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# ARE YOU TAKING A CHANCE WHEN YOUR KIDS GO ONLINE?



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada



# HOW TO KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE ONLINE

## INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

The Internet and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter can be fun places to play games, share information and stay in touch with loved ones. But they also pose safety challenges for parents of young children.

Young children learn best by example. They also need clear boundaries. Spend some time showing your child how to use the Internet safely, and agreeing on Internet ground rules. Give your child the confidence to face situations — teach him/her how to communicate both face-to-face and online. Reinforce that you're always there to help.

## SET UP FOR SAFETY

- Place computers in busy family areas like the kitchen or family room.
- Monitor the use of mobile devices (phones, laptops, tablets, cameras) so you're aware of their contacts and the content your child creates.
- Establish a family recharging station in a central location, outside of the bedroom to store devices overnight.



## KEY MESSAGES FOR YOUR CHILD

**BE KIND.  
SHOW RESPECT.**

How you act online should match how you act face-to-face.

**NOT EVERYTHING  
YOU SEE OR READ  
ON THE INTERNET  
IS TRUE**

## SUGGESTED INTERNET GROUND RULES

- Encourage your child to use the Internet and mobile devices when a parent is present, and in busy family areas. Set time limits for Internet use.
- Ask your child to share minimal personal information online, for example his/her first name and last name initial only.
- Ensure age restrictions are adhered to on social media and gaming sites. These restrictions keep children safe from offensive content and potential predators.
- Urge your child to avoid posting anything embarrassing online, including photos.
- Advise your child to alert you right away if he/she comes across any content that makes him/her uncomfortable, like negative messages, violence or pornography. Remain calm if this happens. Find solutions together to avoid this happening again in the future.
- Teach your child to always ask for a parent's permission before accepting a gift or friend requests, or opening attachments.

## UNDERSTAND THE LAW

- Using the Internet to entice youth (anyone under the age of 18) to meet for sexual acts or to help arrange sexual encounters is a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada.
- Anyone communicating with your child in a sexual manner can be very dangerous and needs to be reported. Tell your child they must alert you if someone asks him/her to make or share sexual images or videos.
- Using the Internet to threaten or bully someone can be dangerous, even if a child thinks it's in good fun. The following Criminal Code Offenses may have serious consequences for your child or yourself if the Internet is used in a negative way:
  - Child Pornography
  - Criminal Harassment
  - Luring a Child
  - Uttering Threats

