



Top tips to help keep our children (and ourselves) stay safe online

The internet and our screens are part of all our lives. We can all certainly acknowledge many positive aspects to being “connected” - but it also poses some significant risks. Unfortunately, there is no fool proof way to protecting our children- but here are some helpful tips.

- Model a healthy screen relationship- put your phone down in the car, during dinner, plug it in and put it away during peak family hours, keep it out of your bedroom.
- Buy an alarm clock for your child’s bedroom and charge their phones in your room at night. This can be a helpful way of giving them a break from the internet.
- Discuss and create guidelines together with your kids and establish realistic rules for the family which are doable that create boundaries around technology use. These rules can include:
 - Create screen-free zones and times.
 - Don’t share personal and/or intimate pictures. Once something is online, it is out of your control.
 - Do not reveal personal information, including address, phone number, or school.
 - Communicate with teachers only through school email addresses.
 - Don't share passwords- (its great if parents can have them.)
 - Never agree to get together in person with anyone met online without parental supervision.
 - Do not respond to a threatening email, message, post, or text.
 - Always tell a parent or other trusted adult about any communication or conversation that was scary or hurtful. **Let them know they won’t get in trouble.** Many perpetrators use secret-keeping or threats as a way of keeping children quiet about abuse. Remind your child frequently that they will not get in trouble for talking to you, no matter what they need to say. When they do come to you, follow through on this promise and avoid punishing them or conveying disapproval, for speaking up.
- Communicate! - Parenting often just comes down to communication- keep the lines open. Talk!
- Pick one evening a week or even a month where you **do a family activity together**, whether it’s movie night, games night that is not focused on screen time but is about connecting.
- If they are old enough to have unsupervised screen time, they are old enough to know the risk. **BE OPEN ABOUT THE REAL THREATS.** Teach kids about suspicious activity online and encourage them to ask for help if something seems unusual or feels wrong to them. Install security software that helps keep kids from clicking on the wrong links and visiting the wrong sites.
- Discuss current events and news items with your children concerning online scams and abuses. These are important teachable moments and help keep the lines of communication open.

- Join in. Your kids surely know more than you do. Let your child show you around their online world- try to keep up about Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Tiktok, online gaming chatrooms, and the latest Apps, and let them teach you.
- Discuss the dangers of interacting with strangers online and remind them that people online don't always tell the truth. Talk about the limits of social media communication and the difference between an online relationship and a face to face one. Discuss how the lack of body language, tone and context can distort and confuse relationships.
- Encourage your children to learn about and use privacy settings. Many apps have privacy policies which disclose that the apps collect and share their users' information. Kids and many adults often accept these policies without reading them. Even a setting set to private may not be so. Educate your children about these risks.
- Watch for warning signs of a child being targeted by an online predator. These can include:
 - Spending less time with friends and family
 - Fidgety/nervous when receiving calls, texts, messages,
 - Acting anxious or fearful
 - Long hours online, especially at night
 - Receiving phone calls from people you don't know
 - Child suddenly turning off his/her phone screen, or computer when you walk into the room
 - Reluctance to discuss online activities
- Take your child seriously if he or she reports any uncomfortable/unsafe that has happened online. Even if she/he violated a rule (texted a picture, met an online friend IRL etc) Believe your child! Respond with validation, love, care, and action. When a child discloses it is NOT the time to reprimand. You need to be a safe resource.

Examples of **Supportive Statements**:

- i) *I Believe you*
- ii) *I Support you*
- iii) *You did the right to tell me*
- iv) *You are not alone*
- v) *I am so sorry this happened to you*
- vi) *You did not do anything to deserve this*

Parent's quick guide to online terminology:

 - Male Genitalia

 - Female Backside

Finsta- a second Instagram account used to share content you don't want the rest of the world to see

DM- A Direct Message on Instagram

Catfishing- a person who creates a fake persona online and interacts with others using it

Revenge Porn- the distribution of personal photographs without consent

Snap Chat Maps- A feature on snapchat that you can see the live locations of the people you follow (note: you can turn this feature off)

Screenshot- When one person saves the image that is on their screen and share it with others, even images that one thought were automatically deleted after a designated period of time.

Sexting- sending or receiving explicit pictures

Trolling- Purposely commenting on others social media posts to bully/ antagonize them

Tik Tok- A popular social media app that users share 15 second videos of themselves; most videos are either lip syncing or comedy.

Twitch- A live streaming gaming platform in which millions of people interact while watching other play popular games, such as Fortnite.

Spoofing- a person masquerades their number to disguise it as another number

Doxxing - the taking and posting of personal identifying and private information online without the survivor's consent and/or knowledge in an attempt to humiliate, harass, coerce, intimidate or menace a survivor.

Resources:

The Shalom Task Force Confidential Anonymous Hotline 718-337-3700 or 888-883-2323

OHEL 1-800-603-OHEL

SOVRI Helpline (Support for Orthodox Victims of Rape and Incest) Confidential and anonymous 888-613-1613

The Jewish Education Project

To learn about how schools can use public funds for prevention workshops and support contact Na'ama Rosenberg, NRosenberg@JewishEdProject.org.

The Shalom Task Force Education Department

Raises critical awareness and provides educational workshops to gain skills around domestic violence and sexual-assault awareness, safe dating, and healthy relationships. Including "Boundaries" Workshop, in collaboration with SOVRI, for high-school students:

90-minute education awareness workshop provided at high-schools by Shalom Task Force and SOVRI - Mount Sinai Beth Israel presenters. This workshop provides students with critical skills to understand safety and boundaries in relationships and to recognize signs of abuse.

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<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/net-safety.html>

<http://www.endtechabuse.org/2018/12/20/tool-5/>