Connected toys:
10 checks to keep your child safe

Any toy with Bluetooth, wi-fi connection or a mobile app that's not secured could pose a risk to your child's privacy or security. If you're shopping for a connected toy for your child, make sure you carry out these 10 vital checks:

Before buying

1 **Read the description of the connected toy carefully in the shop or online.** Find out what the toy actually does and how your child will interact with it.

2 **Check what technology it uses.** Does it require a wi-fi internet or Bluetooth connection and, more importantly, does it really need one? If you'd think twice before giving your child a internet-connected smartphone, a toy should be no different.

3 **Is there a mobile app?** If there is, what does it do and does the company talk about security features, such as usernames and passwords?

4 **Search online for the toy's name** to see if there have been any concerns raised online over its security, or how it safeguards the privacy of your child or personal data. Also, search for the manufacturer's name to see if it has had any controversies, such as a leak of customer data.

5 **Consider whether you really need a connected toy for your child.** You don't have to deny them fun, but consider whether its best to avoid having to think about internet threats until they get older.

When setting it up

1 **Submit only the minimal amount of personal data required** when setting up an account for your child. That means not too much data is exposed if things do go wrong.

2 **Read the company's T&Cs and privacy policies**, even though it's tedious. You should look for things like how your data will be stored and who has access to it. What happens if the company is hit by a cyber attack? And if a vulnerability is found with the toy, will they notify you?

3 **Download any available security updates** for the app or toy to make sure you're protected by the most recent security developments.

4 **Look for any security features available** (usually in the settings). You should be able to set passwords on any accounts, but make sure you use strong terms containing lower and upper case letters, numbers, and special characters.

5 **Keep an eye on your child when they're playing with the toy**, particularly if it can send or receive messages When they're not playing with it, make sure you turn it off.