eSafety parents

Technology and online trends move at a rapid pace and it can be hard for busy parents to keep up. Our tips and advice on online safety for parents and carers are designed so they can learn about the digital environment and how to help their children navigate the online world confidently and safely.

Risks and concerns

Research tells us that a large number of parents (60%) are concerned that their child is being exposed to a range of risks by being online, such as accessing inappropriate content, contact with strangers and excessive screen time. Parents report they want more information on online safety, especially about how to help their child deal with negative online incidents.[1]

Advice for parents and carers

Our website is designed for parents and carers to learn about the benefits and risks of being online so they can help their children have safer online experiences.

We provide strategies for parents and carers to tackle the big issues, talk about tricky subjects and deal with issues as they come up. Our advice and tips are evidence-based and focus on current and emerging online safety issues, including:

- cyberbullying
- online pornography
- sending nudes and sexting
- time online
- gaming
- unwanted contact and grooming
- eSafety Guide to games, apps and social media.

The website includes a range of resources

The Screen Smart Parent Tour — an interactive self-reflective tool for parents and carers with practical tips and advice:

- information and tips from leading online safety experts
- latest research and facts about Australian children online
- a range of downloadable guides and tip sheets
- links to professional support and help for parents and their children.
  esafety.gov.au/parents

[1] Survey commissioned by the eSafety Commissioner, June 2016, of 2,360 parents in Australia with children aged 8 to 17 years who access the internet.

Tips to help keep your child safe online

It is virtually impossible to stay on top of every new app and emerging issue, or to monitor your child 24/7. Safeguards like parental controls, filters and safe searches can help to screen content and set time limits.

However, the best way to positively influence your child's online wellbeing is by actively helping them to make sound decisions and manage online risks as they arise.

eSafety Parents encourages you to take proactive steps, such as to:

- Communicate openly — talk openly and regularly with your child about their online activities, how they connect with friends, who they talk with and the type of sites they visit.

- Get involved — explore and experience online content together. Research or set up your own social media accounts and apps to get a better feel for any online risks and age ratings. Play along in online gaming.

- Explore safety strategies together — get your child to actively think of ideas on how they can keep safe online and how to avoid content that could be harmful to them.

- Agree on ground rules in advance — set daily limits for screen time and device free rooms at home. Be clear about the types of sites or apps your child should not visit and personal information they should not share.

- Lead by example — reduce your own screen time and stick to the rules that apply to the family. Show that you care about your own personal information through privacy settings and the type of content you share.

- Encourage respectful behaviour — encourage your child to think carefully before they post, text or share and avoid posting things that may upset others. Remind them there is a real person at the other end.

- Develop a safety plan in case things go wrong — encourage your child to speak to you or another trusted adult if they encounter something online that makes them feel uncomfortable or distressed. Be aware of what you and your child can do in cases of cyberbullying through blocking and reporting. Parents can report serious cyberbullying to the eSafety Commissioner using our cyberbullying complaints form. **esafety.gov.au/reportcyberbullying**

- Get professional support — if your child is distressed and needs further help as a result of a negative online experience, seek professional help and support.

Where to go for help?

Kids Helpline
Provides free, 24/7 confidential online and phone counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years. Phone 1800 55 1800 or visit **Kidshelpline.com.au**

eheadspace
Offers confidential, free and secure space where young people aged 12 to 25 or their family can chat, email or speak on the phone with a qualified youth mental health professional. Phone 1800 650 890 or visit **eheadspace.org.au**

Parentline
Each state or territory has a dedicated Parentline that offers counselling, information and a referral service. Opening hours vary by state.
Parentline (ACT) — 02 6287 3833
Parentline (NSW) — 1300 1300 52
Parentline (QLD and NT) — 1300 30 1300
Parent Helpline (SA) — 1300 364 100
Parent Line (TAS) — 1300 808 178
Parentline (VIC) — 13 22 89
Parenting WA Line (WA) — 1800 654 432