



How to Talk to Kids about Inappropriate Content Online

Kids use the internet for fun and learning. As they get older, they use it to talk to friends and meet other kids. Unfortunately, the internet also has content they shouldn't see.

Create a safer environment for your child by talking to kids early and often about the internet, starting as soon as they have access to it.

- *Start the discussion by talking about the positives of using the internet.
- *At the same time, tell the child that the internet has places that are not safe for kids.
- *Tell your child they may see things that make them uncomfortable, or that you don't want them to see.
- *Be clear that they can always talk to you or a trusted adult if they see something that upsets them.

Take these five steps to prepare your child for the internet:

1. Explore sites and apps with your child

Have discussions about the content they enjoy. Ask what they like about their favorite games or sites. Show them how and where to find safe content.

2. Be open-minded

Kids have different tastes — than each other and than adults. Ask your child what they want to explore or learn using the internet. Be curious and listen to your child as they talk. If children feel scared or ashamed, they are less likely to talk about their experiences later.

3. Agree to ground rules.

Set boundaries for the websites and apps kids can use. Tell them which ones are safe for them to use, and clarify that you need to check out any new ones they want to explore before they do. Explain that these rules apply inside and outside your home.

4. Explore parental controls

You can block unsafe content with Google SafeSearch and YouTube Restricted Mode. Apply these safeguards on every device in the home.

5. If they see something troubling

Stay calm. At some point, children are likely to see something you do not want them to see. What they see will not have a lasting impact. When they do see something troubling online:

- * Remain calm and be curious.
- * Avoid blame or criticism.
- * Praise the child for their courage to come to you.
- * Listen and help them process what they've encountered.
- * Remind them that the family rules are there to keep them safe.

Learn more at [safety.google](https://www.safety.google)



Our Kids is a Nashville-based clinic that provides expert medical evaluations and crisis counseling in response to concerns of child sexual abuse. For more, visit [OurKidsCenter.com](https://www.OurKidsCenter.com)