

Helper's guide to **Your family**

Beginner handout

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About this guide

This document gives helpers practical suggestions and tips on how to hold a session with individuals or groups of beginners. The guide covers the three 'Your family' hand-outs:

- 5.1 Internet safety with children
- 5.2 Education and health
- 5.3 Genealogy

The three hand-outs in the 'Your family' topic help a beginner to help their children stay safe when online, find out about education and health issues and support their child's learning, and trace their family tree.

Remember to review each hand-out, involve beginners and use the **Introduction for helpers** and the suggestions below to plan and deliver sessions that are appropriate to the needs and abilities of your group or individual.

Please note that all of the web links referred to throughout the Beginner guides can be found in the Useful Links section at the end of the guides. Check that you have access to these links before your session

Remember to use the glossary.

5.1 Internet safety with children

This session may take 45 minutes to complete but everyone learns at a different speed.

How can I manage my computer to help my children be safe?

Discuss what beginners' children do online and how this might change as they grow and develop. Emphasise that Internet safety combines the right set-up and software with guidance and oversight. Get beginners to suggest a good place for children to use a computer at home.

How can I help my children be safe when they search and view content?

Discuss the importance of taking an interest and how this can help monitor online activity. Make a list of things beginners would want to say in a chat about Internet safety.

How can I help my children to avoid risks from strangers or bullying?

Again, discuss the sites that beginners' children use. Help them see how they can anticipate dangers and manage risks accordingly. Discuss the kind of personal information children could give out. Go through the Internet Green X Code. The web links offer you the chance to discuss what to do should an incident occur.

Discussion points

- What about when my children use other computers?
- My child wants an Internet-enabled phone. What should I do?
- How can I control what programs and files my children can access? (eg use Parental Control Centre on PC)

5.2 Education and health

This session may take 30 minutes to complete but everyone learns at a different speed.

How can I find out about what my children are learning at school?

Demonstrate the Directgov link. Be sensitive to beginners' confidence levels in getting involved with education – some may not have had a good experience themselves. Ask the group what they would like to know and find content together, or set challenges for beginners to find it. Find the right curriculum for your location. You may want to have a list of local school websites to hand – your local authority may list them on its website.

How can I use the Internet to help my child's learning?

Again, be sensitive. Ask beginners what they would like to know how to do and adapt your session to personalise it to their needs. Use examples (eg the great fire of London, Newton, blue whales etc.) to show how to search for a topic and find sites, images and videos. Emphasise that parents should help children create their own work, not simply gather or copy existing content and present it as their own. Discuss how to organise what children find using bookmarks, folders etc. so they can return to it later.

How can I find answers about health issues?

Again, be sensitive. Some beginners may welcome the chance to discuss finding out more about their health while some may not (although you could follow up one-to-one to make sure any quiet beginners don't miss out). Explore the NHS web links together before getting beginners to explore on their own. Help them print leaflets and web pages to take away.

Discussion points

- How can I find out how good a school is? (eg OFSTED reports are online)
- Is it OK for my child to copy things they find online, for their homework?
- How do I know that health information is reliable?

5.3 Genealogy

This session may take 45 minutes to complete but everyone learns at a different speed.

Where can I find out how to research my family history?

Please note that some people may find it hard to locate overseas records or records for particular religious groups.

Review the basics if you have not done this yourself. You may want to use some of your own family history to use as example searches (try these out beforehand so you know they'll work). Link to local sources, for example at your library or local authority.

What free sites can give me information?

Show the links to free sites on the BBC web link. Use your own or a beginner's example to demonstrate the FreeBMD search facility and help beginners gain confidence in selecting fields and search terms. Help beginners get a feel for what prior information will help them make the most of online sources.

How can I use paid-for sites in my search?

Again, show where the BBC site links to paid-for family history sites. Use the cost information to help beginners think about budgeting for a paid search, for example the cost of a six-month subscription. Remind them to cancel subscriptions once they don't want to find out more, or they will continue to pay.

 **Safety warning: don't let beginners register until they get home.**

Discussion points

- I've found some family members. How can I use the Internet to get in touch?
- Should I put my family tree online?

