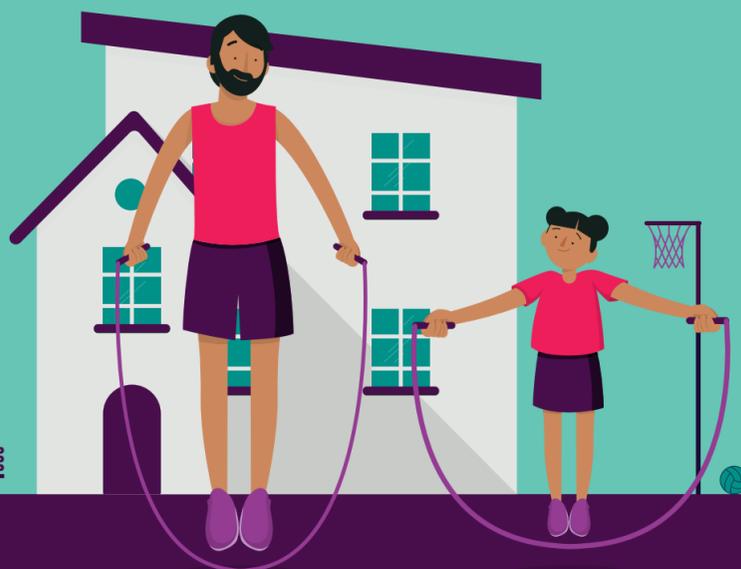


3 WAYS TO HELP KIDS CONNECT AWAY FROM SCREENS

Use the following tips to encourage young people to create connections with friends that don't involve a computer or iPad.



1. WRITE A LETTER

Putting pen to paper will give your child a specific task to focus on, encouraging them to think about how their friend is going and what they might be up to.



Deciding what colour paper, what pen to use and what to say will give them choices and a feeling of control.

Suggest they ask questions throughout the letter, for example "Are you still practicing your netball drills?" or "What are you missing about going to school every day?". This may encourage their friend to return a letter, which will cement that feeling of connection your child might be craving.



Walk with your child to mail the letter so they're in charge of the whole process.



2. MAKE A CALL

Instead of using FaceTime or Zoom, encourage your child to pick up the phone to call a grandparent or friend.

This will give your child the opportunity to work on their communication skills and exchange information in a different way.



Prepare some questions to help with any nerves.

Try:

"What did you do today?" or

"What has been the best thing about your week so far?", which will help keep the conversation going.



3. SHOW A LITTLE UNCOMMON CARE

Showing kindness to make someone else happy can give us feelings of happiness and purpose.

Encourage your child to draw or paint a picture for a grandparent, write a story or poem for a school or netball friend they're missing, or help to bake some cookies for a neighbour.

This will not only give your child something practical to do, they will also get the benefit of knowing they've done something kind, which may increase their own feelings of wellbeing.

