



POWER



Be powerful.
Your kids deserve it.

Learn. Connect. Talk.
Watch what your kids watch.

It is terrifying for parents to think about predators coming into contact with their kids online. At the same time, most parents realize that using the Internet is an essential skill for young people growing up in today's world. That's why it is so important that we talk to our kids about online risks, teach them how to protect themselves, and know what to do if our kids are the target of online predation.

Parent Checklist - Protecting kids from Online Predators

Yes

No

We keep our computer in a family common space, making it easier for me to keep track of my kids online activities.

My kids understand that private chatrooms shouldn't be entered without an adult's permission and supervision.

My kids understand that private information should NEVER be shared without an adult's permission.

My kids know not to respond to emails that make them feel uncomfortable.

Younger kids in our family share a family email instead of having their own.

We've checked into and use the filtering or tracking software and parental controls through my Internet provider.

Our kids know not to download anything unless it is from a trustworthy source.

Our kids understand that everyone they meet online are strangers and that they are NEVER to meet someone they've met online without an adult along.

Our kids know to create a gender ambiguous Screen Names that don't contain any personally identifying information.

If you answered YES to all or most of these questions you already are doing a lot to protect your kids! Take a closer Look at those you answered NO to and think about some changes you might make to further safeguard your kids.

Warning signs and signals

- Your child has telephone conversations with people that you don't know. They may also act secretly about these communications.
- Your child is secretive about his/her online activities including closing or downsizing screens when you enter the room.
- Your child receives gifts or letters from people that you don't know.
- You find alarming conversations by using Tracking Software, or find disturbing images downloaded

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on your computer.

- Your child spends a lot of time online.
- Your child complains of headaches, stomachaches, or other stress-related symptoms.
- Your child suddenly starts acting differently, is unexplainably grumpy or reclusive, or starts acting out in school for reasons unknown to you.

What do I do if my child is the target of an online predator?

First of all, it is important that your child knows that this is not his/her fault. The predator always bears full responsibility for the situation. Young people may feel extremely embarrassed, ashamed and scared by the situation. It is the job of caring adults to make sure that young people know that you care, that it is not their fault, and that you will do everything you can to protect them.

Ask the right questions.

- Do I have all the information I need?
- Have I listened thoroughly to my child?
- Has my child been threatened physically or sexually?
- How is my child handling the situation emotionally?

"You sort of forget that you don't really know who else is in the chatroom with you. You think that they are all your friends"

- 14 year old girl

Report the problem

Report inappropriate behavior to your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Contact local law enforcement immediately if your child -

- Has received unsolicited pornographic images
- Has been sexually solicited online
- Has received child pornography
- Has received threats of physical violence to self or immediate family

Save and print off all emails, chat logs, photographs and messages to share with police.

Take online incidents seriously

There is a misperception that because online predation and cyberstalking happens online, without physical contact, that it is less serious than these same crimes in "real life." This is not necessarily true. Kids today have access to and use the Internet more than any previous generation—they play games on it, talk with friends over it, look for guidance on it, and rely on it for information. Online predators can take advantage of the relative ease, accessibility and anonymity of the Internet to build unhealthy relationships with young people that were not possible just a decade ago. Just like we help people know how to avoid unsafe situations in the real world, we need to arm our kid with the information and tools they need to be safe online too.



[Join the Network today](#) for MediaWise tools that make it easier to manage the Internet in your home. Print off "**MediaWise Internet Respect Plans**" and use them with your family today!

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The MediaWise Network brings you special resources, opportunities for action, and ways to connect with other parents. A FREE online resource brought to you by the National Institute on Media and the Family, composed of people like you.

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