Design for in-skill purchases in child-directed skills

Additional considerations for designing child-directed skills with ISP that children enjoy and parents trust

Things to know about kids & purchases:

Child-directed skills with premium content follow the same best practices as other premium skills, with a few additional use cases to account for. Your skill's ISP experience will differ based on a few parental controls:

- Parents can subscribe to Free Time Unlimited (for whom skills in the Free Time catalog are free).
- Parents can choose to allow purchasing in skills at any time.
- Parents can allow purchasing only with permission sent and verified by text or email each time the child wants to make an in-skill purchase. They can decline, accept, or let expire any such request.

A skill developer may receive the following flags to determine whether or how to surface upsells: Purchasable, Non-purchasable, Entitled, Pending, Declined, and Auto-entitled (indicating a Free Time subscriber). A developer can also infer a request expired when a flag changes from "pending" to "purchasable" without being declined within 24 hours.

Checklist of design requirements:

- ☐ The skill never encourages the child, directly or indirectly, to ask their parents about purchase settings. It never instructs them how to change those settings in the Alexa app.
- ☐ The skill must not encourage or direct a child to ask their parents to approve a purchase.
- ☐ The skill never encourages the child to make repeated, frequent requests after a parent declines a purchase.
- ☐ The skill never duplicates information in the Amazon purchase flow.
- ☐ The skill does not refer to purchases in any messaging when the child is flagged as Auto-entitled. It responds to direct inquiries about purchases with "there's nothing to purchase."

Checklist of best practices:

Follow best practices for any in-skill purchase for adults, PLUS these additional considerations for child-directed skills:

- ☐ The skill surfaces upsells for one ASIN at a time that use simple language and are explicit about what's included in the purchase.
- ☐ The skill tells the child their purchase request status only when the child asks for it directly or when necessary to avoid confusion.
- ☐ The skill does not surface upsells or messaging about an ASIN after a parent already declined it or let it expire. (Minimum 48 hours recommended).
- ☐ The skill "takes a break" in surfacing upsells for all of its ASINs after a parent declines permission to purchase one.
- ☐ The skill avoids sending a high volume of purchase requests to parents by either limiting the number of product ASINs offered or turning off upsell messages when the customer already has ASINs in pending status.
- ☐ The skill never upsells a product to which the child is already entitled.
- ☐ The skill never surfaces information or upsells regarding Free Time.
- ☐ The skill allows the child to continue playing (or re-playing) a free experience while they wait for permission or if they decline an upsell.

Sample script: Waiting for approval

Child: Alexa, play Animal Trivia Time

Skill: Welcome back to Animal Trivia Time. You already finished today's game with a score of 4/5. Do you want to play again for fun?

Child: I want the mammals pack

Skill: I'm still waiting for a grownup's permission to do that. Do you want to play today's game again for fun?

Child: No

Skill: OK. See you back for more animal trivia soon!

amazon alexa

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Support all ISP use cases for children

Additional use cases for child-directed skills with suggested responses

Use Case	Purchasable	Non-Purchasable	Entitled	Pending	Declined	Expired
The child invokes the skill.	Do not surface an upsell in a welcome message.	Do not surface upsells or proactive messaging about ISPs.	Surface any content to which the child is entitled. Do not surface upsells in a welcome message.	Offer any further playable content for them to use in the meantime or bring the skill session to an end.	Offer any further playable content or bring the skill session to an end.	
The child said "yes" to final purchase confirmation	Offer use of the premium content immediately. If the child declines to use it immediately, inform them how to use it in the future.	N/A	N/A	Offer any further playable content for them to use in the meantime or bring the skill session to an end.	N/A	N/A
The child reaches an upsell trigger	Surface an upsell message as planned.	The skill must not surface an upsell. Offer any further playable content or bring the skill session to an end	Offer access to the content, which the child has already purchased, where appropriate.	Offer any further playable content or bring the skill session to an end.	Avoid surfacing an upsell within at least 48 hours of the purchase request being declined or expiring.	
The child asks "What can I buy?"	Surface a description of the premium content available OR surface an upsell message for one product.	The skill must not surface an upsell or proactive messaging about ISPs.	Surface an explanation of any premium content to which the child is entitled. Deliver a card to the Alexa app with more purchase detail if more than one purchase has been made.			
The child reaches the end of an experience or completes a task	When an experience concludes or the skill fulfills the child's request, a developer may surface an upsell before the skill closes.	The skill must not surface an upsell or proactive message about ISPs. Offer any further playable content or bring the skill session to an end	Offer any further playable content or end the skill session with a short exit message. (Never surface an upsell if the child asks to stop/quit/exit.)			
The developer checks for a flag update any time during a skill session	If the flag was previously flagged as "pending," the request has expired, and the skill should not surface an upsell for a period of time.	The skill must not surface an upsell. Offer any further playable content.	Announce the purchase is approved and offer the purchased content immediately. If the child declines to use it, inform them how to later.	Offer any further playable content or bring the skill session to an end.		

Sample script: Full purchase flow

Skill: "You've reached the end of today's challenge with a score of 4/5. Nice work! You really know your animals! That's all the trivia I have for today. If you can't get enough wildlife, you can get 50 more brain teasers with the Mega Mammals trivia pack. Want to learn how to get it?"

Child: Yes!

Amazon: The Mega Mammals Trivia Pack has 50 more questions to test your animal knowledge. As a Prime member, you can get it for 99 cents. Check the Alexa app for terms. Do you want to buy it?

Child: Yes

Amazon: Sure, I'm asking a grownup permission to purchase the Mega Mammals Trivia Pack.

Skill: Want to play today's quiz again while you wait?

Child: No

Skill: OK. See you back for more animal trivia soon!