful with games or apps that ask for access to contacts, location, or photos**

**Understand that “free” games often make money by encouraging in-game purchases such as upgrades, loot boxes, or extra lives.**

It helps to set clear agreements on if and when in-game spending is allowed — and to review these rules together from time to time

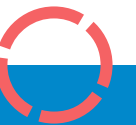
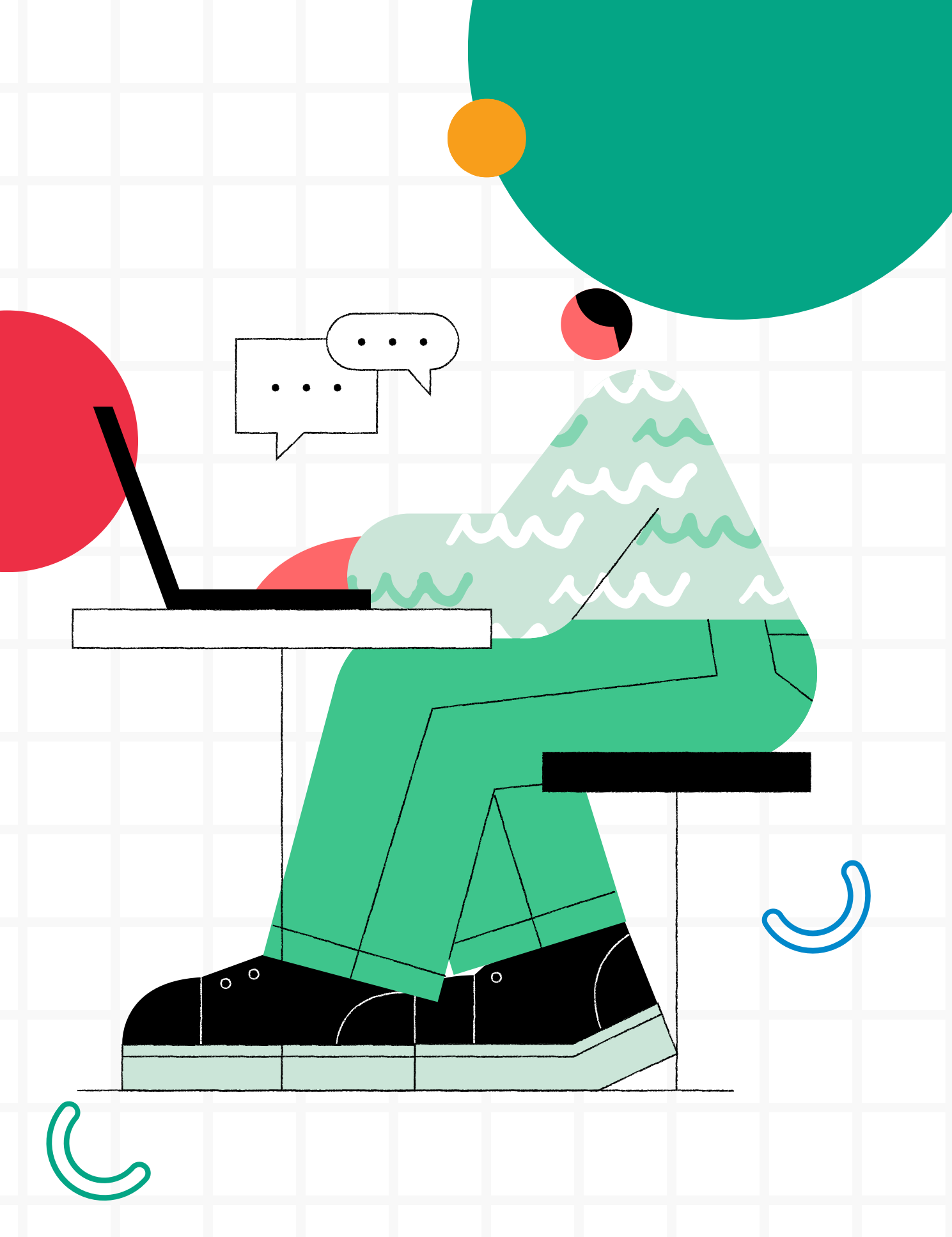


# Digital Safety Tools

Here are some **platform controls** that you can explore:

## 1. [Google Family Link](#)

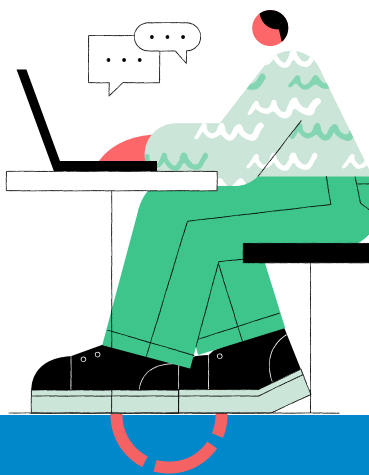
- **What it does:** Allows you to approve or block apps your child wants to download from the Play Store, set daily screen time limits, and view their location
- **Safety:** You can block "inappropriate sites or apps" and manage "Website & browser restrictions"
- **How to use:** Download the app on your phone and your child's device. Link them using your Google accounts



# Digital Safety Tools contd.

## 2. YouTube Kids

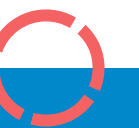
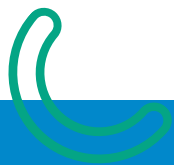
- **What it does:** It is a filtered version of YouTube designed to provide a more contained and family-friendly space for children
- **Safety:** You can select content levels based on your kid's age - Preschool Mode (ages 4 and under), Younger Mode (ages 5–8), or Older mode (ages 9–12). You can approve what your kids can watch and even block videos or a whole channel
- **How to use:** Download the free app or visit the website at [www.youtubekids.com](http://www.youtubekids.com) to get started. Use built-in tools to customize the experience, such as setting a "Timer" to limit screen time or selecting the "Content Level by Age"



# Digital Safety Tools contd.

## 3. OTHER TIPS:

- **OTT:** Use parental locks and create a separate “Kids” profile
- **Check App Permissions:** Be cautious of games or apps that request unnecessary access to location, contacts, or photos
- **In-game ads:** Most "free" games earn money through in-game ads and purchases. Always ensure your credit card or UPI details are not saved on your child's device
- **Protect privacy and data:** Teach children never to share personal information like full names, addresses, or schools, and use strong passwords
- Regularly review updates and co-watch or play online together occasionally





# Quick Answers to Common Questions

## **Q: Why should I be concerned about ads my child sees online?**

Many online ads are designed to blend into the content your child enjoys, making them harder to spot. This can lead to uninformed purchases or exposure to unsafe or misleading messages.

## **Q: Are all ads harmful?**

Not at all. Some ads are informative or help good causes. The key is helping children recognise and evaluate them.

## **Q: How can I help my child recognise influencer ads?**

Encourage them to look for clues like #ad, “paid partnership” labels, or repeated product mentions. Explain that being paid to promote something can affect what someone says about it.



# Quick Answers to Common Questions

## **Q: What techniques do advertisers use?**

Common techniques include fun songs, favourite characters, urgency (“Hurry!”), “free” offers that lead to purchases, and exaggerated claims.

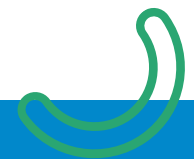
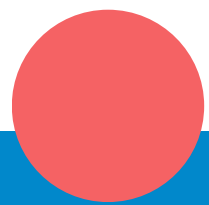


## **Q: What should I do about in-game purchases?**

Make sure no payment details are added on apps being used by your kids. Agree on purchase related rules together. Explain how “free” games may encourage spending through rewards or time-saving features.

## **Q: How can I make our conversations about ads more engaging?**

Turn it into a game of “Spot the Ad,” ask your child what they think the ad is trying to do, and explore whether it’s giving the whole story.





# Common Ad techniques to Watch For

**Clickbait Titles**  
“Win a phone now!”

**Disguised Ads**  
A favourite YouTuber promoting products without disclosing the same

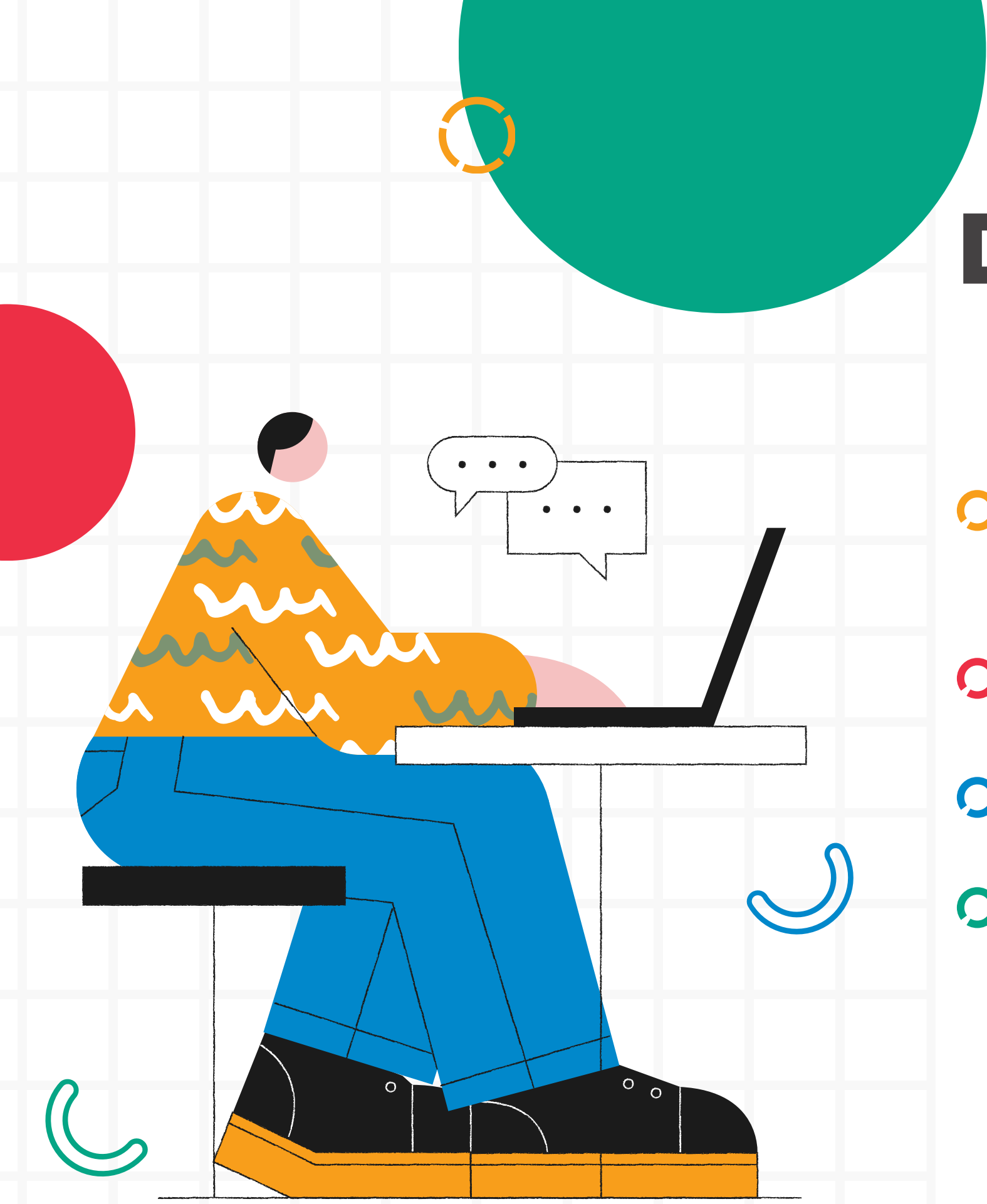
**In-game Purchases**  
“Free” games that encourage spending on upgrades or loot boxes

**False Urgency**  
“Only 2 left!” or “Offer ends soon!”

**Unrealistic Claims**  
“Lose 10 kg in 5 days without exercise and a healthy diet!”

# Digital Safety Basics

- Never share personal information (name, address, phone, email) without a parent's permission.
- Avoid clicking on pop-up ads or suspicious links.
- Be cautious with games or apps that ask for data access.
- Report unsafe or suspicious ads to a parent or trusted adult.





# What You Can Do as a Parent

- 🕒 **Co-watch:** Watch videos or play games together; point out ads and discuss them.
- 🗨️ **Ask Questions:** “Do you think this claim is true?” “Why do you think they are showing this to you?”
- 🕒 **Set Rules:** Decide together when and how purchases are made.
- 🕒 **Encourage Pausing:** Before clicking, ask your child to stop and think.
- 🕒 **Model Smart Choices:** Share your own decision-making process about ads.

# Conversation Starters



“Can you spot the ad in this video?”

“Why do you think this influencer likes this product?”

“What would you do if a game asked for your personal information?”





Teaching children to  
decode ads and make  
smart choices!

INITIATIVE BY



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