
(ISC)²
Safe and Secure Online[®]

Parents' Guidelines to Internet Safety

Is your child spending more and more time online? Are you worried your child may be putting themselves in danger by talking to strangers on the internet?

Don't worry!

There are some steps that you can do to ensure your child's safety while still allowing them to have fun online.

Educate yourself:

You must first know the basics of the internet before you can teach your child how to become safe online.

- Be aware of the types of websites and games that your child frequents. Make sure they have the proper safety and privacy settings.
 - Most social networking sites have two types of privacy settings: Public (everyone and anyone can view your child's profile) and Private (only people on your child's friends list are able to view their profile).
- Understand what the different ratings for games and apps mean and then look up the ratings of the particular game your child wants to play. (ESRB.org) Make sure the game is appropriate for your child's age.
 - There are ratings for Early Childhood (eC), Everyone (E), Everyone age ten and above (E10+), Teen (T), Mature for age seventeen and above (M17+), and Adults (A). Research what each rating includes.
 - Look at ESRB's resources for parents (http://www.esrb.org/about/parents_tips.jsp) to decide what games are right for your child and how to add mods to make games more age-appropriate if need be.
- Geo-tagging is a feature on phones that posts the location of the photo when posted online. If your child uses their phone to post photos online, you may want to turn this feature off to protect their location and privacy.
 - For an iPhone, go to Settings > General > Location Services and configure the location settings for certain apps or globally for all of them.
 - For an Android, open the camera > click the small icon that looks like a satellite dish > set store location to "off".
- Take a moment to become acquainted with internet lingo that kids use while on the computer.
 - BRB>be right back, AFK>away from keyboard, BTW>by the way, POS>parent over shoulder, g2g>got to go, GG>good/great game, TTYL>talk to you later, etc.
 - These are always changing, so looking up a recent list every once in a while might be handy.
- If you feel the need to block access to some sites for your child, there are ways to do that. You may need to download a free and simple software that can block the sites that you designate. You may also want to consider monitoring your child's internet access instead of blocking sites, so you can allow them to explore online in a manner that allows you to easily step in if something is inappropriate.

Educate your child:

Teaching your child the ways to be safe online at an early age will help them establish safety skills that will stay with them throughout their life.

- Explain to your child about having an "online reputation"- something which will be visible forever.
 - Make sure to explain to them that anything they post now will be available for employers, college admissions officers, and anyone else to view in the future. Tell them to think twice before posting.
- Talk to them about changing their social networking sites' privacy features to private. Make sure your kids only accept friend requests from people that they know and they're careful posting private information online.
- If your child has an email account, make sure they know not to open emails or download anything from someone they don't know, to protect your computer from receiving damaging viruses.
 - Make sure your child is aware that downloading music, videos, etc. without paying for them is illegal.
- Talk to your child about cyber bullying and the implications it presents- make sure they know that just because they can be anonymous online, they shouldn't be cruel to anybody. Make them aware that cyber bullying is serious, illegal and can harm and even take others' lives if your child takes part in it.
 - If your child is the victim in cyber bullying, tell them to save all messages or images and tell you or a trusted adult immediately. Make sure to watch for behaviors that may indicate depression, and report the abuse.

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Emphasize Communication:

Having communication between you and your child will allow you to be aware of any issues immediately if they arise and can bring your family closer together by adding to the trust you have in each other.

- Explain to your child about the dangers of the internet, such as stalkers waiting for your child to post valuable personal information, so that your child is aware of the dangers and knows there is a reason for safety precautions and not merely that their parents are “trying to ruin their fun” by being strict about the internet. They'll be much more open to following your rules if they know the reasons behind them.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their online experiences. Ask them to share their favorite sites and games with you, and invite yourself to play with them. Make an effort to play with them, especially if they offer the chance to you. The internet can be fun for both parties!
- Talk to your child about the dangers of meeting up with someone in real life that they had only previously met online. Emphasize that they should ask you first and not go meet someone without your knowledge.
- If you decide to block or monitor your child's online activities, consider telling them beforehand so they don't feel betrayed if they find out. If you include them in your decision and inform them that it's for their safety, they may be more understanding and open to your plan.
- Don't be afraid to ask your child questions about the internet- they may know more than you and be willing to share!
- If you create an open environment where you talk about and share the internet with your child, your child will feel they'll be able to trust you with their online activities. This way, if something bad comes up, such as your child being sent messages that make them feel uncomfortable or they're being cyber bullied, your child will know they can count on you to be there and you'll be able to resolve the problem efficiently.
 - If your child IS sent pornography or other messages that make them feel uncomfortable or upset, you should contact the authorities right away.

Don't be afraid to have fun:

Despite the dangers online, the internet is a great place to connect with friends and family, learn about new things, share information, and play games. Once you have your basic safety procedures in place, don't feel afraid to go online. As long as you and your child trust your instincts and are able to report any unsafe or uncomfortable messages or otherwise, you'll be in control of your own internet experience. Enjoy yourselves!



(ISC)² FOUNDATION

The (ISC)² Foundation is a non-profit charitable trust that aims to empower students, teachers and the general public to secure their online life by supporting cybersecurity education and awareness in the community through its Safe and Secure Online educational program, scholarships and industry and consumer research. For more information, please visit www.isc2cares.org.