

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MINECRAFT FOR PARENTS

Over 20 million people have purchased the game. Including 8,000 in the last 24hrs. Minecraft is incredibly popular, an undisputed creativity tool that many kids want to spend all day playing. In September 2014 Microsoft paid 2.5 billion to purchase Minecraft citing among other reasons: "It's the one game parents want their kids to play." (Washington Post)

Being an effective Minecraft parent requires taking an active and supervisory role.

If your primary school child starts playing Minecraft, it is recommended that you open an account too because you want to be informed and know what they are doing.

This handout introduces game play, issues for parents, educational application and advice from experts of all ages.

THE BASIC GUIDE TO MINECRAFT

WHAT IS MINECRAFT?

Minecraft is a game where you build things with blocks. It's a sandbox game, meaning the building experience is limited only by imagination and practice. Like playing in a physical sand pit. It's about mining and building, and surviving (if played in Survival Mode).



There are no levels or points to achieve. You imagine. You Mine. You Craft. You make it happen. This is the key to its enormous popularity over a wide range of ages. It's the reason kids don't even care that the graphics are clunky looking.

There are four gameplay Modes in Minecraft. The two main ones are Creative and Survival.

* CREATIVE MODE

The ultimate building mode with an unlimited supply of bricks ready-made for building a virtual world of mountains, towns, people and more. You never die and to move around you can fly. To see the extent of what can be built, visit [The Best Minecraft Projects Ever](#).

* SURVIVAL MODE

The sun rises and sets in twenty minute days and you have to make everything you need to survive – to build a shelter, catch food and face overnight attacks. To build with wood, you have to cut down a tree. To use an axe, you have to make one. The creatures who attack overnight are low level scary (no blood) and if you don't survive, you respawn (return to life) in a safe place in the game.

THE WORLD OF MINECRAFT

At the start of each Minecraft session a random Minecraft world is generated. Minecraft can choose, or you can use a seed you make up (specified numbers and letters like a name or birthday) or you can find an interesting world seed from one of the many lists online. A shared seed will let a friend generate the same Minecraft world.

A CHECKLIST FOR NEW (AND NOT SO NEW) MINECRAFT PARENTS

Almost 20 million people play Minecraft. Children love it. Educators are using it in schools. But for a parent, getting started can be overwhelming.

ARE YOU READY TO BE INVOLVED?

Minecraft parents need to be prepared to participate, supervise and embrace the learning curve. Fortunately there's a wealth of information on-line and a number of books specifically for parents such as *A Parent's Guide to Minecraft* (Peachpit Press). The level of supervision required increases markedly with internet access whether it is playing in a public multiplayer environment, downloading mods or accessing tutorials on YouTube.



Younger children especially, playing single player offline, will need help mastering some of the game skills.

Screen time management is essential as Minecraft has virtually no end point (see House Rules).

As a Minecraft parent, the learning and creativity Minecraft encourages is well worth the commitment.

WHICH VERSION TO PURCHASE?

Minecraft is available on PC, games consoles and hand-held devices (Pocket Edition). The PC version is more fully featured with extra unique biomes and mods. It's the most popular platform. The Pocket Edition is easier to play and cheaper but game play is more limited.

HOW MANY ACCOUNTS?

Each Minecraft account must be registered to a different email address. Ideally a child should have their own account. Children can share an account but only one can play at any time and they are using the same game files. This means they can destroy, either accidentally or on purpose, their sibling's builds and collected items. While items are always available in Creative Mode, there is no Undo function. Everything has to be rebuilt and may involve many tearful hours of repeated work. If children have separate Minecraft accounts with separate user profiles on the PC they don't share files.

MULTIPLAYER – YES OR NO?

Single player off-line is the safest and easiest game mode to control. However, as children get older, they want to play with their friends. Multiplayer Minecraft fosters teamwork and social skills. Multiplayer options range from a Local Area Network, a self-hosted server or a public server. A public server is not a protected environment or intended specifically for children but parents can supervise to improve safety or choose a known family-friendly server.

HOUSE RULES

Minecraft is a game of endless possibilities and many children find it hard to stop playing. Clear boundaries for Minecraft screen time need to be set. If siblings are sharing an account, guidelines for the use of each other's items and builds are needed. Finally if children are using online servers, parents need to be aware of who they are playing with and what they are communicating. It may be appropriate to remove the chat option.

MORE QUESTIONS?

Here are some excellent and practical websites for new (and experienced) Minecraft parents;

<https://thecybersafetylady.com.au/2014/08/a-parents-guide-to-minecraft/>

<http://minemum.com/>

<http://education.minecraft.net/>

<http://www.howtogeek.com/210923/the-parents-guide-to-minecraft/>



dianella