



PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD: Keeping Kids Safe and Secure Online

Who are your kids talking to online?

Now, especially, children are socializing with their friends – and friends of friends, and strangers – on social media and through online gaming platforms more than ever before. Do you know who your kids are talking to? Teaching kids how to appropriately interact with strangers is just as important online as it is in the “real” world.

Whether your child is six and just starting to use a tablet for remote learning or 17 and surfing social media while they fill out college applications online, there are ways to keep them safe from people who might try and do them harm.

Your best bet? Talk to your kids about what they are doing online and why they need to be careful about who they are talking to! Here are a few tips to get the conversation started:

- Sit down with your children and review their friends and followers lists
- Have them tell you about the people they are following or gaming with – do they know these people in real life? Do other players say or do things that make your kids uncomfortable?
- Remind them about the dangers of communicating with “strangers” – should they believe everything they read? Could a man pose as a younger boy? Or as a girl?
- Encourage your kids to think about their personal safety. How easy is it to find a person based on a picture? Or a name? Or a school?
- Tell them it’s okay to say no to a friend request – try practicing ways to say “no”
- Set boundaries. Make sure your children know they should NEVER agree to meet someone they met online without talking to you first
- Establish yourself as an ally: remind your children that they can come to you if someone online makes them feel uncomfortable

If you know of a child in immediate risk or danger, **notify law enforcement right away.**

Online child exploitation can be reported to your **local police department** or to the

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s

CyberTipline: www.CyberTipline.com or by calling 1-800-843-5678

Resources:

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0006-talk-your-kids

www.justice.gov/opa/video/parents-stay-safe-home-stay-safe-online

www.justice.gov/usao-ma/outreach/project-safe-childhood

