



Empowering Youth

PRACTICAL PARENTING TIPS FOR ONLINE SAFETY

Every day, youth are surrounded by multiple devices that provide access to all the benefits that the online digital world has to offer. While more readily available, it's extremely important for families to learn to recognize potential dangers to help keep their kids safe exploring the online world. Here's how you can strike the right balance between access and safety with these practical tips.





By engaging in open and ongoing conversations about online safety, parents and caregivers can empower youth to navigate the digital landscape with confidence.



Keep the Conversation Flowing

Encourage your kids to talk about their online adventures and discoveries. Teach them about potential dangers and remind them that they can always turn to you with questions or concerns. Open communication is key to making sure they feel supported and informed.

Set Up Some Ground Rules

Establish clear screen time limits and content boundaries and make sure your kids understand them. Explain why these rules are important and how they can help protect them from online risks. Consistent guidelines will help them navigate the online world safely.

Share the Importance of Privacy

Help your kids understand the value of safeguarding their personal information. Explain why they should not share their full name, address, phone number, or school details online. Caution should be taken to make sure that personal information is not readily displayed in bio profiles that anyone can access. Add an extra layer of protection by teaching them how and why to turn off locations on their social apps. Knowing what information to keep private is crucial for their safety.

Stay in the Loop

Keep an eye on your children's online activities. Parental control software can help you periodically check in on their social media and other online activity. This isn't about invading privacy; it's about ensuring their safety and recognizing danger. Regular check-ins can help you stay aware of their online interactions.



Boost Critical Thinking

Empower your kids with critical thinking skills. Teach them how to question what they see online, assess the credibility of information, and avoid interacting with people they do not know in real life. These skills can help them prevent dangerous situations and make safer choices online.

Understanding Online Luring

Start by explaining the concept of online luring to your children. Online luring is when someone tricks or persuades a child or young person they meet online into doing things they shouldn't, like sending inappropriate pictures or meeting in person. The goal is to establish a relationship of control over the victim, leading to potential physical harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation.

Ending Uncomfortable Conversations

It's important for young people to feel strong and able to set limits online. Talk about ways to stop conversations that make them feel uncomfortable or end online friendships. Tell your children that they have the power to stop a conversation or block a person who is making them feel uncomfortable.

Seeking Help

Emphasize the importance of seeking help from a trusted person. Assure your child that they're not alone and that it's never too late to ask for help. Online luring escalates quickly, and it's important to understand that it's not the victim's fault. All blame and shame is solely on the online predator.

IDENTIFYING RED FLAGS

Teach your children to recognize red flag behaviors that signal an unsafe situation. These may include:

Excessive Attention

Groomers often shower children with an overwhelming amount of attention, messages, and compliments, seeking to establish a sense of dependence.

Inappropriate Affection

Be wary of exchanges that become overly personal or affectionate, as well as requests for personal information or photos.

Secrecy and Requests for Secrecy

Predators may encourage children to keep their conversations secret from trusted adults or set up separate secret accounts so parents won't see their conversations.





Stay Smart and Safe

ESSENTIAL ONLINE TIPS CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH!

- ✓ **Private Accounts**
Set all your social media accounts to PRIVATE.
- ✓ **Location Off**
TURN OFF location services in all your social apps.
- ✓ **Friends Only**
Accept friend requests only from people YOU KNOW in real life.
- ✓ **Blocking and Unfollowing Strangers**
Block, unfollow, and unfriend people YOU DON'T KNOW on social media.
- ✓ **Safe Chats**
Chat only with people YOU KNOW personally.
- ✓ **No Meetups**
Don't meet up with ONLINE acquaintances in person.
- ✓ **Game Friends**
Avoid adding GAMING FRIENDS to your social media.
- ✓ **Keep It Clean**
Don't share or text EXPLICIT videos or photos.
- ✓ **Camera Off**
DISABLE or block your webcam and other cameras when not in use.
- ✓ **Be Cautious**
Don't open attachments from UNKNOWN PEOPLE.
- ✓ **Personal Info**
Keep your personal information PRIVATE (city where you live, school name, phone number, birthdate, etc.). Also, keep your public biography profile PRIVATE.
- ✓ **No Intimate Pics**
Don't send INTIMATE pictures.
- ✓ **Speak Up**
Tell an adult if you receive an intimate picture or any UNWANTED message online.
- ✓ **Secret Code**
Use a SECRET CODE WORD to text someone you trust if you're in trouble. (TIP: The code word should be three characters so you can text it quickly).
- ✓ **Password Privacy**
Keep your passwords PRIVATE. Share them only with parents.
- ✓ **Tech-Free Zone**
Make your bedroom a TECH-FREE ZONE at bedtime and overnight.
- ✓ **Talk It Out**
Talk to a TRUSTED adult about anything uncomfortable.