

Tips for your kids online safety.

October is Cyber Security Awareness Month, and as a parent you want to make sure your child stays safe, especially online. Preparing them for potential threats means talking with your child about what they might see when posting, searching or any other online activity. When starting that conversation, here are a few tips for what to go over with your child to help make sure they stay safe online.

1 Be careful what you post

This includes your home address, phone number, usernames, passwords, birthdates and much more. If anyone asks your child for this information while they are online, make sure they know to alert you immediately.

2 Download with permission

Before downloading software, movies or anything else, have them ask permission. Downloading the wrong file can lead to installing viruses and malware on your devices, all that can steal your family's personal information.

3 Always beware of strangers

Never click on emails, texts or direct messages (DMs) from people they don't know. Even if it looks like someone they know, or that looks friendly or innocent, it's better to delete the message if they are suspicious.

4 Report cyberbullies

Staying safe online also means knowing when cyberbullying is happening, and should be reported as soon as possible. Make sure your child knows that no one has the right to make them feel uncomfortable, and that they should behave with respect when online themselves.

5 Protect your devices

Sharing passwords, even with friends is never suggested. Having your kids set up a PIN or biometrics (face or fingerprint) on their devices will help protect their devices and information.

More for parents:

Whether they are remote learning, playing video games or connecting with friends, talking with your child about online safety is a great start toward setting up an internet safety plan. Having ground rules, teaching them how to spot red flags and encouraging them to have open communication with you sets your child up to be the safest they can online.

Having these conversations frequently also makes sure you can keep track of any problems they might be experiencing. Be on the look out for changes in how they use a device, if they are trying to hide online activity, or any other noticeable changes in their mood (angry outbursts, anxiety, depression, etc.). Report any concerns, especially cyberbullying and other threats.

With a little prep and mindfulness, you can stay safe online!