

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

A Handbook for Families



Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the BRP *Ride Out Intimidation* program for their support in developing our online resources for youth and families. Furthermore, we extend our deepest appreciation to our Youth Council for their vital feedback and active role in co-creating the materials designed for youth.



Dr. Victoria Talwar
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Professor at McGill University

Foreword

In the past decade, youth's social worlds have undergone a dramatic shift, moving from predominantly face-to-face interactions to online spaces that increasingly shape how they socialize and spend their time. The playground has been replaced by screens, and virtual interactions have become the reality for many adults and youth. The digital world offers many opportunities, such as quick access to information and the ability to connect with others across physical borders. However, it also raises concerns, particularly for youth. Cyberbullying is a prevalent issue across Canada, putting youth at risk on many levels. Family support plays a major protective role in the prevention and intervention of cyberbullying when parents are aware of the situation and know how to take the right action.

Given these growing concerns, understanding how to support youth online is essential. For over a decade, our research team at McGill University has conducted research on cyberbullying. Recently, with support from BRP's *Ride Out Intimidation* program, we have translated our academic findings into evidence-based resources for youth and families and created the *Youth Digital Compass*. The *Youth Digital Compass* is a program that develops research-based tools to help youth, parents, and teachers navigate online life safely, kindly, and confidently.

The *Youth Digital Compass* Team includes highly motivated young researchers at different stages of study, from undergraduate to doctoral levels under the supervision of Dr. Victoria Talwar, Canada Research Chair at McGill University. The team members come from backgrounds in education, human development, and applied child psychology. This diversity allows us to design practical, evidence-based multimedia grounded in developmental science and real-world experience.

With EPCA's support, we hope this handbook empowers youth and families to navigate the digital world with greater confidence, safety, and kindness. Together, we can all make the digital space safer and kinder for youth.



For further inquiries, please contact us via email at onlinesafety@mcgill.ca.

What You Will Find in This Handbook



YOUTH SECTION

Engaging infographics and QR-linked videos clarify digital safety by:

- Building awareness of online risks and behaviors.
 - Debunking cyberbullying myths.
 - Promoting empathy and positive decision-making.
 - Providing interactive activities for families to reinforce learning together.
-



PARENT SECTION

Fact sheets and tip sheets equip caregivers with:

- Foundational knowledge of digital risks and youth experiences.
 - Practical communication and safety strategies.
 - Platform-specific insights and guided activities to spark meaningful family dialogue.
-



GLOSSARY & RESOURCES

Access a curated directory of mental health supports, expert-backed resources, and a glossary of key terms to bridge the digital knowledge gap.

- Glossary: Clear definitions of terms to ensure common understanding.
 - Resources: A Canadian directory of mental health resources and organizations.
-



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01 For Youth

The internet is so vast that sometimes it can be hard to point out cyberbullying when we see it. This module will help you learn the signs of cyberbullying so you can know when to step in!

1.1



That's cyberbullying!



Behind the Screen: The Faces of Cyberbullying

This is what cyberbullying may look like. Be cautious!

VERBAL VIOLENCE



Jordan's hate comments

Using words to hurt others' feelings like insults, teasing, or spreading lies.

EXCLUSION



Lila's blocked chat

When someone is left out on purpose, not allowed to join, or forced out.

VISUAL VIOLENCE



Josh's viral fall

When someone shares pictures or videos of someone else without asking.

IMPERSONATION



Maria's catfish

Using fake or stolen accounts to pose as someone else.

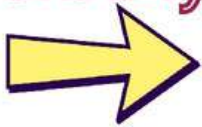


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WARNING:
This is
Cyberbullying!



Cyberbullying is when someone is mean or hurts another person's feelings online, and they keep doing it over and over again on purpose.



Digital Danger Zones: Where Cyberbullying Hides



**IN TEXT MESSAGES
& CALLS**



IN EMAILS



**IN GAMING CHAT
ROOMS**



IN SOCIAL MEDIA



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1.2

*The internet isn't always as it may seem...
This module will show you how to be
careful online so you can continue to
browse safely!*

Staying Safe Online





Personal Information

Q: What is personal information?

A: Any information that can identify you or reveal sensitive details. Basic information should always be kept private and sensitive information should be kept extra, extra safe!



1

Basic Information



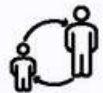
Full Name



Home Address



Email



Age

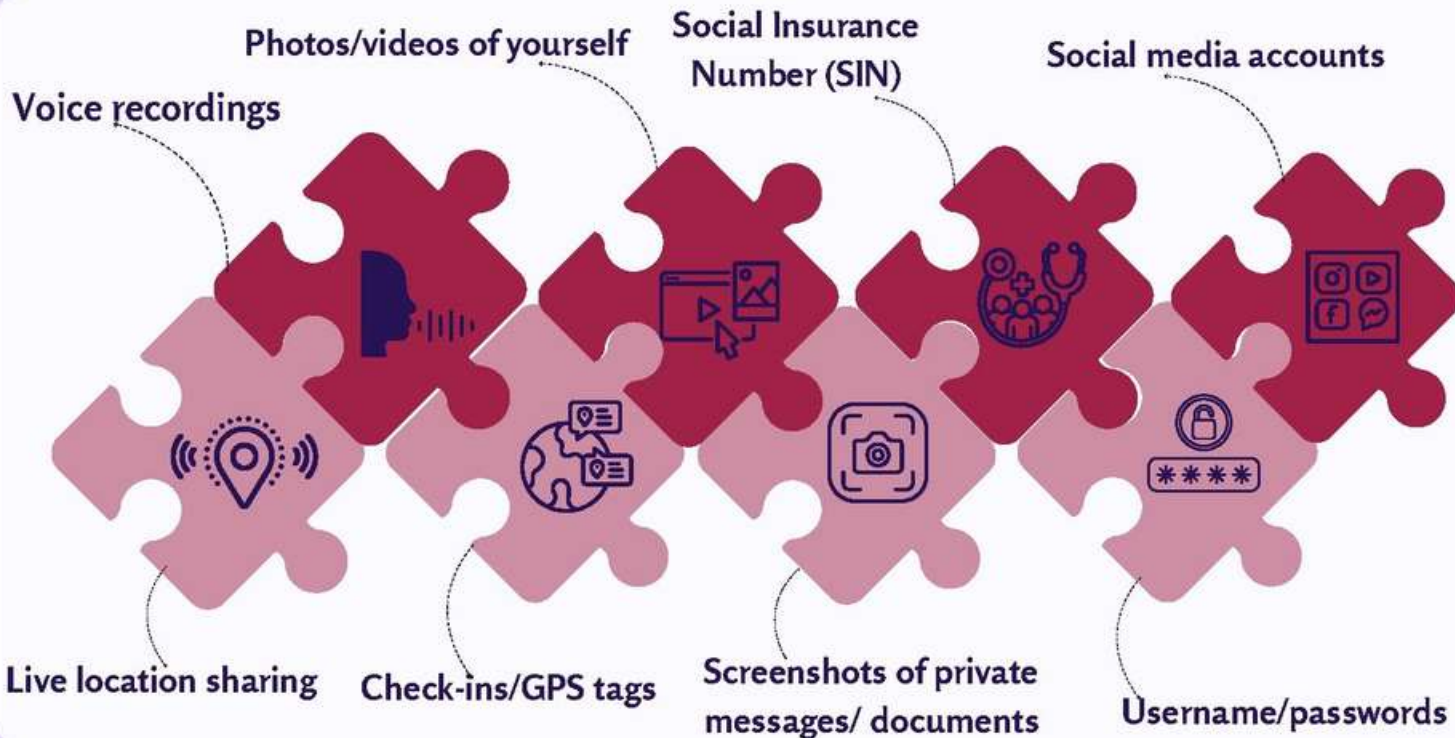


Phone Number



2

Sensitive Information





Oversharing Online means posting too much personal information online, which can lead to problems like privacy risks and cyberbullying.

“Think Before You Share” Guidelines

It’s not always easy to know what should be kept private. But some things are best not shared online — they should only be told to your family or close friends.

Here’s a list of what NOT to share online!



Your Full Name and Birthday



Your Home Address



Your Phone Number



Your School Name



Your Family Information



Your Online Passwords



Your Personal Conversations



Yours or Anyone’s Inappropriate Photos



Your Location in Real Time



Recognizing Online Dangers

You're so dumb! Nobody likes you!

- 1** Name Calling and Insults: Repeated insults or mean messages are a sign of cyberbullying.



Hey!

You're so cool!

Can you do me a favor?

- 2** Manipulation and Deception: Some people use flattery or fake friendships to pressure you into doing things you're uncomfortable with.

Send us your photo!

Come on!

Don't be lame!

Everyone is doing it!



- 3** Peer Pressure in Digital Spaces: If someone pressures you to do something risky, it's a warning sign.



You have been removed from the group!

Ok



Did you hear what she did?

- 4** Exclusion and Rumor-Spreading: Being left out on purpose or having rumors spread online can be harmful.

If you don't do this,

I'll tell everyone your secret.

- 5** Threats and Intimidation: Threats can be direct or subtle, but they are always a warning sign.

“Hanging out online is super fun, but sometimes things can get weird or even harmful. It's really important to spot the signs when an interaction isn't safe, so you know to step back.”



Social Media Super Choices



SUPER CHOICES



Share happy and fun posts.



Show your creative side.



Use privacy settings to keep your information safe.



Be kind and respectful to others.



Tell a trusted adult if something makes you feel worried or uncomfortable.

UH-OH CHOICES



Share your private information.



Argue or be mean to others online.



Talk to strangers without a trusted adult's permission.



Believe everything you see online.



Share other people's private information.

#Social media: Super Choices or Uh-Ohs?#
Let's choose wisely!#



Gamer's Safety Guide

START GAME

2

Just hang out with your IRL friends and mute online bullies.



4

If a game or chat feels uncomfortable, just pause and tell an adult.



1

Do not share your personal information with strangers when gaming!



3

Come up with a strong password and keep that secret code to yourself!



5

Don't let trolls ruin it. Just hit the report button to keep the game safe.





Standing Strong Against Cyberbullies

1.3

*Not sure what to do when you see cyberbullying?
This module will teach you the right ways to
become an upstander – or a support for your
friends who are being cyberbullied!*





DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

MYTHS ❌

"It's okay if it's just a joke"



"It's okay if everyone else is doing it"



"It's not my problem"



FACTS ✅

If it makes someone feel bad it's not a joke – it's just hurtful



Following the crowd isn't an excuse to be mean



If you saw it, you can report it, tell an adult, or check in with the person





BYSTANDER INTERVENTION MODEL

1

NOTICE THE EVENT

WHEN SOMEONE'S
BEING TREATED
BADLY



BE THE ONE
WHO NOTICES



2

INTERPRET IT AS A PROBLEM

ARE THEY
JOKING? THIS IS
REALLY MEAN



IT'S NOT DRAMA, IT'S HARM.
A HURTFUL COMMENT IS A

RED
FLAG

3

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

IF NOT
YOU
THEN WHO?
BYSTANDERS HAVE
POWER



4

KNOW HOW TO HELP

THERE ARE
MANY WAYS
TO HELP. DO
WHAT'S
RIGHT

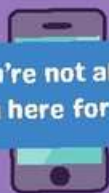


5

TAKING ACTION

COURAGE IS CLICKING
HELP

you're not alone,
i'm here for you



SENT



NOT IGNORING





When The Bully Is Your Friend

It's online, but it can be closer than you think

“Maura and Casey are best friends. One afternoon, Maura laughs while looking at a classmate's photo.”

Her head looks huge on camera!



“Casey starts to worry. Maura is her friend, but the comment was mean. She doesn't know what to do.”

SAY SOMETHING

IGNORE

It feels wrong to stay quiet.

It's kinda funny, but it might hurt her feelings



“Later, Casey sees that same comment posted online by Maura.”



“In the end, Casey decides to be honest and she tells Maura to take the comment down.”

Your joke is mean, can you delete it?

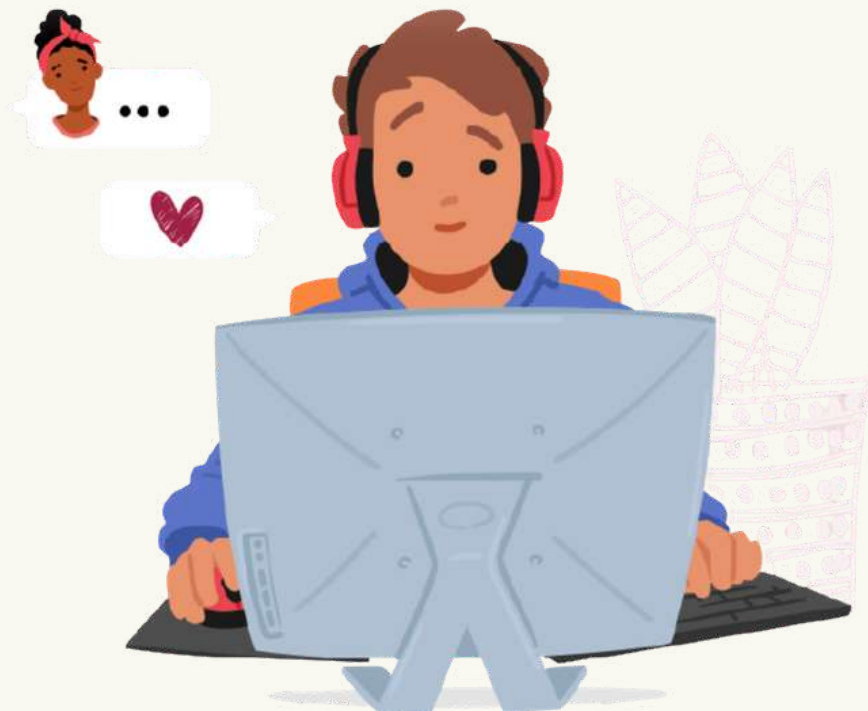


Friends look out for each other, even when it can be uncomfortable

1.4

*Spending time online is more fun when everyone's kind!
Here you will learn how to better approach interacting with your friends and other people online so everyone has a good time.*

Being Kind and Respectful Online





HOW TO BE KIND AND POLITE ONLINE

The internet can be an amazing place! You can do research for school, connect with your friends, and even check out the latest videos!

But we need to make sure that everyone can enjoy using the internet without feeling hurt or left out.



TIPS!

USE KIND AND SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE

You are so cool! 😎

Thank you!

Next time you're playing a game with your friend online, make sure to say something nice about their talents!

BE AN UPSTANDER

If you see someone being mean online, don't just scroll by. Speak up or show support to help make the internet a kinder and safer place.



24-HOUR RULE

When you feel upset about something you see online, you may want to respond right away. But give yourself 24 hours before responding or posting something online.



USE "I" STATEMENTS

Start with "I" when sharing how you feel! Instead of saying, "you're mean" try saying, "I felt hurt when you said my hair looks bad". It helps people understand you better!

I think
I want
I feel
I see
I believe

Being online isn't always easy, but we can do our part in creating a safe, positive space and inspiring others to do the same.





CHEAT SHEET: BEING KIND AND POLITE ONLINE

A big part of maintaining a positive and respectful environment online is **standing up** for others who may be cyberbullied or harassed.



*The **5 D's** can help us remember the steps we can take to support our friends who are in these situations*

1

Distract

Change the subject or shift the conversation



2

Direct

Directly respond to the issue at hand



3

Delegate

Ask an adult for help



4

Delay

Check-in with the victim to offer support



5

Document

Report the problem to the platform

REPORT



02 For Parents

In this module, you will learn what cyberbullying looks like, how to discuss it with your child, and what to do if your child is experiencing cyberbullying.



2.1

Understanding Cyberbullying



What is Cyberbullying?

This infographic highlights key elements of cyberbullying and outlines common cyberbullying behaviours.

1

Intention of Harm

Cyberbullying is a type of aggression aimed at causing harm and emotional distress.



2

Repetition

It repeats overtime, (e.g., sending the same message to different group chats).



What Does Cyberbullying Look Like?

Hurtful Communication

- **Flaming or bashing** (i.e., verbal attacks using insults, bigotry, or other hostile expressions).
- **Teasing/belittling/name-calling**
- **Rumour-spreading**
- **Denigration** (i.e., negative, untrue statements about another).
- **Harassment** (i.e., repetitive offensive texts).
- **Cyberstalking** (i.e., stalking someone online by repeatedly harassing and threatening them through communications).

Public Humiliation

- **Cyber-smearing** (i.e., creating, posting and/or distributing sensitive, private and/or embarrassing information or image).
- **Creating derogatory websites** that mock, torment, and harass the intended victim.
- **Outing and trickery** (i.e., soliciting personal information from individuals and sharing it online with others).
- **Rating aspects of an individual** (e.g., appearance, character) on a rating site.

Deceiving & Isolating

- **Impersonation** (i.e., using the online identity of someone else, usually by hacking their account, and then spreading offensive information using that identity, catfishing).
- **Exclusion** (i.e., being excluded from online communities or blocked from online activities).



Where Does Cyberbullying Happen?

Cyberbullying can happen **anytime** and **anywhere** technology is accessible. Examples include:

- Chatrooms
- Websites
- Social Media
- Groupchats
- Emails
- Online Games
- Text Messaging
- Phone Calls

Research shows that venue use for cyberbullying varies with age and the most common technology used by that age group.

Among **elementary** school students, **gaming** platforms are frequent venues where cyberbullying occurs.



Among **middle school** students and **college** students, **social media** is a common means by which cyberbullying occurs.





Signs of Cyberbullying

Parents should stay attentive to any unusual patterns of behaviour as they may signal that your child is a **target, bystander, perpetrator** or even involved in **multiple roles** in cyberbullying. **Here are some warning signs:**

- 1** Using technological devices more frequently and for longer periods than usual.
- 2** Loss of interest in daily activities they usually enjoy.
- 3** Concealing and acting secretive about online activities.
- 4** Stop using technological devices or social media unexpectedly.
- 5** Avoiding social activities and school.
- 6** Mood changes; withdrawn, frustrated, persistent sadness, distress, low energy levels, changes in sleeping and eating patterns and indicators of self-harm.
- 7** Upset or visibly distressed when using electronic devices.
- 8** Social withdrawal from peers and family.



Please note that these behaviours do not necessarily indicate your child is experiencing cyberbullying, but they may signal a need for support. This factsheet is for educational purposes and may not include all possible signs.

Resources for Parents and Children

Kids Help Phone

<https://kidshelpphone.ca>

Text: 686868 Call: 1-800-668-6868

Cyber tip

<https://www.cybertip.ca/en/>

NeedHelpNow

<https://needhelpnow.ca/en/>

PREVNet

<https://www.preynet.ca/bullying/cyberbullying/what-parents-can-do/>

Bullying Canada

<https://www.bullyingcanada.ca/what-should-parents-know-about-bullying>



How do I talk to my child about cyberbullying?

Tips to help you understand and discuss cyberbullying with your child

TIP 1: Start with the basics!

When discussing cyberbullying with your child, it is important to first make sure they understand what cyberbullying is. You can **start by sharing this definition with them**: “**Cyberbullying is when someone is mean or hurts another person’s feelings online, and they keep doing it over and over again on purpose.**”

A way to start the conversation: “Do you know what cyberbullying is? Can I tell you more about it?”

Helping your child understand the different types of cyberbullying behaviours can make it easier for them to recognize when they’re experiencing it.

EXAMPLES:

- ➔ If someone leaves hurtful comments under your child’s Instagram photo repeatedly, that’s a form of **Verbal Abuse**.
- ➔ If your child was a part of a class group chat, but was removed and not allowed to rejoin, this is **Exclusion**.
- ➔ If someone shares embarrassing pictures of your child without permission, this is a form of **Visual Violence**.
- ➔ If someone hacks your child’s TikTok account and starts posting strange content, that’s considered **Impersonation**.

TIP 3: It is NOT a joke!

Help your child understand that **cyberbullying is not a harmless joke**; it can seriously hurt someone’s

Tell them: “Even if you can’t see the person, they still have feelings, just like you do!”

TIP 4: Know where it shows up!

Cyberbullying can **appear in different places**. Here are some places to keep an eye out for and step in when needed.

- In text messages
- In gaming chat rooms
- In emails
- In social media apps

What cyberbullying is NOT!

- Setting boundaries or blocking someone.
- Accidentally hurting someone’s feelings online but apologizing after.
- Choosing not to respond to messages or ending an online conversation politely.



I think my child is being cyberbullied...

This is a not an easy situation to be in. Here are some quick tips to keep in mind as you navigate this with your child.

1

A child who has experienced cyberbullying may be dealing with a lot of complex emotions, including low self-esteem.² Remember to show them they are loved and valued through both your words and actions.

Examples: “It’s okay to tell me”, “Thank you for sharing this with me” or even, giving them a hug.

2

Make sure your child is aware it is not their fault.

3

Keep a record of any cyberbullying incidents. If the bully involved attends the same school, consider arranging a meeting with the school for support and creating a safer environment for all children.

4

Report the incident directly on the platform where it occurred, as cyberbullying violates the terms and conditions users agree to when signing up.

5

Block the individual(s) to cut off communication.

6

If needed, speaking with a mental health professional could be helpful for your child.

KNOW YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS!

There are legal consequences to cyberbullying in Canada. Cyberbullies can have their devices taken away, have to pay their victims and may even face jail time in severe situations.

For more information, use the link provided below.

Disclaimer: As laws may change, we recommend checking the most recent legal guidelines.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-against-law.html>



Family Interactive Activity 1

Cyberbullying Scenario Challenge

Objective: To help children **recognize specific cyberbullying behaviors** - such as verbal abuse, exclusion, and impersonation - while understanding what is not considered cyberbullying.



PREPARATION

- **Print or write** the scenarios (provided below).
- Create **three zones** in your living room: a “**Cyberbullying Zone**”, a “**Grey Zone**”(Situations that are unclear, accidental, or need more context.) and a “**Healthy Digital Habits Zone**”.
- Mark the boundaries: Use tape or cushions to create clear lines between the three areas.



HOW TO PLAY

- **Read a card aloud** to your child.
- **Ask them to move** to the zone they think the scenario belongs to.
- **Discussion:** If they land in the middle, ask: “What information are we missing to make this a ‘Healthy’ or ‘Bullying’ action?” (e.g., Was it a joke? Did it happen more than once?). **If it is cyberbullying**, remind them: “It’s not your fault” and “Even if you can't see the person, they still have feelings.”



Family Interactive Activity 1

Cyberbullying Scenario Challenge



PRINTABLE SCENARIO CARDS

Card 4. Sharing Embarrassing Picture

Scenario: Sharing an embarrassing picture of someone without permission.



Is this Cyberbullying or a Healthy Habit?

Card 5. Blocking Someone

Scenario: Setting a boundary or blocking someone you don't want to talk to.



Is this Cyberbullying or a Healthy Habit?

Card 6. Accidental Hurt with Apology

Scenario: Accidentally hurting someone's feelings but apologizing after.



Is this Cyberbullying or a Healthy Habit?



Family Interactive Activity 1

Cyberbullying Scenario Challenge



PRINTABLE SCENARIO CARDS ANSWERS

Card 1. Repeated Hurtful Comments

This is a form of **Verbal Abuse of flaming**. When we say mean things over and over online, it can make someone feel really sad and unsafe.

Card 2. Excluding from a Group Chat

This is **Exclusion**, which isolates the individual. Everyone deserves to feel included online, just like in real life. Leaving someone on purpose can hurt their feeling a lot.

Card 3. Hacking an Account

This is **Impersonation and a violation of privacy**. Getting into someone's account without permission is against the rules and hurt their trust. It's never okay to pretend to be someone online.

Card 4. Sharing Embarrassing Picture

This is **Visual Violence or cyber-smearing**. Sharing private photos without asking is a big violation of trust. It can make someone feel embarrassed and scared. Always ask before sharing!

Card 5. Blocking Someone

Blocking is **a protective tool**, not bullying. It is okay to say 'no' to talking to someone who makes you feel uncomfortable. Protecting your feelings online is smart!

Card 6. Accidental Hurt with Apology

Cyberbullying is defined by the intent to harm and repetition. If you make a mistake online, saying "I'm sorry" shows you care. It's **a constructive way to fix things!**

2.2

While the internet can be a wonderful place, it can also be risky for youth's safety and well-being. In this section, you'll learn the essentials of digital safety for youth, how to protect your child from online risks, and how to promote well-being in a digital world.

Keeping Youth Safe and Resilient Online





Youth's Digital Safety: What Parents Need to Know

Use this guide to learn the essentials of digital safety for youth. It covers core concepts, how your child interacts online, and how to identify common risks and their warning signs.

DIGITAL SAFETY: THE BASICS

What is digital safety?



As your child grows, their online lives become more **complex** and **independent**.



Digital safety for children involves **practices and tools** that **protect** them from online risks, **empowering** them to navigate the internet responsibly.



Why is it important today?



Digital safety is crucial now due to children's **widespread online presence** and **increased exposure** to **evolving threats** like cyberbullying and online predators.



It's essential to foster their **long-term well-being, responsible digital citizenship**, and to equip them with **vital skills** for a safe online experience.



NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

Understand the digital landscape for your child!

Did You Know?

Research shows that parents who have **strong digital knowledge and skills** tend to be **more involved** in guiding their children through the online world.



Youth's Online Benefits



ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Internet aids school research, homework, and offers engaging online learning formats like educational games and videos.



PROSOCIAL WELL-BEING

Online interactions foster a sense of belonging and can improve well-being.



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Computers and online activities improve school readiness and cognitive skills such as problem-solving and digital literacy.



IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

The internet lets youth explore who they are, developing a positive self-image.



SAFE SOCIAL SPACE

Internet provides a low-pressure way for youth, especially those with anxious tendencies, to practice social skills, boosting confidence.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

The internet offers a means for youth to seek emotional help and important information.



NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

Understand the digital landscape for your child!

Youth's Online Interactions

How Youth Are Using the Internet:

Youth are more active online than ever, using devices like smartphones and computers for education, entertainment, research, and social networking.

The Tech Behind Their Digital Lives:

It's common for parents to be unaware of certain technologies and platforms their child are using. **Here are some examples:**

Hidden App Features

Photos, videos, or messages that are designed to **disappear** after a short period (e.g., a few seconds after viewing for Snapchat Snaps).

Bypassing Filters

Tools like VPNs that help youth **get around internet blocks** at school or home.

Specific Gaming

Platforms like Discord for **talking to other players**, or apply special game changes called **mods** to **customize their gaming experience**.

Niche Online Groups

There are some **websites or forums** about **very specific hobbies or interests** (e.g., Subreddits on Reddit).



IDENTIFYING ONLINE RISKS

Understand the threats your child might encounter online!



This section breaks down **online risks** to your child into **5 categories**: **Content**, **Contact**, **Conduct**, **Contract**, and **Cross-Cutting Risks**.

CONTENT RISKS

Your child may **accidentally** or **intentionally** encounter or create **problematic online content**, like explicit violence, hate speech, or pornography, with AI deepfakes and AI-assisted image-based abuse posing a serious new risk for teens.

CONTACT RISKS

Your child can encounter or be targeted by **harmful online and offline interactions**, including harassment, grooming, sextortion, child sexual abuse material, predatory behaviors like catfishing, and potential issues with AI companions.

CONDUCT RISKS

Your child may witness, participate in, or become victims of **harmful online behavior** like **cyberbullying**, or be exposed to **dangerous user communities** like those promoting self-harm, or **risky online challenges and trends** like the choking or Benadryl challenge.

CONTRACT RISKS

Your child can be exploited by **harmful agreements or commercial interests**, including age-inappropriate marketing, online gambling, malware, scams, and insecure digital services leading to identity theft, fraud, and in severe cases, human trafficking.

CROSS-CUTTING RISKS

Your child can be exposed to dangers that **span all four categories**, affecting their privacy and their physical and mental health. This can cause **inequalities or discrimination**, and includes common examples like **addiction and privacy risks from online oversharing**.



RECOGNIZING WARNING SIGNS



Watch out for these early alerts !

Learning to spot **the following general warning signs early** can make a huge difference in keeping your child safe from online risks.

1 Behavioral and Emotional Shifts

- **Increased secrecy** about online activities.
- **Agitation or withdrawal** when not online.
- New, secret online "**friendships**" or **defensiveness** about internet use.
- Unexplained **anxiety, sadness, or loss of interest** in usual activities.

2 Physical Well-being

- Constant **tiredness** or **trouble sleeping**.
- Unexplained **headaches, stomach aches, or muscle tension**.
- **Bruises, cuts, or injuries** without a clear reason.
- Neglecting **personal hygiene** or significant shifts in **eating habits**.

3 Academic and Social Impacts

- **Sudden drop** in school grades or **missed assignments**.
- Shifts in **friend groups** or **increased arguments** with family.
- Unexplained **requests for money**.
- Using **new, out-of-character** words or ideas.

4 Device and Online Activity Clues

- Finding **new, hidden apps** on their devices.
- Receiving many **unknown** or **suspicious** messages/calls.
- Ignoring **privacy settings** or discovering **disturbing content**.

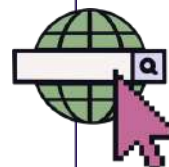


Supporting your child's online safety

Use these 5 tips to help your child build safe/healthy online habits:

1 BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S DIGITAL WORLD

- Stay informed about the **social media, gaming platforms**, and **apps** your child uses. This knowledge will help you have open conversations about their online life.
- Instead of just monitoring your child, **actively participate**. Play the video games they enjoy, create content together on their favorite apps, and explore new technology **as a team**.
- Learn your child's **online language**, including **slang and emojis**, to better understand their conversations and spot potential red flags like cyberbullying or predatory behavior.



Some examples of youth's online lingo:

POS = Parent Over Shoulder

KMS = Kill Myself (signals distress)

Finsta = Fake Instagram

LMIRL = Let's Meet In Real Life
(danger from stranger)

Ghosting = Cutting off
Communication with Someone

Slay = Doing something great



Note: these terms are always evolving, so you may need to keep updated on the online lingo that emerges.





Supporting your child's online safety

2 REDUCE YOUR CHILD'S EXPOSURE TO HARMFUL CONTENT

- Consider installing **filters** and **age restrictions** on devices and platforms to block inappropriate content (found in **privacy settings** and **content warning** section on every device).
- Consider **setting healthy boundaries** (e.g., time limits, no screens at the dinner table).
- Consider **watching content together** with your child to monitor content.

3 PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM ONLINE CONTACT RISKS

- Consider having a conversation with your child about online manipulation early on, for example,
 - **Grooming**: when an adult builds a relationship with a child and then exploits them (sexually or emotionally).
 - **Catfishing**: when someone creates a fake identity online.
- Emphasize that not everyone online is honest and who they say they are.
- Explain to your child that these are situations that could occur online and if ever they experience one of these situations they should talk to a trusted adult about it!





Supporting your child's online safety

4

INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF A DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

- A digital footprint is the trail of information you leave behind through posts such as **photos** and **comments**.
- Let your child know that once an image is shared online, it will remain there **forever**!
- Also, encourage your child to **think before they post** and about who they are sharing their images with.



5

PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM MALWARE, SCAMS, ONLINE GAMBLING

- Consider installing **security softwares** like:
 - Norton 360
 - Kaspersky Safe Kids
 - McAfee Total Protection
- Encourage your kids not to click unknown links.
- Consider **requiring permission** for downloads and purchases on all devices.
- Encourage your child to **cover their devices** cameras when they are not in use by putting a piece of tape or a webcam cover to minimize breaches of privacy.





Family Interactive Activity 2

The Resilience Roadmap

Objective: To build a foundation of trust through open dialogue and to practice **Digital Resilience** - the ability to bounce back from negative online experiences.



PREPARATION

- Find a relaxed, distraction-free **Tech-Free Zone** (e.g., during a walk or over a snack).
- Review the definition of **resilience**: managing emotions and seeking support when faced with digital stress.



HOW TO PLAY

1) Open Dialogue Warm-up

- Ask your child what they enjoy most about their favorite apps.
- Let them lead the conversation to show that you are an ally, not just a monitor.
- Say, “I want to make sure that if anything ever feels off online, you feel safe telling me”.



Family Interactive Activity 2

The Resilience Roadmap

2) Best Resilient Response

Present the following situations and discuss the best Resilient Response:

- **Scenario 1:** You see a post that makes you feel bad about yourself or your life.
 - Resilient Response: **Practice Self-Regulation.** Take a deep breath and step away from the screen for a **Non-Tech** break.
- **Scenario 2:** Someone sends you a mean message or tries to exclude you from a group.
 - Resilient Response: **Critical Thinking & Support.** Remind yourself that their words don't define your value, and immediately tell a trusted adult.



Family Interactive Activity 2

The Resilience Roadmap

- **Scenario 3:** You accidentally see something online that makes you feel scared or uncomfortable.
 - Resilient Response: **Seeking Help.** Use your **support network**. Seeking help is a sign of strength and bravery, not weakness

3) Draw the Digital Superheroes

Ask your kids to draw their own **digital superheroes**, with special powers (resilient responses they discussed) such as the ability to take deep, calming breaths, a radar to find safe and supportive people nearby, or a shield that blocks hurtful messages, etc.

One of the most powerful ways to stop cyberbullying is when peers speak up. In this module, we will learn how to encourage your child to be an “upstander” – someone who helps in safe and positive ways.



2.3

Becoming an Upstander



Learning About Upstanders

One of the best ways to stop cyberbullying is when peers step in and stand up for someone who's being targeted. That's why it's so important to encourage your child to speak up if they see cyberbullying happening. The information below will share why standing up for others makes a difference, and what can sometimes make it hard to do.

→ Who is a bystander?

A bystander is someone who witnesses cyberbullying but does not take action.

Who is an upstander? ←

An upstander is someone that intervenes and stands up for the victim of the cyberbullying they witness.

Facts about Upstanders

Standing up to a cyberbully reduces the negative effects of bullying on victims, such as increased depression, anxiety, and loneliness⁶, but many children do not report standing up for victims of cyberbullying.

Standing up for victims reduces the likelihood of that the cyberbully will continue victimizing others.

Children and adolescents who are cyberbullied value peer support as well as adult support.

Being an upstander is beneficial, since upstanders have higher academic achievement and self-esteem.



Barriers to Becoming an Upstander

→ Peer Dynamics

Early adolescence is a period where peer dynamics could be complicated. Adolescents care a lot about the way their peers see them and may fear that standing up against cyberbullying will lead to their peers seeing them as 'uncool' or make them a future target for bullying.

Bystander Effect ←

The bystander effect is the idea that people are less encouraged to act when others are present because they assume that someone else will intervene and it is not their place to do so.

→ Not Knowing How to Help

Bystanders can be unsure what the best response is or if their response will change anything during a cyberbullying event.

Perspective-Taking ←

Bystanders sometimes think that the victim 'deserves it' or brought it on themselves¹. They may also assume no intervention is needed since it's 'not a big deal'.

→ Safety

It can be unrealistic to expect children to intervene in every situation—it can sometimes be unsafe.



How Can I Guide My Child to Be an Upstander?

Standing up isn't always easy. Here's a guide to teach your kid how to stand up against cyberbullies—the right way.

12:30



Tip #1: Be a Supportive and Warm Figure in Your Child's Life

- Frequently communicate with your child about their school experiences.
 - Try these out:
 - **"How was school today? Did anything interesting happen? How are your friends doing?"**
- Let your child know often that you are there for them.
 - Try this out:
 - **"I want you to know I am always here for you and you can talk to me about anything."**
- When your child communicates with you, react in a kind manner. Try to respond with openness rather than concern or frustration.
 - Try this out:
 - **"I'm glad you told me about that, tell me more."**





How Can I Guide My Child to Be an Upstander?

12:30



Tip #2: Talk About Cyberbull5ying and Empathy Frequently

- Take opportunities to initiate conversations about online etiquette, empathy, and what cyberbullying looks like.
 - Try these out:
 - “Do you know what cyberbullying is?”
 - “Do you act kind online?”
 - “Do you know the best way to stay safe online?”
- Be aware of cyber lingo so you can identify what constitutes cyberbullying—**knowing this is ever-changing.**



How Can I Guide My Child to Be an Upstander?

12:30



Tip #3: Use Indirect, Contextual Ppenings to the Conversation

- Bring up cyberbullying examples seen in the news or on social media.
 - Try this out:
"I saw a story of a student being bullied online—what do you think of that?"
- Mention hypothetical situations.
 - Try these out:
 - **"Have you ever seen someone at school be left out of a group chat? Have you ever seen someone leave a mean comment on a post?"**
 - **"How would that make you feel?"**
- Discussing a peer's experience or a story tends to reduce defensiveness and increase engagement in the conversation.



How Can I Guide my Child to be an Upstander?

12:30



Tip #4: Teach Upstander Strategies

Direct: Be firm and intervene directly with the bully.

Distract: Change the subject or interrupt the situation.

Delegate: Get help from a trusted adult.

Delay: Check in with the victim afterward and offer support.

Document: Report the comment to the platform.

- Sometimes kids can get nervous about how they might be perceived by being upstanders. Giving them different tools allows them to intervene in a way that's most comfortable for them.
 - **Upstanders feel strongest when they are supported too!**
- Remember: Support, Report and/or Comfort.



How Can I Guide my Child to be an Upstander?

12:30



Tip #5: Acknowledge Your Child's Worries about Becoming Upstanders

- It's not always "cool" to be an upstander. Let your child know it's normal to feel nervous about speaking
- up.
 - Try these out:
 - "I know it can be hard to speak up or to step in, but it's important to be supportive when someone's being cyberbullied."
 - "Remember there are different ways to help!"

Tip #6: Support Being Assertive not Aggressive

- Do not encourage aggressive or retaliatory behavior.
 - Try this out:
 - "It's great to help defend your friends but don't be mean to the bully either."



How Can I Guide my Child to be an Upstander?

12:30



Tip #7: Model Upstander Behavior



- Your child is always watching and imitating how you behave.
 - Modelling appropriate behavior both online and offline goes a long way.
- Speak up when you notice someone being unkind and explain your actions to your child.
 - Online or offline, show your child how to respond to hurtful behavior with kindness.
 - Try this out:
 - **“Look at this comment, it’s kind of mean, I’m gonna ask the person to be more respectful”**
- Model how to support others.
 - Show your child that checking in with others is important—even if it’s after the fact.
 - Try this out:
 - **“I messaged my friend after seeing a mean post about them to make sure they’re ok.”**



Family Interactive Activity 3

The Upstander Ally Challenge

Objective: To help children move from being passive bystanders to active **upstanders** by practicing safe, assertive ways to support victims and intervene cyberbullying.



PREPARATION

- Prepare **Scenario Cards** based on common online situations (e.g., mean comments, exclusion from group chats).
- Review the three **Upstander Power Moves**: Support (privately comfort the victim), Speak Up (stop the bully assertively), and Seek Backup (tell an adult).
- Review the core rule: **Be Assertive, Not Aggressive**. (Don't bully the bully).



HOW TO PLAY

1. Pick up a card and read a scenario: You see a classmate being teased in a group chat with mean emojis.
2. Ask, "Why might someone be afraid to help here?" (e.g., fear of being called "uncool").



Family Interactive Activity 3

The Upstander Ally Challenge



HOW TO PLAY

3. Child must act out one of the following:
 - **Support:** Send a private message to the victim: I saw that, it wasn't cool. You okay?
 - **Speak Up:** Post: “Let's talk about something else,” or That's pretty mean, let's stop.”
 - **Seek Backup:** Show how to report the message and tell a parent.
4. **If more than one child participates in this activity**, it can be charades – after one child acts out, other children guess which upstander strategy the child is acting.
5. Discuss why being **assertive** (firm) is better than being aggressive (insulting the bully back).

2.4

Guider les comportements en ligne

You play an important role in shaping your child's online experiences. This module shows how you can guide respectful digital interactions online.





How can my child engage with others online positively and respectfully?

Navigating the digital world isn't always easy. Parents have a unique role in helping their children have positive online experiences. This fact sheet offers practical information about what respectful digital interactions may look like and why they matter for your child's well-being.

SENSE OF BELONGING

- Positive social media interactions—like friendly messages or emotional support—are linked to higher life satisfaction and emotional wellbeing.
- Engaging in shared online experiences (peer discussions or group chats) helps kids feel seen and included.

**Receiving kindness :
Why are positive online experiences important for my child?**

SELF-ESTEEM AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Receiving likes or supportive messages online can help kids feel valued. These small moments build confidence, reduce loneliness, and increase feelings of connection.
- Positive digital interactions also spark curiosity, resilience, and social engagement.

WAYS TO CONNECT

- Chatting with friends online strengthen sexisting relationships and improves well-being.
- Having a mix of familiar and new connections is linked to greater happiness and less loneliness.



Acting kind: Why should my child be positive and respectful online?

HELPS CHILDREN FEEL CONNECTED

When children treat each other with kindness, they're more likely to build real friendships and feel a sense of belonging. This makes them want to come back and stay involved.

CREATES POSITIVE COMMUNICATION HABITS

When children learn to share experiences, ask friendly questions, and respond with care, they're practicing how to build healthy relationships online—habits that will carry into later digital experiences.

KEEPS THE SPACE SAFE AND WELCOMING

Respectful behaviour sets the tone for how everyone acts. When children are kind and follow shared rules, the community stays supportive and focused—and avoids bullying or negativity.

STRENGTHENS GROUPS OVER TIME

Being positive and respectful helps create a long-lasting online space where children enjoy spending time. This keeps the community active and supportive.

BUILDS TRUST

When youth feel respected, they're more comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences. This makes the group stronger and encourages others to take part too.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Parental guidance on being kind online can positively impact children by helping them show more empathy, express encouragement, share in others' joy, offer support, and write more thoughtful messages. Guidance around tone, kindness, and inclusion also sets the standard for creating a safe online space.



What does being respectful and kind look like online?

Kids don't always know what respectful behavior looks like online. This page offers tips you can share with your child — using simple, everyday examples of empathy, inclusion, and handling disagreements — to help them practice kindness and build safer, healthier digital habits.



Show empathy

Consider how others might feel when they read your words. Offer support or encouragement if someone seems upset, left out, or unsure.

Pause before posting

Take a moment to ask yourself: Is it kind? Is it true? Is it necessary? Would I say this to someone's face?

Respect privacy and consent

Never share someone else's photos, videos, or personal information without their clear permission.

Use respectful language

Be polite and avoid insults, slurs, or teasing. Even jokes can be hurtful—make sure your words are kind and inclusive.

Think about your tone

Online messages can be misunderstood. Avoid using ALL CAPS or sarcasm, and be clear about your intentions.

Be inclusive

Make sure everyone feels welcome. Avoid inside jokes that exclude others, and celebrate different backgrounds and perspectives.

Report harmful behavior

If you see bullying, hate speech, or inappropriate content, report it instead of ignoring or joining in.

Disagree respectfully

It's okay to have different opinions—but be calm, curious, and kind. Listen first, and never attack the person.

Think long-term

Everything you post becomes part of your digital footprint. Make sure it reflects who you want to be—now and in the future.

Lead by example

Kindness online starts with you. When you act respectfully, others are more likely to follow your lead.



Positive online communication tips for your children

As children and adolescents spend more time online, **developing strong digital communication skills** becomes critical. Communicating positively and respectfully online supports youth's friendship quality, overall well-being, and helps them maintain a positive digital reputation. **Parents play a key role in shaping these positive online experiences!** Use these tips to encourage your children to be kind and respectful online:



1

Model positive communication

Children learn from how we interact online! It can be helpful to model kindness in texts, comments, and emails, even when things are frustrating.

For example: If something you personally wrote gets misunderstood, you might say, *"Sorry if that came off the wrong way—here's what I meant."*



2

Discuss the consequences

Have a conversation about the real consequences of posting online and the words that are used.

For example: *"Remember, having a digital footprint, which will stay online and can potentially impact your life later on."*



3

Foster open communication

Let your child know you're here to discuss their use of the internet, what they see online, and even to address some questions they might have about navigating the online space.

Remember: As parents, it's normal not to know all the answers! You can always search for some guidance online together.



4

Stand up to Cyberbullying

Did you know 1 in 4 Canadian youth are exposed to cyberbullying?

Whether it's reporting the comment, reaching out to a victim, or speaking to an adult—children should be reminded the ways to stand up to cyberbullying.



5

Online Etiquette

Children should be reminded that their choice of words can hurt, just as mean things can hurt when said in person. They can be encouraged to ask themselves questions before making a post:

"Would I say this in person?"
"How would that make them feel?"



Family Interactive Activity 4

The Digital Time Machine – 2035 Project

Objective: To help children understand that online actions leave a permanent trail and to practice **decoding tone** to avoid digital misunderstandings.



THE ACTIVITY

The child acts as a Digital Detective investigating a candidate (the parent) for a dream job in the year 2035. However, the candidate's "Digital Footprint" from 2025 has just been leaked!



PREPARATION

- **The Evidence Pile:** Write 5–8 **Secret Messages** on scraps of paper (see examples below).
- **The Job Cards:** Create 2–3 **Future Career** cards (e.g., Olympian, Video Game Designer, Doctor).
- **A Trash Can and a Golden Frame** (can be drawn on paper).



Family Interactive Activity 4

The Digital Time Machine – 2035 Project



HOW TO PLAY

- The child picks a Job Card (e.g., Video Game Designer).
- The child draws an Evidence slip from the pile. These are things the candidate posted years ago:
 - **Slip 1 (The Shout):** A comment that says “WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT???” (Testing: ALL CAPS tone).
 - **Slip 2 (The Sneaky Pic):** A photo of a friend sleeping with a funny/mean caption. (Testing: Consent & Privacy).
 - **Slip 3 (The Respectful Disagreement):** A post saying, “I don’t agree, but I see your point. Let’s chat.” (Testing: Respectful Etiquette).



Family Interactive Activity 4

The Digital Time Machine – 2035 Project

- The child must decide if the evidence goes in the **Golden Frame** (Helpful Footprint) or the **Trash Can** (Harmful Footprint).
- **The child asks the parent:** “Why did you post this? Did you ask for permission? Was it necessary?”
- For any **Trash Can** items, the child must **fix** the digital footprint by rewriting the message using the **THINK** rule (True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind).



Family Interactive Activity 4

The Digital Time Machine – 2035 Project

➤ PRINTABLE JOB CARDS

Card 1. Galactic Olympic Athlete

Role: Lead Athlete for the First Lunar Games.

Requirement: Must be a role model for kids across the solar system.

The Stake: A single mean comment from 10 years ago could lose you your sponsors and your spot on the shuttle!



Does this candidate show sportsmanship and self-control online?

Card 2. Video Game Architect

Role: Designer of the world's most popular Virtual Reality world.

Requirement: Must be able to manage a huge online community without getting into flame wars.

The Stake: If the architect is a troll or a bully, the whole game world becomes toxic.



Does the candidate use their digital power to build up or tear down others?



Family Interactive Activity 4

The Digital Time Machine – 2035 Project

➤ PRINTABLE JOB CARDS

Card 3. Robotic Surgeon General

Role: Remote operator for life-saving surgeries.

Requirement: Must be extremely private, and calm under pressure.

The Stake: Posting private photos of patients or friends without permission shows a lack of professional ethics.



Can this person be trusted with private information and secrets?

Card 4. Eco-City Mayor

Role: Leader of a 100% Green Mega-City.

Requirement: Must be a Uniter, not a Divider. Needs to handle disagreements respectfully.

The Stake: Old posts using All Caps shouting or insulting people who disagree make the Mayor look immature.



How does this candidate handle people they don't get along with?



Parent's guide to social media

In this module, you can learn more about Discord, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok: how your child uses the app, potential risks, the safety features, and what you can do to help keep your children safe.

2.5



A Parent's Guide to Discord



This guide can be used to learn more about Discord. It provides a detailed look at how your child uses the app, the potential risks they might encounter, the platform's safety features, and what you can do to help keep them safe on Discord.

What is Discord?

Discord is a communication app that started as a way for gamers to chat while playing but has since become **a popular platform for anyone to connect over shared interests**. The app's Terms of Service require users to be **at least 13 years old**, though some areas may mandate a higher age.



Key Features of Discord

- **Servers:** User-created communities.
- **Channels:** Topic-specific spaces within servers.
- **Go Live / Screen Sharing:** Broadcast your screen to others.
- **File Sharing:** Share images, documents, and other files.
- **@mentions:** Notify specific users in a chat.
- **Roles:** Assign titles and permissions to users within a server.
- **Bots:** Automated programs that can perform various functions, like moderation or playing music.
- **Status Updates:** Let others know what you're doing.

How does Discord Keep Your Child Safe?



Apps are **ever-changing** and so are their features! Please remember to check your or your child's settings regularly to stay aware of **any updates** to **in-app safety features**.

➤ Teen Safety Assist Features

Discord has features that are **automatically turned on** for all users who have self-reported their age as a teenager, **including**:

- **Sensitive Content Filter:** automatically scan and block DMs (direct messages) from non-friends that may contain explicit images.
- **Safety Alerts:** pop-up notifications that appear when a teen receives a DM from a first-time sender, giving them a chance to block, mute, or get safety tips before they reply.

➤ Friend Request Settings

You can control **who can send your child a friend request to help prevent unwanted contact**. This can be limited to Friends of Friends or Server Members.

Q Where can I find this feature? ✕

On the mobile app:

Tap **your profile picture** > tap the **gear icon** > select **"Content & Social"** > Scroll down and select **"Friend Request"**.

How does Discord Keep Your Child Safe?

➤ Family Center

This tool provides parents with **a high-level view of their child's activity**, including who they're friends with and what servers they've joined. **To activate this feature**, both you and your child must complete the setup process. Your child will generate a QR code from their "Family Center" settings that you'll need to scan with your Discord app.

Q Where can I find this feature? ×

On the mobile app:

Tap **your profile picture** > tap the **gear icon** > scroll down and select **"Family Center"**.

➤ Reporting Tool

This tool lets users **flag content and behavior that breaks the platform's rules**. You should encourage your child to report issues like **harassment, bullying, and hate speech**, or you can report it for them.

Q Where can I find this feature? ×

On the mobile app:

Press and hold the **message** > select **"Report Message"**.

What are the Risks of Discord?



Risk #1: Predators

> Warning Signs

Friend requests/DMs from strangers, conversations becoming personal quickly, requests for secrecy, pressure to move to other apps, and offers of gifts

> What You Can Do

Adjust your child's settings to limit friend requests and direct messages. Talk with them about online safety, like recognizing grooming tactics and knowing what personal information to avoid sharing. Remind them to always block and report suspicious users.



Risk #2: Inappropriate Content

> Warning Signs

Joining "age-restricted" servers, secrecy about their online activity, or sudden screen switching.

> What You Can Do

Turn on "Keep Me Safe" and ensure their birth date is accurate in the app. Enable Teen Safety Assist. Talk with your child about what content is appropriate and encourage them to find well-moderated servers.



Risk #3: Cyberbullying

> Warning Signs

Changes in their mood, such as increased sadness or anxiety, or shifts in their behavior like avoiding friends, declining school performance, or changes in their sleep and eating habits.

> What You Can Do

Have regular, low-pressure conversations about their online experiences. Show them how to use Discord's safety tools. Remind them they deserve respect online, and seek professional help if their well-being is at risk.



A Parent's Guide to Snapchat



This guide can be used to learn more about Snapchat. It provides a detailed look at how your child uses the app, the potential risks they might encounter, the platform's safety features, and what you can do to help keep them safe on Snapchat.

What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a mobile app known for its focus on **visual and temporary communication**, allowing users to send photos and videos that disappear after they're viewed. The minimum age to create a Snapchat account is **13 years old**.



Key Features of Snapchat

- **Snap:** Photos or videos sent to friends that disappear after they are viewed.
- **Filters:** Effects for photos and videos.
- **Lenses:** Augmented reality (AR) effects for faces and surroundings.
- **Stories:** A broadcast of a user's Snaps that is visible to all their friends for 24 hours.
- **Spotlight:** A public feed of videos from the community.
- **Snap Map:** An interactive map showing your friends' locations and public Snaps.
- **Memories:** A private archive for saving Snaps and Stories.
- **Snapstreaks:** Tracks consecutive days friends send Snaps.

How does Snapchat Keep Your Child Safe?



Apps are **ever-changing** and so are their features! Please remember to check your or your child's settings regularly to stay aware of **any updates** to **in-app safety features**.



Private by Default Settings for Teens

Snapchat automatically makes teen accounts **private by default**, so they can only communicate with mutual friends and are protected from unwanted contact. **Other default privacy settings include:**

- **Public Profiles:** Not available for younger teens (13-15). For older teens (16-17), privacy settings block strangers from direct chats.
- **Friending and Contact Protections:** Snapchat may warn a user trying to add a teen without mutual contacts.
- **Location Sharing:** Off by default for all users



Family Center

With a mutual opt-in, you can **monitor** your child's Snapchat friends and recent communications, **restrict** sensitive content, and **confidentially report** concerning accounts.



Where can I find this feature? x

Tap your **profile picture** > tap the **gear icon** > scroll to **"Privacy Control"** > tap on **Family Center**.

How does Snapchat Keep Your Child Safe?

➤ Reporting & Blocking

Users can easily **report, block, or remove** other users who are sending unwanted or inappropriate content.

🔍 Where can I find this feature? ✕

- **To Report or Block a user from the Chat screen:** Tap and hold on **their name** > select **Manage Friendship** > find the **Report** or **Block** options.
- **To Report a Snap or Story:** Press and hold on the **content itself** > tap **Report Snap** or **Report**.
- **To Report a Public Profile:** Go to **the profile** > tap the **three dots or gear icon** > select **Report**.

➤ “Here For You” Tool

This tool provides immediate, confidential support by surfacing mental health resources when a user searches for related terms like "anxiety" or "depression."

🔍 Where can I find this feature? ✕

Tap **the search icon** > type **a mental health topic** (like “anxiety”) > the **“Here for You” resources** will appear in the search results.

What are the Risks of Snapchat?



Risk #1: Predators

> Warning Signs

Friend requests/DMs from strangers, conversations becoming personal quickly, requests for secrecy, pressure to move to other apps, and offers of gifts.

> What You Can Do

Talk with them about online safety, like recognizing grooming tactics and knowing what personal information to avoid sharing. Remind them to always block and report suspicious users.



Risk #2: Addiction

> Warning Signs

Anxiety when away from phone, stress over "Snapstreaks", losing interest in hobbies, late nights, constant urge to check.

> What You Can Do

Create phone-free zones/times; turn off notifications; use screen-time tools; build time-awareness; model healthy habits.



Risk #3: Cyberbullying

> Warning Signs

Changes in their mood, such as increased sadness or anxiety, or shifts in their behavior like avoiding friends, declining school performance, or changes in their sleep and eating habits.

> What You Can Do

Have regular, low-pressure conversations about their online experiences. Show them how to use Snapchat's safety tools. Remind them they deserve respect online, and seek professional help if their well-being is at risk.



A Parent's Guide to Instagram



This guide can be used to learn more about Instagram. It provides a detailed look at how your child uses the app, the potential risks they might encounter, the platform's safety features, and what you can do to help keep them safe.

What is Instagram?

Instagram is a free social media app **that lets you share photos and videos with your followers.** You can post permanent content to your profile, share photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. To join, you must be **at least 13 years old.**



Key Features of Instagram

- **Followers:** Users who are allowed to see your posts.
- **Following:** Users whose content is visible to you.
- **Stories:** Users can post a photo or video that remains visible to their followers for 24 hours.
- **Close Friends:** A private story that only the user's selected friends can see.
- **Explore Page:** A page that suggests content from other users, tailored to your interests.
- **Reels:** Videos suggested to you based on your interests.
- **Shopping:** A shopping page where you can buy items from various stores on the app.
- **Likes:** A feature that allows you to like or react to a post.
- **Comments:** A feature that allows you to comment on a post.

How does Instagram Keep Your Child Safe?



Apps are **ever-changing** and so are their features! Please remember to check your or your child's settings regularly to stay aware of **any updates** to **in-app safety features**.



Private Teen Accounts by Default

For Instagram users **under 18**, accounts are **automatically set to private**. For users under 16, they can only change this default setting with help from a parent or guardian. **Other restrictive settings by default** includes:

- **Restrictive Interactions:** preventing them from being messaged or tagged by people they don't follow.
- **Sensitive Content Controls:** limiting their exposure to potentially mature topics like cosmetic procedures or violence in feeds like Explore and Reels.



Parent Supervision Tools

These tools allow you to **set time limits, view who your child messages, and receive notifications about their activity**.

 **Where can I find this feature?** 

Tap **your profile picture** > tap the **menu** > **scroll down** to select **Family Center**.

How does Instagram Keep Your Child Safe?

➤ Time Management

Instagram helps your child manage their time through **automatic default settings**, like **Daily Time Nudges** and **Sleep Mode**, as well as **optional tools** that users can customize, such as **Daily Time Limits**.

🔍 Where can I find this feature? ✕

For the optional tools:

Tap your **profile picture** > tap the **menu** > tap **How you use Instagram** > tap **Time management**.

➤ Reporting, Blocking, Restricting, and Muting

These tools allow your child to **report harmful content or accounts and block, restrict, or mute users** to control your experience and safety.

🔍 Where can I find this feature? ✕

Tap the **profile picture** > tap the **three dots** > select **report/block/restrict/mute**.

What are the Risks of Instagram?



Risk #1: Scammers/Predators

> Warning Signs

Friend requests/DMs from strangers, conversations becoming personal quickly, requests for secrecy, pressure to move to other apps, and offers of gifts.

> What You Can Do

Adjust your child's settings to limit friend requests and direct messages. Talk with them about online safety, like recognizing grooming tactics and knowing what personal information to avoid sharing. Remind them to always block and report suspicious users.



Risk #2: Inappropriate Content

> Warning Signs

Using new or adult language you haven't heard them use before, sharing or mimicking risky challenges or trends, comparing themselves excessively to influencers.

> What You Can Do

Encourage open judgement-free conversations about mimicking dangerous behavior online and consuming such content. Implement familial controls to avoid exposure to such content.



Risk #3: Cyberbullying

> Warning Signs

Changes in their mood, such as increased sadness or anxiety, or shifts in their behavior like avoiding friends, declining school performance, or changes in their sleep and eating habits.

> What You Can Do

Have regular, low-pressure conversations about their online experiences. Show them how to use Snapchat's safety tools. Remind them they deserve respect online, and seek professional help if their well-being is at risk.



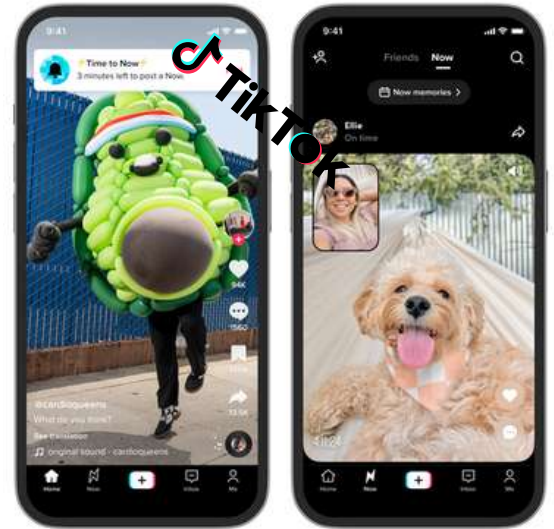
A Parent's Guide to TikTok



This guide can be used to learn more about TikTok. It provides a detailed look at how your child uses the app, the potential risks they might encounter, the platform's safety features, and what you can do to help keep them safe on TikTok.

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a free app where users can **create and watch short videos**. Most videos are 15 seconds to 10 minutes long. The app's algorithm learns what users like and shows them content from friends and creators worldwide. While anyone can watch TikToks, users must be **at least 13** to **have their own account**.



Key Features of TikTok

- **Duet and Stitching:** Allows users to create side-by-side or clipped video responses to others.
- **Live Streaming:** When a user live streams video for others to watch, comment, and send virtual gifts.
- **For You Page:** An app section for browsing personalized content.
- **Following Feed:** An app section that allows users to browse content for those they follow.
- **Likes:** Allows users to show they appreciated a post.
- **Comment:** Allows users to write a message under a post.

How does TikTok Keep Your Child Safe?



Apps are **ever-changing** and so are their features! Please remember to check your or your child's settings regularly to stay aware of **any updates** to **in-app safety features**.



Default Settings for Teens

For **ages 13–15**, TikTok accounts are **private by default** with only approved followers able to view content, while **ages 16–17** also start with private accounts but may choose to switch to public. Other **defaults include:**

- **Limited Interactions:** Direct messaging, Duet, and Stitch are disabled for users under 16, while users under 18 cannot go LIVE or send/receive gifts
- **Screen Time Limits:** Users under 18 have a 60-minute daily limit by default; extending it requires a passcode managed through Family Pairing.



Family Pairing

You can link your TikTok account to your child's to manage **privacy, screen time, restricted mode, and direct messages**.

 **Where can I find this feature?** 

Tap your **profile picture** > tap the **menu** > tap **Settings & Privacy** > select **Family Pairing**

How does TikTok Keep Your Child Safe?

> Reporting & Blocking

Users can **report** inappropriate content or accounts that break community guidelines and **block** others to stop them from interacting or viewing their content.

Where can I find this feature?

- **To Report:**

Go to the **video, comment, LIVE, or account** you want to report > tap the **Share** arrow > select **Report**.

- **To Block:**

Go to the **profile of the user** you want to block > Tap the **three dots** in the top right > select **Block**.

> Well-Being Guide

TikTok offers **a variety of in-app tips** on digital self-awareness, healthy screen habits, restricted mode, and support for emotional challenges.

Where can I find this feature?

Tap your **profile picture** > tap the **menu** > tap **Settings & Privacy** > scroll down and tap **Support** > find **Safety Center** > Select **Well-Being Guide**.

What are the Risks of TikTok?



Risk #1: Scammers/Predators

> Warning Signs

Friend requests/DMs from strangers, conversations becoming personal quickly, requests for secrecy, pressure to move to other apps, and offers of gifts.

> What You Can Do

Adjust your child's settings to limit friend requests and direct messages. Talk with them about online safety, like recognizing grooming tactics and knowing what personal information to avoid sharing. Remind them to always block and report suspicious users.



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Family Interactive Activity 5

Lingo Secret Agent Decoder

Objective: To help parents and children bridge the communication gap by learning online lingo and emojis.



THE ACTIVITY

The family is divided into two roles: the Agent (the child) and the Intelligence Headquarters (the parent). The Agent is sending coded messages from the digital world, and Headquarters must decode them correctly to win the mission.



PREPARATION

- **The Lingo List:** Use the terms from the Tip Sheets: POS (Parent Over Shoulder), Finsta (Fake Instagram), Snapstreak, Ghosting, Slay, and LMIRL (Let's Meet In Real Life), etc.
- **Materials:** Paper, markers, and a few envelopes (optional).
- **The Agent Gear:** Any pair of sunglasses or a hat to represent the Undercover Agent.



Family Interactive Activity 5

Lingo Secret Agent Decoder



HOW TO PLAY

- **Encryption Phase:** The child (Agent) writes a secret text using as much online lingo and as many emojis as possible, including 3–5 normal internet slangs and exactly 1 Red Flag term.
 - **Example:** I'm on my Finsta but POS is here. Hope I don't get Ghosted for this. Slay!
- **Decoding Phase:** The parent (Headquarters) tries to translate it into plain English.
 - **If the parent gets stuck,** the child can give a hint (e.g., “Think about what an Instagram account might be called if it's secret”).
 - The “hint” should be no more than 3 times.



Family Interactive Activity 5

Lingo Secret Agent Decoder



HOW TO PLAY

- **Security Sweep:** Once translated, the parent must point out which specific term is the Red Flag.
 - **If the parent identifies the Red Flag correctly,** they save the mission. And they should ask the child “Agent, why is this a danger signal for our department? If you saw this in a real chat, what is your First Action Command?”
 - **If they miss it,** the child has to explain which specific term is a danger signal and why (e.g., “LMIRL means meeting a stranger in person!”). After that, the parent should respond: “Thank you for flagging this, Agent. Your reminder updates our defense systems.”

03 Glossary of Terms



Glossary of Terms

Algorithm: a set of rules and calculations based on predicted interest that social media platforms use to decide which content appears in one's personalized feed

Avatar: the digital visual representation of a user online

Bystander: a user who witnesses cyberbullying, but is not directly involved as the victim or perpetrator

Catfishing: the act of creating a fake online persona, with stolen or fabricated details, to deceive individuals

Chat Moderation: the process of monitoring or regulating messages to ensure they follow guidelines and prevent toxic behavior or spam messages

Clan/Guild: organized, player-run groups in online games who organize themselves to play, compete, and socialize together

Clickbait: online content curated to grab people's attention and make them curious enough to click, often with misleading images or titles

Glossary of Terms

Cyberbullying: when someone repeatedly and intentionally hurts or harasses another person online

Cyberstalking: when the internet is used to repeatedly watch, track, or contact another person in a way that feels unwanted, intrusive, or scary

Digital Citizenship: the responsibility to practice safe, respectful, and kind behavior in online communities

Digital Footprint: the ‘footprint’ that a person’s data leaves behind as they use the internet, including social media and web-browsing activity

Direct Message (DM): a private, one-one-one message on a social media app that only the sender and receiver can see

Dissing: a slang term for speaking to or about someone in a disrespectful, insulting, or put-down way

Doxing: the intentional act of exposing someone’s personal or private information publicly on the internet without their permission

Emotes: small digital images, emoji or a digital icon used to express emotions, reactions, or expressions in the digital space without using words

Glossary of Terms

Exclusion: when someone is intentionally left out or ignored, especially in a way that hurts their feelings

Flaming: posting very rude, mean, or angry messages to someone online in the form of insults

Game Moderators: someone who oversees the online chat room environment to ensure community guidelines and a safe, respectful environment are followed

Game Tag: a unique username or alias chosen to represent a player in online games

Griefing: a form of cyberbullying where players, named 'griefers', deliberately annoy, harass, or disrupt the experience of others for personal amusement

Hashtag: a symbol (#) used before a word or phrase on social media to categorize content

Impersonation: the act of pretending to be someone else online, often by using their name, photos, or identity without permission

Glossary of Terms

In-Game Purchases: real-money transactions available for purchase within video-games to buy a form of virtual reward

Loot Boxes: virtual ‘boxes’ in video games that can contain random in-game items, such as outfits, tools, or upgrades

Matchmaking: grouping players into online, multiplayer sessions

Microtransactions: small, digital purchases made within a video game or app

Outing: publicly sharing a person’s private, sensitive, or embarrassing information without consent

Rage Quitting: suddenly abandoning an activity or game due to intense frustration and anger

Social Pressure (Online): The ongoing influence from others on the internet that pushes a person to act, look, or present themselves in a certain way in order to fit in or be accepted.

Trolling: deliberately posting upsetting, provocative comments to annoy others, start arguments, or get attention

Glossary of Terms

Upstander: a person who sees a bullying situation and chooses to take positive action to help

Viral Content: digital content that spreads rapidly across platforms, often accumulating a large amount of views



Acronyms

POS = Parent Over Shoulder

KMS = Kill Myself (signals distress)

LMIRL = Let's Meet In Real Life (danger from stranger)

BRB = Be Right Back

DM = Direct Message (private message sent over social media platforms)

PM = Private Message (private message sent over any platform)

FOMO = Fear of Missing Out

YOLO = You Only Live Once

SMH = Shaking My Head (expresses disbelief)

TTYL = Talk To You Later

IMO = In My Opinion

HMU = Hit Me Up (signals desire for person to reach out to them)

IG = Instagram

IYKYK = If You Know You Know (refers to inside joke)

TBH = To Be Honest

04

Resources



Resources

- If you are in immediate danger, call **911**.
- **Crisis Services Canada (24/7):** Suicide support and resources
Phone: 1-833-456-4566
Text: 45645 (4PM – 12AM ET)
Website: crisisservicescanada.ca
- **Bullying Canada**
Phone: (877) 352-4497
Text: (877) 352-4497
Email: support@bullyingcanada.ca
- **Cybertip.ca:** Canada's tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children and access to Internet Safety Information for Youth.
Website: <https://www.cybertip.ca/en/>
Phone: 1-866-658-9022
Contact Form: <https://www.cybertip.ca/en/contact/>
- **Good2Talk line for post-secondary students (24/7)**
Phone: 1-866-925-5454
Website: good2talk.ca

Resources

- **Kids Help Phone (24/7)**

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Website: kidshelpphone.ca

- **LGBT Youth Line (Sunday to Friday 4pm – 9:30pm EST)**

Phone: 1-800-268-9688

Text: 647-694-4275

Website: youthline.ca

Other Resources

- **Government of Canada**

Website: [https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety_
canada/campaigns/cyberbullying.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety/canada/campaigns/cyberbullying.html)

- **PrevNET**

Website: <https://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/>

- **Media Smarts**

Website: <https://mediasmarts.ca>



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