Parent Resource: Internet Safety for Kids

Why internet safety, and why now?

The FBI has issued a warning about the potential for increased online exploitation of children given the closure of schools and the likely increase of time spent online. It is never too early to begin talking about online safety with your kids. Below are some suggestions and resources provided by the FBI and other professionals.

Tips and resources

Protecting Children's Internet Safety

- Discuss Internet safety with children of all ages when they engage in online activity.

- Review and approve games and apps before they are downloaded.

- Make sure privacy settings are set to the strictest level possible for online gaming systems and electronic devices.

- Monitor your children's use of the Internet; keep electronic devices in an open, common room of the house.

- Check your children's profiles and what they post online.

- 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.

- Remember that victims should not be afraid to tell law enforcement if they are being sexually exploited. It is not a crime for a child to send sexually explicit images to someone if they are compelled or coerced to do so.

FBI's Safe Online Surfing Program

The FBI's Safe Online Surfing (SOS) program teaches students in grades 3 to 8 how to navigate the web safely. The age-appropraite lessons and games cover topics like cyberbullying, protecting personal information, recognizing trustworthy and untrustworthy sites, and avoiding malware. This program is available in English and Spanish.

Center for Cyber Safety and Education

Get advice from cybersecurity professionals on how to navigate the internet safely. From parents to teachers and librarians, we have the tools and knowledge you need on the topics that you care about: cyberbullying, safe shopping, social media, gaming and more. Best of all, we've partnered with Garfield to bring you cutting-edge tools to keep classrooms safe and secure online. As your non-profit Center for Cyber Safety and Education, we can't wait to help you stay safe online.
https://iamcybersafe.org/s/

Guide for Parents and Caregivers for Cyber Safety

ACA Aponix cybersecurity team put together a free downloadable guide on cyber safety for parents of children ages 3-18:
https://www.acacompliancegroup.com/blog/keeping-children-safe-online-during-covid-19-social-distancing

Connecticut Children's Medical Center

Is Your Child Online? Follow 6 Steps for Social Media Safety
With schools closed and social distancing measures in place, children are turning to social media to stay connected with friends – through messaging and video chats, sharing photos and videos, and playing video games. For many, this is happening at a younger age than their parents originally planned.
That can be okay, since it's important for children of all ages to maintain social connections, especially in times of crisis. But if you're a parent, you should follow some basic steps to keep your child safe online.
Kevin Borrup, DrPH, JD, MPA, associate director of Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center, joins the blog with advice.