

Staying Safe while Surfing the Internet

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People of all ages and walks of life use social media. It is a great way for people to connect with family or friends and share pictures, videos, and important life events. But is it all safe for our children? All the good things that the online world has to offer can also bring some risks. We need to beware of inappropriate conduct, inappropriate contact and inappropriate content that can be accessible to our children. How much sharing is appropriate? Who can see what is posted? Do you know what they have access to?

The best way to educate our children and keep them safe is to speak with them directly about it. Never assume that they already know, that they are too young, or that someone else will teach them. They may learn about some aspects in school, but you have more authority at home and know more about your child because you are their greatest advocate and expert. As the parent or guardian, you should know about what your children are doing online and how to prevent them from walking into dangerous situations.

It is important to start young, it is never too early to start teaching them online safety. Nowadays, children start using smartphones, tablets, and computers at a very young age. Teaching them about how not to download apps without your permission or click on ads that may pop up while they are playing games is key. Many times these ads can be for inappropriate games for children or even promiscuous dating apps. There are thousands of inappropriate apps that children can easily access if it is not password protected or if they know the password. Getting them accustomed to asking permission before clicking anything will lead to smarter online decisions in the future.

As the adult it is your responsibility to initiate the conversation. Do not wait for them to start asking questions. You must be able to effectively communicate your expectations for their behavior online. Another important aspect to reveal is what may be some of the consequences of poor decision making for their actions online. Whether it be through social media, things they may watch, bullying, online gaming, or talking to strangers.

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Younger children need much more supervision online, and as they get older, this supervision should slowly diminish. Before the age of twelve, they should not have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet. Whether it is through their smart phones, tablets, or computer. You should consider parental controls, filtering, blocking, child browser and search engine, monitoring tools and limit their usage time.

As kids enter into their early teen years, they want to feel more independent and may rebel against having so many controls and restrictions. This should be a time where they are granted a little more freedom, but nonetheless, they should still be monitored and have limited time. As they enter into the older teen years, it is okay to release most, if not all of the controls. But, they should still be aware and understand that you have the right and duty to ask about their online life.

In these teen years, it is important to talk about the credibility of people they meet online as well as any information they read and receive online. They should also be informed about what your expectations are for them online. Like their behavior towards others or things they may post. Anything that is posted online will always remain online, even if you delete it from your profile. Always think about what you share and who might see it. To be more secure, check the privacy settings on your child's online profiles.

More information and tips can be found at: https://www.onguardonline.gov/articles/pdf-0001-netcetera.pdf?utm_campaign=%2B+Education&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=29383813&hsenc=p2ANqtz--wuR7UNnOVV7bSK0ZBfSAXKkFtGbdVCWZYQC6qc08SJBtdgI4pOIFzOP7zJuQeRjLDZJASSqU7WTFjx3u5XtJs5gDUvw&hsmi=29383813

and: https://kids.usa.gov/online-safety/index.shtml?utm_campaign=%2B+Education&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=29383813&hsenc=p2ANqtz--wuK1mCu-e1oTcBTWbXW6djeNuHkDR1MwBw8dgPh6pakOUA8wI06yrJbOx-k09pMqW4uC_rdcvqyOkcBcuke0KjTFviA&hsmi=29383813



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