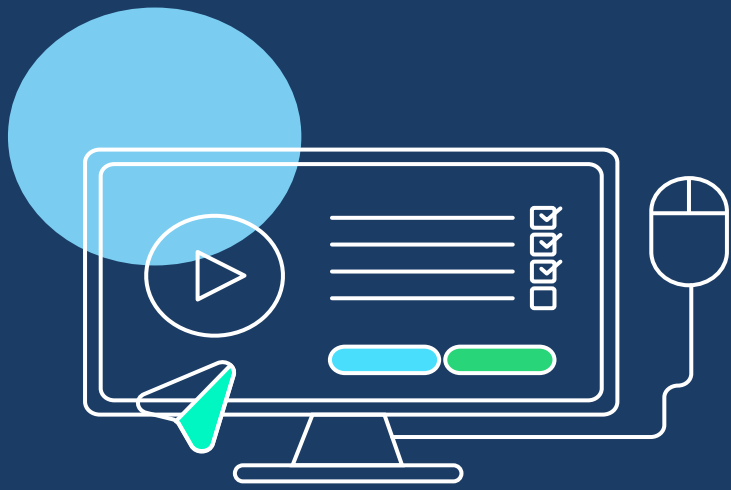


SUPPORTING ONLINE SAFETY IN CHILDREN AND TEENS



In today's digital age, where the internet is an integral part of daily life, ensuring the safety and well-being of our children online has never been more crucial. From social media platforms to online gaming communities, children are exposed to a myriad of risks ranging from cyberbullying to inappropriate content. This information sheet aims to provide parents and caregivers with practical tips, resources, and strategies to empower children to navigate the online world safely, responsibly, and confidently.



There are many great resources that are worth considering when helping children to understand and be prepared for the online world. The following links cover topics you may want information about: [Media Smarts](#), [Common Sense Media](#), and [Net Cetera](#).

GENERAL ONLINE SAFETY

Children face a myriad of concerns when navigating the online world, ranging from exposure to inappropriate content to involvement in cyberbullying, where children may experience harassment, intimidation, or humiliation through various online platforms. Additionally, there is a risk of encountering harmful content which can negatively impact their psychological development. Furthermore, children's privacy and personal information may be compromised through data breaches, identity theft, or unknowingly sharing sensitive information with strangers. Overall, ensuring children's online safety requires vigilance, education, and proactive measures to mitigate these risks effectively.

LINKS



- [Media Smarts Parent Guides](#)** - Guides caregivers can use to ensure child safety. Topics include headings such as “Helping our kids deal with cyberbullying” and “ Helping our kids use their smartphones safely”.
- [Media Smarts Youtube Channel](#)** - A variety of short videos that can be used as mini lessons related to online safety for kids.
- [Net Cetera “Chatting with kids about being online” VIDEO](#)** - An instructional video for caregivers that gives ideas on ways you can approach, support, and talk to your student about online safety (note: US based resource).
- [Net Cetera PDF DOCUMENT](#)** - A PDF file that outlines general areas of concern for online safety and ideas on how to mitigate risk (note: US based resource).

ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

- A recent [Common Sense Media article](#) provides statistics that stress the importance of talking to children about explicit online content at younger ages.
- 15% of teen respondents** said they first saw online pornography at **age 10** or younger. **The average age reported for first viewing pornography was 12.**
 - While the vast majority of respondents said they had seen pornography, nearly half (44%) indicated that they had **done so intentionally**, while slightly more than half (58%) indicated they had **encountered pornography accidentally**.

A diversity of experiences are possible when pornography is viewed by young people. An article published by the Government of Australia summarizes some of the possible impacts on young people. [“Online Pornography: Effects on Children and Young People”](#)

There are many ways to support kids – the links below provide several strategies.

- Common Sense Media:** [Talking to Teens and Preteens about Pornography](#)
Media Smarts: [Talking to Your Kids about Pornography - TIP SHEET](#)



ABOUT SEXTORTION

Sextortion is a form of exploitation involving the use of coercion or threats to obtain sexual images, videos, or other explicit material from another person. Typically, the perpetrator threatens to share the material publicly or with the victim's friends and family unless they comply with the demands, which may include sending more explicit content, money, or performing sexual acts.

Sextortion is a serious crime and can have significant emotional, psychological, and social consequences for the victim. Online predators pose another significant threat, as they may attempt to groom children for sexual exploitation or other nefarious purposes.

There have been recent local instances of sextortion where children are lured in through common social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. These luring situations are often instigated by criminal networks. These entities may befriend an unsuspecting child, send photos (sometimes explicit) to gain trust and then, when children send pictures back of themselves, they may get used against them. Male children are the most common targets (91% of victims are male).

[Cybertip.ca](#) is a website with information on Canadian online safety and has a place to [REPORT](#) online concerns.

