



Parent's Guide to Internet Safety



Lynn Fitch
ATTORNEY GENERAL

To protect children online, you must establish and maintain communication.

Internet safety starts with parenting. Using software alone will not protect your child. Time, attention, and active conversation are the best tools to protect our children. Encourage your child to tell you if they see or receive something that makes them uncomfortable. Discuss internet safety with children of all ages when they engage in online activity. You may not be able to protect them from everything, but you can teach them how to make responsible choices when they encounter a problem. The goal is to have regular and active conversations so that the conversation is open and ongoing, not just reacting to negative behaviors.



Explore the internet together as a family.

Ask what apps they use and work through and explore the privacy and reporting functionalities together. Know your child's IDs and passwords to all of their devices, apps, email, and social media accounts. Check your child's profiles and what they post online.

Create online rules together with your family. Place computers in common areas of your home to monitor your child's activity. Review and approve games and apps before they are downloaded. Consider periods of time that require disconnection. Establish "no phone zones" such as the bathroom or even a child's bedroom.

Talk to your child about sharing personal information. Children need to know that certain information should never be shared online. Also, make sure your child knows what information is and isn't appropriate to share with people they have met online. Make sure your child knows to get your permission before ever giving out personal information.

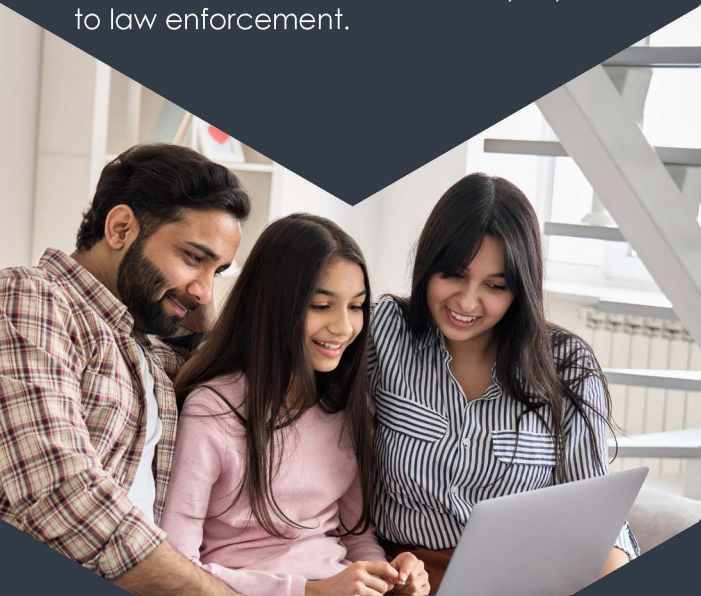


Educate yourself about technology and the internet. The more you know the better you will be able to relate to your child about these issues and the better qualified you will be to make decisions. Research before you buy. It's important to learn about a device's capabilities before you buy.

Take advantage of Privacy Settings on Websites and Apps. Make sure privacy settings are set to the strictest level possible for online gaming systems and electronic devices.

Address cyberbullying with your child. Even young children who don't use social media or cell phones can experience some forms of cyberbullying while playing online games or playing in a virtual world. Create a plan for what your child should do if they witness bullying, or if they become a victim of bullying.

Be a good digital role model. Your children watch your actions to learn how they should act. If you see, hear, or experience cyber bullying, inappropriate sexual posts or messages, or any other behavior that makes you or your child feel uncomfortable, immediately report it to law enforcement.





Don't be overly critical of your child's use of the internet. Try to be open, talk about the issues, and make rules for when problems arise. Many times, taking away internet access because a child has made a mistake doesn't help solve the problem. Talk to children about protecting themselves and respecting others online.

Talk to children about the dangers and risks online. Talk to your child about the risks of meeting "online friends" in person. Explain to your children that images posted online will be permanently on the internet. Make sure children know that anyone who asks a child to engage in sexually explicit activity online should be reported to a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult, and law enforcement as well.

RESOURCES

Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force

www.icactaskforce.org

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

www.missingkids.org

**Report information about a missing or
exploited child to the National Center for
Missing & Exploited Children:**

*1-800-THE-LOST
Report.CyberTip.org*

**Parent resources for talking with your
kids, including:**

Conversation Starters
Helpful Tips
Videos
Education and Mentoring Kits

www.MissingKids.org/NetSmartz

**To request a presentation or
training please visit:**

*www.AttorneyGenerallynnFitch.com
(601)359-3680*