

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM ONLINE STRANGERS

There are fun reasons for your child to be online. Learning new ideas, playing games, and connecting with friends are just a few. But there are some safety issues too. One possible threat to your child's safety is strangers, or predators, who seek out children online. Here are some tips to keep your child safe.



- Teach your child about online strangers.

Explain that online, people can make fake profiles and pretend to be someone they're not. For example, they can lie about their age and pretend to be a child or teen when they are an adult. And they can pretend to like the same music or games as your child. They lie to build trust with children.

- Tell your child to be careful about what they share online.

You may want them to avoid sharing photos, phone numbers, and names of family members. Ask them not to say where they go to school and where they meet up with their friends. This is information that online strangers can misuse.

- Talk about the danger of sites and apps that use direct messaging and video chat.

This is often how dangerous online strangers engage with children.

- Talk about what to do if your child feels uneasy online.

For example, if someone asks for their personal information or photos, they should tell you. If it's not a friend they know and trust in real life, they may need to block the person.

- Have them tell you right away if an online stranger asks to meet in person.

Remind them that it's not safe to meet with an online stranger. Regular reminders will help keep your child safe.

- Keep track of what your child does online.

Look at the history of sites they visited, and watch for content that is sexual or not age-appropriate. Follow your child on social media. This will help you know if anyone suspicious is connecting with them online. If there are online apps or controls that you don't know how to use, you could ask another parent or a friend for help.

- Learn common acronyms children and teens use online and while texting.

These are shortened forms of words that people use to hide their conversations. You can go online to find lists of these words.

- Watch for warning signs that your child is in contact with an online stranger.

These signs include:

- Changes in your child's behavior, such as hiding what they are doing online and being online more than usual. They may get angry when they can't be online.
- Texts or calls to and from people you don't know.
- Gifts, mail, or packages from people you don't know.

Contact your child's doctor if you have concerns about your child's behavior. If you are worried that your child is in danger, contact the local police.

CREDITS

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