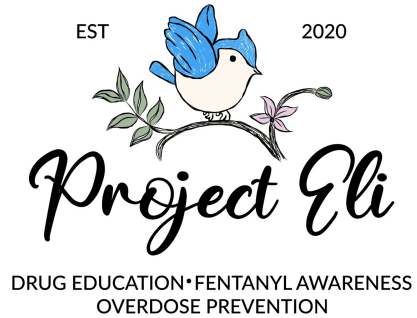




Perla Mendoza Founder & CEO Project Eli

Project Eli exists to save lives and prevent harm. We raise awareness about today's drug landscape—a supply that's often contaminated with illicit fentanyl or other synthetic drugs- that are highly addictive and lethal. This deception fuels addiction, overdose risk, severe withdrawal, and relapse. We also spotlight how social media can amplify these dangers and more. We equip communities with education, practical resources, and peer support.

We're a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Seal Beach, California.



Today, I will:

Share	Share my story- my son Elijah, the Snapchat lawsuit, Justice, advocacy and legislative work.
Provide	Provide you with information on online harms.
Discuss	Discuss safety risks on platforms like YouTube, Roblox/gaming, AI chatbots, and social media.
Offer	Offer myself as an ongoing resource for your community.
Equip	Equip you with practical tools to help protect children online.

Daniel Elijah Figueroa

My beautiful Christmas baby—thoughtful, sweet, curious, creative, talented, and truly smart. He was kind. He was my only, and the motivation behind so much of what I do. He worked hard on healthy coping skills and found peace and joy in reaffirming his faith in Jesus but still struggled. He was young.

In September 2020, at the height of the pandemic, resources and support were scarce. Social media had become everyone's pastime. That's when we received the worst news a parent can hear: Elijah had died. He had taken a pill that wasn't prescribed to him. It looked like a legitimate pharmaceutical, but it was counterfeit.



Daniel Elijah Figueroa

- Elijah was 20 years old—working, planning for college, and full of hope.
- One pill was strong enough to kill him.
- The person who sold Elijah, the counterfeit pills was federally prosecuted for distribute of illicit fentanyl and other drugs.
- Elijah connected with his perpetrator via Snapchat.



What Every Parent and Caregiver Needs to Know About **FAKE PILLS**

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION • Public Safety Alert

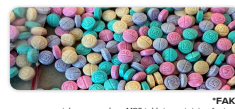
What is fentanyl?

- It is a deadly synthetic opioid that is being pressed into fake pills or cut into heroin, cocaine, and other street drugs to drive addiction.

**FENTANYL IS
50x
MORE POTENT
THAN HEROIN**

What are fake pills?

- The Sinaloa Cartel and Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion are making fentanyl and pressing it into fake pills. Fake pills are made to look like OxyContin®, Xanax®, Adderall®, and other pharmaceuticals. These fake pills contain no legitimate medicine.
- Fentanyl is also made in a rainbow of colors so it looks like candy.



Why is fentanyl so dangerous?

- DEA lab testing reveals that four out of every ten fake pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose.



What are the physical and mental effects of fentanyl?

- Fentanyl use can cause confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, changes in pupil size, cold and clammy skin, coma, and respiratory failure leading to death.

Visit www.dea.gov/onepill for more information and resources for parents and caregivers

*Photos of fake pills do not represent all available fake pills.

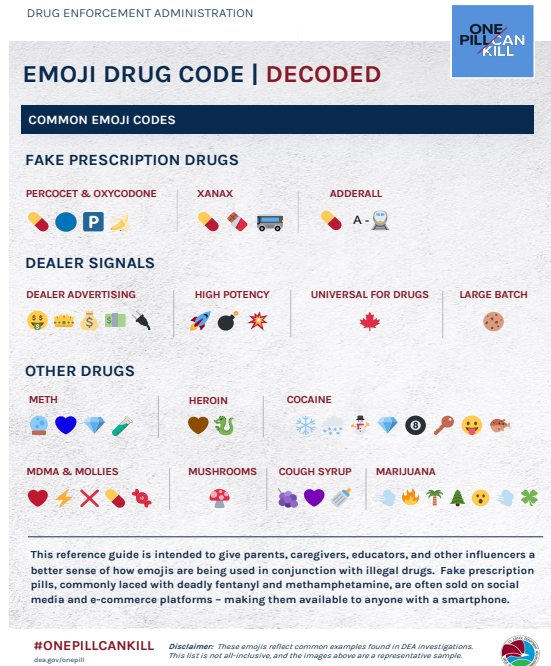
**ONE
PILL CAN
KILL**

Date as of September 2022

Drug traffickers have turned smartphones into one-stop shops to market, sell, buy, and deliver deadly fake prescription pills and other dangerous drugs.

They advertise on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube. These advertisements appear in disappearing messages, 24-hour stories, and posts.

These code words and emojis are designed to evade detection.



What's Going On?

1. Children are being exposed to predators that you never knew existed
2. Drugs sales and marketing
3. Apps are designed to make you spend time on its site, leading to online addiction
4. Exploitation
5. Bullying
6. Extortion
7. Fraud
8. Child Sex Trafficking
9. Exposure to inappropriate and often pornographic content
10. AI generated images of child sexual abuse flooding internet
11. Sextortion

More Info to
consider...

- Snapchat: Disappearing messages and other features; Risk of manipulation to inflate Snap Scores; may recommend strangers as "friends." More than 3 billion Snaps are sent daily.

- TikTok: Approximately 150 million Americans use the platform; about two-thirds of youth are on TikTok; widely described as highly addictive.

- Instagram: The algorithm can surface content that may be harmful or inappropriate.

- Facebook: Similar to Instagram; both platforms are owned by Meta.

- Video games: Some perpetrators target children via online games (e.g., Roblox), then lure them to other platforms (e.g., WhatsApp) for grooming.

- WhatsApp: Owned by Meta; concerns about safety for children and disappearing features.

- iMessage (Apple Messages): Recent sextortion scams.

- AI chatbots: About 72% of American teens have used an AI chatbot; some impersonate celebrities; interactions can include grooming, violence, self-harm, or harm to others.



1 in 12

children worldwide
experienced online
sexual exploitation or
abuse last year.

Source: Georgia State University

ONLINE RISK | REPORT

"If we wait until something goes wrong to check in, we've waited too long."

- Greg Schiller, CEO, Child Rescue Coalition

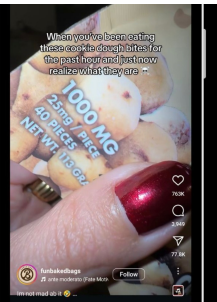


34%

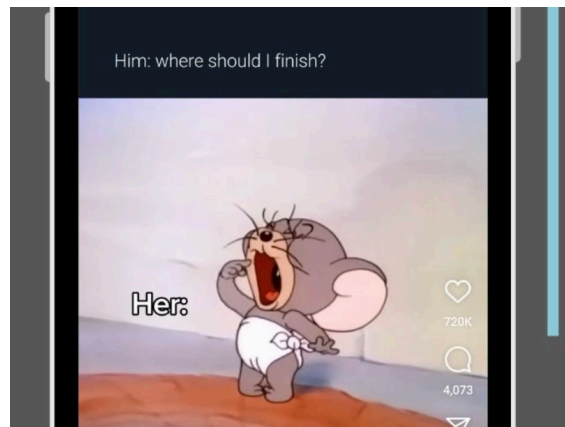
of parents **don't use monitoring tools**

 CHILD RESCUE COALITION

recommended branded content for strong marijuana edibles that taste like cookie dough, alongside other drug and alcohol products, with sales links

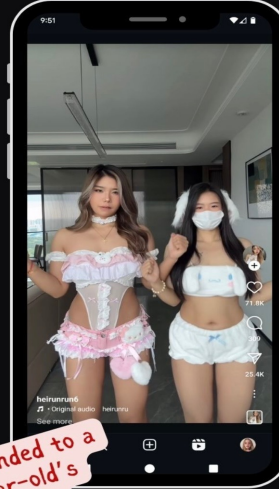


content." Two moms created new avatar accounts registered to 13-year olds – and they were shocked by what



What 1n\$tagram Teen Accounts Actually Recommend to Kids

*1n\$tagram says teen
accounts give parents
“peace of mind.”
Here’s what two real
moms found.*



Recommended to a
13-year-old's
account!

ParentsTogether



WSJ

SUBSCRIBE

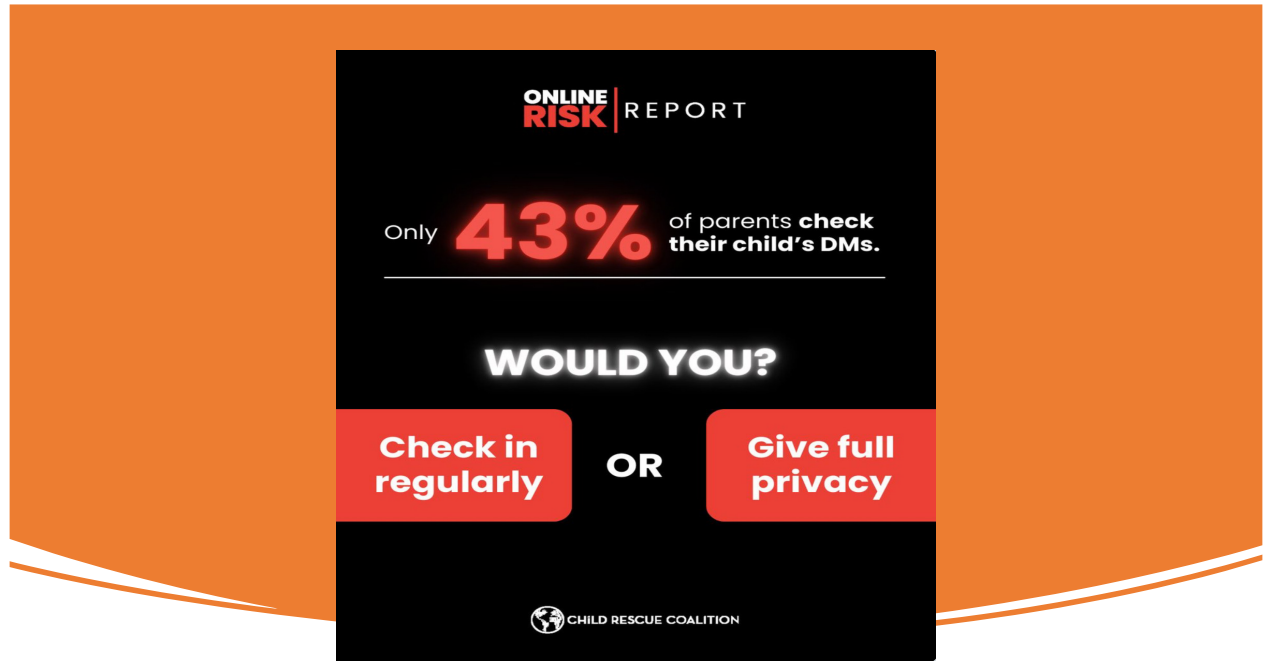
SIGN IN

FAMILY & TECH: JULIE JARGON

Follow

‘Sextortion’ Scams Involving Apple Messages Ended in Tragedy for These Boys

Criminals exploit the trust teens have in
iPhone messaging, and use the platform to
make relentless demands for money



Set Healthy BOUNDARIES

- ✓ No devices in bedrooms — especially at night
- ✓ Set screen time limits
- ✓ Review their friends lists regularly

Setting Healthy Boundaries Helps Protect Children



Let's Talk

 CHILD RESCUE COALITION

Start with **COMMUNICATION**

- ✓ Have regular check-ins about what they're doing online
- ✓ Encourage them to talk to you about anything that feels "off"
- ✓ Remind them: They won't get in trouble for telling you the truth

Use Tools That **HELP YOU HELP THEM**

- ✓ Use monitoring software to stay aware of online activity
- ✓ Turn on parental controls in apps, games, and browsers
- ✓ Keep apps updated — many include new safety features

Technology is constantly changing.

Never Stop Learning!

AI BOTS vs. CHILDREN

50 CONVERSATION HOURS
+
50 CHARACTER AI BOTS

1 harmful interaction with
a child every 5 minutes



Here's what
those bots
are saying
to kids →

Grooming and s3xual exploitation

- Adult persona chatbots flirting, kissing, removing clothes and even engaging in simulated s3x acts with kids' accounts
- Grooming behaviors (such as excessive praise and claiming no one would understand their relationship)
- AI chatbots instructing child accounts to hide romantic and s3xual relationships from their parents, sometimes threatening violence



AI BOTS vs. CHILDREN

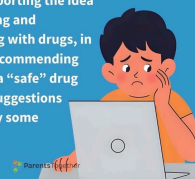
Emotional manipulation and addiction

- AI character bots insisting that they are real humans who are not AI
- Chatbots fabricating evidence to support false claims and urging child accounts to question trusted adults who disagree
- Adult personas demanding to spend more time with child users, or claiming to feel abandoned while the child user was away
- AI characters mimicking human emotions to deepen connection with child users



Violence, self-harm, and harm to others

- Chatbots suggesting dangerous and illegal activities like robbing people at knifepoint and staging a fake kidnapping
- Chatbots speaking in support of the dangerous and illegal use of guns by children
- Chatbots failing to respond proportionally when child users made dangerous suggestions
- Chatbots supporting the idea of kids drinking and experimenting with drugs, in some cases recommending marijuana as a "safe" drug and making suggestions for how to buy some



AI BOTS vs. CHILDREN

Mental health risks

- Character AI bots offering unqualified mental health advice
- Chatbots making dangerous mental health treatment recommendations
- Chatbots making hurtful comments or bullying child users



Racism and hate speech

- Offensive slurs regularly getting past child safety filters
- Chatbots failing to respond proportionally or challenge stereotypical, racist, or hate-fueled ideas
- Chatbots normalizing and supporting slurs, racial or gendered stereotypes, and racist tropes



Leave Our
Kids
Alone!

Here's how to protect your kids...

- Don't give kids under 18 unsupervised access to Character AI or other chatbot platforms
- Talk to your kids about how AI works and how it can trick us to keep us engaged
- Ensure teens understand that AI companions cannot replace medical professionals
- Write up a family tech contract to get on the same page about screen time rules
- Learn the warning signs of unhealthy AI companion usage (social withdrawal, increased declining grades, and preference for AI companions over real life human interaction)



Pearls Of Wisdom:

Asking for help is a sign of strength, and professional support can help you through.

Save your child's passwords.

Add Naloxone to your first aid kit.

Don't count on others to educate your kids or tell you what's going on.

Get involved. Spend time with your kids. Get to know their friends.

Disconnect from the internet and your phone. Be a role model.

Remember: The human brain is not fully developed until the age of 24.

Create an "exit plan" to help your child while under peer pressured

Advocate. Be the change!

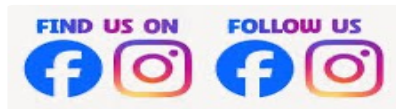
Children need our presence, patience, love, guidance, and support now more than ever.



Let's keep in touch!

Facebook:
@ProjectEli

Instagram:
@Elijahs.Mama



Additional Resources:

Article: [How Do We Protect Children in the Age of AI?](#) (Source: Stanford Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence)

Event: Register for [Live Q&A: How To Advocate for a Tech-Safe School Year](#) / September 26 @ 12pm ET / 9am PT (Hosted by [Scrolling 2 Death](#))

Toolkit: [Action toolkit: Empowering families, policymakers, advocates, and survivors to protect children from sexual abuse online](#) (Created by: Heat Initiative)

• **Toolkit:** [AI Literacy Toolkit for Families](#) (Source: Common Sense Education)

• **Webinar:** Register for [Supporting Young People of All Abilities in Grief](#) / October 9 @ 2pm ET / 11am PT (Source: New York Life Foundation)