

Loot boxes

Parent Guide

Why are they in so many games? And how problematic are they?

What are loot boxes?

Loot boxes are an **increasingly common feature** found in **online video games**. They allow players to **buy items** to **decorate their characters** or **boost chances of success in the game**.

They appear both in **popular console games** like FIFA 21 and Apex Legends and **app-based games** like Roblox and Fortnite. They are often **heavily marketed to children** to make them seem exciting, rewarding and essential to enjoying the game.

What is the problem?

The big controversy around loot boxes is that they are **blind purchases and rewards are randomised**. This means that you have **no control** over what you get for your money.

Sometimes it can be a high-value item. But **often it will be something worth less than you paid**.

This risky nature means that **loot boxes** can promote **gambling-like behaviour** – and children **can end up spending lots of money** to try and get the item they want.

What can I do?

Firstly, take an **active interest in what games they play** – and try to understand what spending options these games have.

Explore the game or account settings together, and consider **disabling in-game purchases** if you are concerned.

You could also make sure your **card details are not stored on a device** your child uses.

What if my child wants to buy a loot box?

If your child wants to buy a loot box, **discuss what reward they want, and why**. Talk about **whether they can enjoy their game without it**.

While **buying the occasional loot box is unlikely to pose a serious risk**, it is important to **discuss the value of what they want** – and if it is really worth it.

Having these conversations will help your **child see loot boxes for what they are, and make better decisions**.