

Starting Important Safety Conversations

Children are far more likely to seek help when they feel heard, supported, and trusted. Instead of having one "big talk," focus on creating ongoing conversations about online experiences.

For Young Children

Try simple, open-ended questions such as:

- Who did you play with online today?
- Did anyone make you feel confused, uncomfortable, or upset?
- What would you do if someone asked for your name, address, or photo?

For Preteens

Encourage discussion with questions like:

- Have you ever received a message from someone you didn't know?
- What do your friends do when strangers contact them online?
- Do you know how to block or report someone who makes you uncomfortable?

For Teens

Focus on trust, judgment, and real-world scenarios:

- How do you decide whether someone online is trustworthy?
- Have you ever seen behavior online that felt manipulative or inappropriate?
- What would make it difficult for someone your age to ask an adult for help?

Use Reassuring Language

Children should know:

- They will not be in trouble for reporting something uncomfortable.
- They can always come to a trusted adult for help.
- If someone asks them to keep a secret from their parents, that is a warning sign.
- Their safety is more important than losing access to a game, app, or device.

Remember: Online safety isn't achieved through monitoring alone, it's built through trust, communication, and consistent boundaries. By understanding the risks of online interactions and creating regular opportunities for conversation, families can help children enjoy technology while staying safer online.

Questions or feedback? Connect with us! @catchthewaveofhope

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