Cyber Safety 101

Keeping Our Kids Safe Online

The internet offers endless opportunities for learning, exploration, and connection. However, there are many hidden dangers in kids accessing the internet and it's up to all of us to ensure that the children and teens in our lives understand the risks, know how to prevent unsafe situations, and know what to do if they encounter a situation online that makes them uncomfortable.

Definitions

Digital Footprint: the trail of data you leave when using the internet. It includes websites you visit, emails you send, and information you submit online. A digital footprint can be used to track a person's online activities and devices.

Sexting: the action or practice of sending sexually explicit photographs or messages via mobile phone.

Sextortion: the practice of extorting money or sexual favors from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity.

Cyberbullying: the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.

Online predators: individuals who commit child sexual abuse that begins or takes place on the internet.

Grooming: manipulative behaviors that potential abusers use to gain access to a potential victim, coerce them to agree to the abuse, and reduce the risk of being caught.

Topics to Cover When Chatting with Children About Being Online

Younger Children

- Netiquette - etiquette and manners on the Internet
- What is/is not appropriate content
- Pop-ups and passwords
- Not trusting people you meet online
- Never give personal information

Older Children

- "Sexting" and penalties of inappropriate exchange of photos
- Cyberbullying
- Meeting in person
- Sharing and liking of inappropriate content
- Online grooming
- Entering contests or taking quizzes

What Parents Can Do:

Open Communication

It's never too early or too late to start a dialogue with your child or teen about how to stay safe online. Talk to them about safe ways to use the internet and social media and be honest about potential online dangers. Assure them that they can always come to you if they are ever in a situation that is uncomfortable or scary.

Set Boundaries

Clearly outline your expectations for their online interactions and communicate those expectations early and often. Consider how they might be accessing the internet (laptops, tablets, phones, video games, etc) and create clear rules, such as setting a time each day when screens and devices must be shut down for the evening and having the family computer in high traffic areas of the home.

Take an Internet Safety Pledge

You and your child can co-create and take a pledge regarding online safety. There are many examples of youth online safety pledges that you can model your pledge from.

Watch Out for Red Flags

Be on the lookout for signs that your child or teen may have been exposed to inappropriate content. Signs may include confusion, anxiety, withdrawal from friends and family, referencing age-inappropriate topics, or even other effects like bed wetting, sleep issues, or aggression.

Utilize Parental Controls

Use a parental control filter to help limit your child or teen's exposure to inappropriate content. Parental controls can give you valuable intel on your child's online activities and alert you to potential red flags.
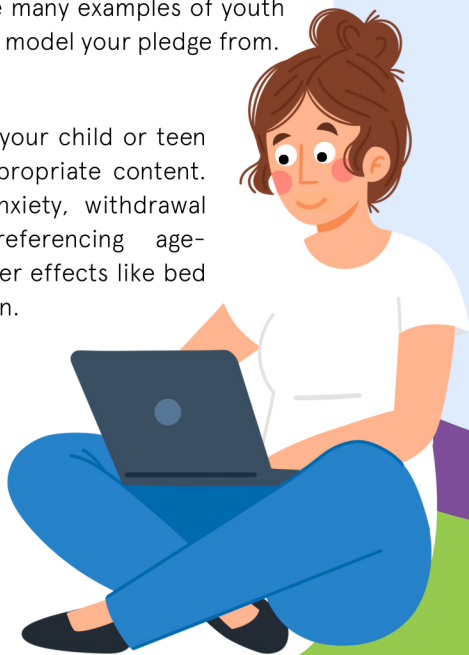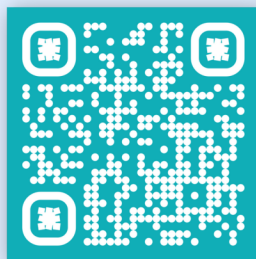
Report It:

If someone sends your child photos or videos containing obscene content, speaks or writes to your child in a sexual manner, or asks to meet your child in person, call the **CyberTip Line: 1-800-THE-LOST or visit www.cybertipline.com**

Kentucky law requires mandatory reporting of child abuse, neglect, and dependency (KRS 620).
Call Kentucky's Child Protection Hotline (toll free) at 1-877-KYSAFE 1 (1-877-597-2331) or use the reporting system at **www.reportitky.org**

To request a training on Cyber Safety, visit faceitabuse.org/trainings

For more information and strategies to keep your child safe online, visit:

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