

Barnardos: Plugged In, Switched Off **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/81041>)**

Hundreds participate in inaugural Barnardos Conference on Digital Wellbeing and Screen Time

Barnardos hosted their first online conference on Digital Wellbeing and Screen Time, "Plugged In, Switched Off" on Tuesday, March 30th. The focus of the conference, supported by Google.org, was on digital wellbeing and aimed to share an understanding of what this means, and how to support children and young people to better manage their time, and wellbeing, online.

The conference arose due to the increased requests and concerns from parents and teachers in relation to children spending too much time online, and concerns for their safety. With over 800 people registering for the conference, it is clear that this is a topic at the fore of the public's mind.

According to Cliodhna Purdue, Barnardos Online Safety Programme Training Executive, "we receive a lot of questions about how best to approach and manage screen time from participants in our Online Safety Programme. We therefore understood that a conference like this was needed, in an effort to bring people together to gain a better understanding of what digital wellbeing is, and how to better manage screen time. **Plugged In, Switched Off** was an excellent event bringing together experts in the field, professionals, schools, young people and parents; representatives of the many groups concerned about children's digital wellbeing".

The event was MC'd by Anton Savage and was headlined by Joanna Fortune, parenting expert and psychotherapist, who examined how we parent in the digital age and discussed how we can ensure that imaginative play is sustained in middle childhood when play patterns change and the digital device play tends to take over. Also participating in the event were two young people representing Webwise and the Youth Advisory Panel, and industry experts from Google and Tik Tok.

Almudena Lara, Child Safety Lead at Google said: "This event was a brilliant opportunity to engage with young people, parents and carers and professionals to discuss and learn about how to make a positive use of technology that enhances safety and wellbeing. At Google we understand our responsibility and have developed tools to support users focus on their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their family and to help children stay safe online."

The conference can be viewed from Wednesday April 7th until May 5th on the Barnardos website at www.barnardos.ie/pluggedin (<https://www.barnardos.ie/learning-development/training/online-safety-programme/plugged-in-switched-off>)

Barnardos offer a range of Online Safety Programme workshops for schools and parents, and has qualified trainers available to provide them online. For more information or if you would like to book an Online Safety Workshop please see www.barnardos.ie/osp (<https://www.barnardos.ie/learning-development/training/online-safety-programme>)

Region

Online

[View conference \(https://www.barnardos.ie/learning-development/training/online-safety-programme/plugged-in-switched-off\)](https://www.barnardos.ie/learning-development/training/online-safety-programme/plugged-in-switched-off)

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