First Device Family Toolkit

Welcome to the exciting milestone of your child's first mobile device! We created the First Device parent toolkit to help you decide when your child is ready for their first device, how to teach your child to be safe and responsible online and we have included some conversation starters for when you cowatch the Heroes of Zero animated cartoon series.

Is your child ready?

Consider your child's maturity, responsibility, and understanding of online safety. Are they ready to navigate the digital world responsibly? Evaluate their awareness of online risks, such as sharing personal information, connecting with strangers and their ability to be kind and respectful to others online. If they are not ready, explain to them what they need to learn in order to take on the responsibility of having their own device. This is the beginning of an important conversation.

Choose the right device

Type of Device

If you decide to get your child a mobile device, their first one could be a tablet, a smartphone, a simple "flip" phone or even a smartwatch.

- A phone can be used for calls, texts, and knowing the child's location, all of which can be reassuring and enhance their safety - or be potentially dangerous if misused.

- A simple "feature phone" allows for calls and texts but doesn't run apps.

- For many young children, a tablet might be a good choice if you want your child to access entertainment and educational content, but they don't need to bring a device with them all day.

- Another option is a handed-down smartphone that isn't connected to a cellular network.

Budget

Factor in device cost, data plans, insurance, apps, and accessories.

Parental Controls

Explore devices and apps with parental controls. Learn how to use them to monitor and manage content. Some devices are configured for kids, with built-in parental controls, out of the box but there are parental controls available for most Android and Apple iOS devices.

Connectivity

Decide whether your child needs wireless connectivity internet access outside the home. Most devices have Wi-Fi, which may be all your child needs unless they need to make calls or send texts when away from home. As an option, parents can turn off Wi-Fi, which still allows children to use some apps.

Agree on a plan for responsible device use

Talk about online safety

Educate your child about internet safety, cyberbullying, and inappropriate content. Encourage them to tell you if they feel uncomfortable online and to ask for help.

Establish reasonable rules and guidelines

Set clear guidelines for how long they can spend online and how they use their time. Talk to them about good online behavior and how to take care of their device.

When and where to use It

Teach your child about appropriate times and places to use their device. Lead by example.

Handling mistakes

Turn rule-breaking moments into teachable experiences. Discuss consequences, fostering responsible behavior.

Privacy and security

Educate your child on privacy, update security software, and review app settings. Take the time to learn about the apps they use.

Encourage good screen time habits

The World Health Organization recommends no more than 60 minutes until the age of five and no screens for children before the age of two. Encourage your child to engage in physical play and get sufficient sleep.

Support healthy media choices

Make a plan with your child for how they will use their time online. Use the device settings to prevent your child from accessing distressing, violent and sexualized content.

Support your child's friendships

Support your child in making healthy friendships both online and offline. Stay engaged in their online lives through co-watching, co-playing, and celebrating their online discoveries.

### Kindness and inclusivity matter

Teach the importance of treating others with kindness, respect and inclusivity, both online and offline. Encourage them to stand up against bullying when it's safe to do so and to seek help from a trusted adult.

Life skills for their online journey

Instill essential life skills, such as understanding and managing feelings, critical thinking, resilience, and problem-solving. These are as important online as offline.

Download the **First Device Children's Pledge** from our website. Complete the pledge with your child and set them up to be safe and successful as they start their online journey. Remember, with great power comes great responsibility — let's embark on this adventure together.

Cowatch the Heroes of Zero!
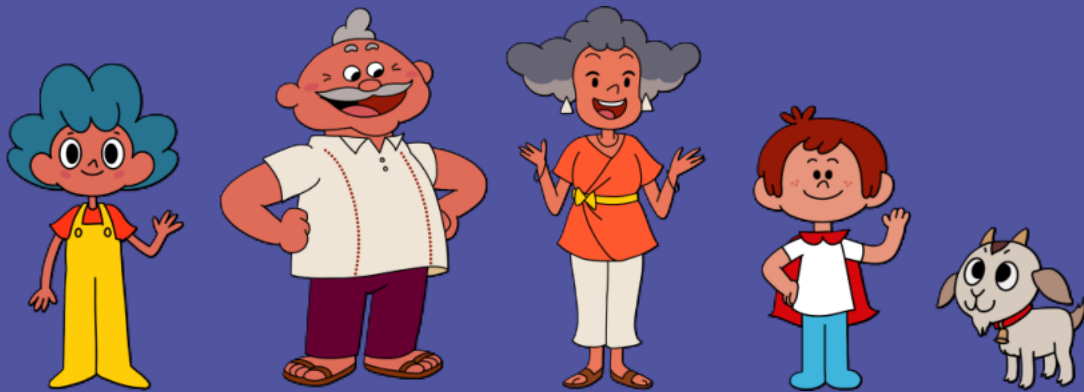
The Heroes of Zero is a fun and engaging way to teach children the life skills that they need to navigate their online and offline worlds. Produced by award-winning studio FableVision, the series features a young girl called Nena, who lives with her grandparents, Lola and Lolo, and a young boy called Ciro, who almost never speaks. Each of the six short episodes takes the children on a new adventure in the online and offline world that requires them to use their Superpowers. The series is set in the suburbs close to the city and the countryside. We did not give the town or the country a name as this story could happen anywhere in the world.

How to introduce the Heroes of Zero to your child

- Describe it as a fun way to learn important life skills

- Build excitement – let's watch the first episode together!

- Briefly introduce the main characters Nena and Ciro before watching.

- Pause after each episode to talk about the characters' choices and emotions and explore how skills like critical thinking, being a defender and resilience help solve difficult situations.

Going Deeper – episode discussion prompts

Use these optional prompts for richer discussions if you want to go more in-depth after viewing each episode with your child.

- Don't feel you need to use all prompts after each episode

- Pick 1 or 2 meaningful questions to go deeper

- Allow your child to share openly without judgment.

Episode 1 – New Neighbors
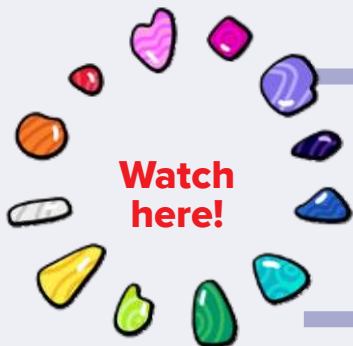
(Making Friends)

Aim: To help your child learn how to make friends

How did Nena feel being alone before she met Ciro?

Why did Nena talk so much when she first met Ciro?

What does it mean to be a friend?

Watch here!

Stream Episode 1 on YouTube Kids
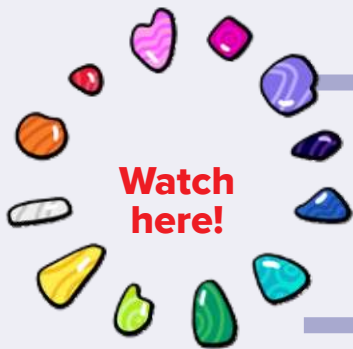
Episode 2 – First Device

Aim: Teach children respect, and how to value the tablet or phone that you give them

If you were Nena how would you feel about Mads' words and actions?

Has anyone ever been mean to you? What did you do?

Watch here!

Stream Episode 2 on
YouTube Kids
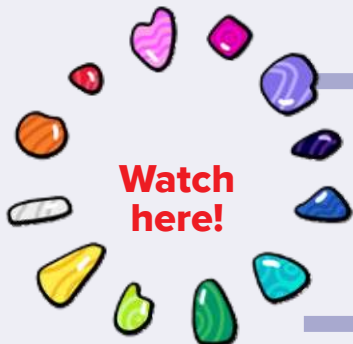
Episode 3 – The Defender Stone

(Standing Up to cyberbullying)

Aim: To open dialogue around bullying and cyberbullying and the importance of standing up for others.

What would you do if you were in Ciro's place?

How can you stand up for a friend who is being bullied?

Watch here!

Stream Episode 3 on YouTube Kids

Episode 4 – The Soothing Stone
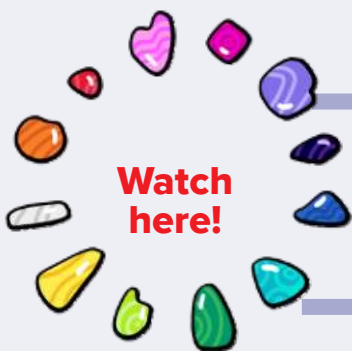
(Managing Screen Time)

Aim: To help children understand the unhealthy effects of too much screen time

Do you need to ask permission before using your device?

What are some bad effects of too much screen time?

What fun things can you do without screens?

Watch here!

Stream Episode 4 on
YouTube Kids

Episode 5 – The Thinking Stone

(Online Safety)

Aim: To help children know whom they can trust and what they can believe online and offline

What personal information did Nena's grandparents share?

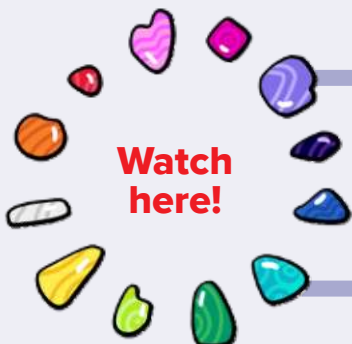What would you do if a stranger offered you a prize online?

Who can you ask for help if something online seems weird?

Tips for Online Safety

Don't share personal info like your home address or name of your school.

Never meet someone first met online.

Use parental controls to limit your child's access.

Watch here!

Stream Episode 5 on YouTube Kids

Episode 6 – The Resilience Stone

(Building Resilience)

**Aim: To help your child build resilience –
to help them keep going when things are tough**

What was Ciro's important advice for when things got tough?

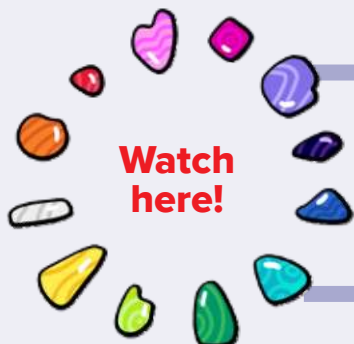If you're in a difficult situation, whom can you ask for help?

What's something you find hard but keep trying your best at?

Tips for Building Resilience

Make space for frustration and disappointment.
Encourage problem solving to find solutions.
Tell your child "Don't give up – keep trying like Ciro did."

Watch here!

**Stream Episode 6 on
YouTube Kids**

Be a model for slow tech living

The best way to teach your child good cyber habits is to model slow tech living in your own life. Parents and caregivers who spend time on their devices are suggesting to their children that it's okay to become lost to their screens. Do you want to give your child that message? If not, consider introducing these elements of Slow Tech Living into your life.

Create screen free spaces in your home.

Designate tech-free zones such as your bedrooms and dining areas.

Watch your media diet.

Before using a device, pause and ask yourself: is it really necessary? Is there an alternative offline activity that could be more fulfilling? Mindfully choose when and why you use your devices.

Prioritize real-life interactions.

Make time each day for in-person interactions with family, friends, and colleagues. Make face-to-face conversations a priority over digital communication.

Go screen-free one hour before bed.

Always take a "tech-free hour" before bedtime to prevent your exposure to blue light and allow for better sleep quality.

Introduce your child to tech slowly.

They will be happier and healthier if you slow down their introduction to the online world and wait to give them their first device until they have learned the life skills they need to navigate the online world safely and responsibly

Designate Screen-Free Days.

Choose one day each week or each month to take a break from all digital devices (including social media and emails), focusing on rejuvenation and unplugging from the online world.

Redirect your attention to what is most important.

Ask yourself what is the most important thing in your life. Redirect your attention so that you dedicate real time to this. Do everything you can to reclaim your attention so that you decide where you place it.

How to get even better at digital parenting

Congratulations! By watching the Heroes of Zero and talking to your child you are one step closer to promoting responsible technology use in your children and in empowering them to take control of their digital lives. You've been successful in introducing your children to the Superpowers they need to thrive in all spheres of life.

We encourage you to share this toolkit with other families and to build a movement of parents who are raising their children to be good digital citizens.

The First Device Parent Toolkit was developed by **ConnectSafely**, a nonprofit dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy and security and by **Power of Zero**, a global initiative that brings together parents, educators, researchers, UN agencies, corporate citizens, NGOs and philanthropic foundations to ensure that every child learns the life skills they need to navigate their online-offline lives.