



Cyber Conversations

Guiding Parents and Kids Through Online Safety

Navigating Cybersafety Talks for Kids Ages 5-18



Protecting Your Child's Device

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about securing their device, the goal is to help them understand that devices are like a secret clubhouse holding important information. We want to teach them the basics of why it's essential to keep their clubhouse safe in a way that's fun and easy to grasp. Think of it as teaching them how to be digital "guardians" of their tablets and devices.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Making Device Security Fun: Invite your child to think of their device as a secret clubhouse that only trusted people can enter. Explain that, just like they wouldn't want strangers in their clubhouse, they need to keep their device safe from strangers online. You could turn this into a game by helping them imagine ways to "guard" their clubhouse, like using a password.

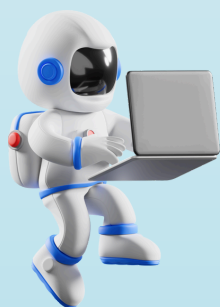
2. Breaking Down Steps: Instead of overwhelming them with technical terms, focus on one security step at a time. For instance, start by explaining why having a strong password is helpful, then move on to why we don't share that password with anyone but parents.

3. Celebrating Safe Habits: Praise them when they understand the importance of device security. Positive reinforcement will make them feel proud to be "in charge" of keeping their device safe.

4. Encouraging Questions: Create a safe environment where they feel comfortable asking questions. This builds a foundation of curiosity and helps them feel confident about asking questions when they don't understand something.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What if someone we don't know tried to get into your tablet? How do you think we could stop them?" This encourages them to think about the purpose of passwords and other security measures.
- "Imagine your device is a treasure chest. What special 'locks' can we put on it to keep it safe?" This introduces the concept of passwords and other protections in a fun and imaginative way.
- "Do you know why we don't share our password with friends? Who should know your password?" This helps reinforce that device security is personal and only trusted people like parents should know it.



Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

With older kids, talking about device security is essential because they're likely more aware of the digital world and may be managing their own devices. This discussion is about making them think critically about how secure their devices are and why it matters, especially as they increasingly use technology for school, socializing, and entertainment.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Acknowledging Their Device Usage: Start by recognizing their experience with their devices and discuss how they might already be taking steps to secure them.

2. Connecting Device Security to Real-Life Risks: Use relatable examples, like how a phone can be vulnerable to hackers or how unsecured apps can lead to unauthorized access. Explain that securing devices is more than just protecting apps—it's about keeping their information, like photos, messages, and account details, safe.

3. Highlighting the Consequences of Lapses in Security: Discuss how an insecure device can lead to identity theft or unwanted charges. This helps them understand that device security protects not only their privacy but also their financial and personal well-being.

4. Empowering Them to Implement Security Measures: Encourage them to use security features such as strong passwords, two-factor authentication, and regular backups. Explain that taking these steps gives them control and is a sign of responsibility.

5. Encouraging a Backup Habit: Highlight the importance of backups, emphasizing that even if something happens to the device, they won't lose important files. Explain how local and cloud backups work, and let them decide what might work best for them.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What steps have you taken to protect your device and accounts? Are there any things you think might make it more secure?" This question helps them reflect on their current security practices and identify any areas for improvement.
- "Have you ever thought about what could happen if someone else got access to your device? What would you want to do to prevent that?" This prompts them to consider the risks of unsecured devices and think about proactive measures.
- "If you had to back up all your photos and files today, how would you go about it and what method seems the most efficient for you?" This question encourages them to think about backup methods and decide which option feels most manageable for them, making it more likely they'll actually follow through.

Enabling Parental Controls



Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When discussing online safety with older kids, it's helpful to frame parental controls as a safety measure—much like wearing a life jacket while swimming. The goal is to help them understand that while the internet is a fun and exciting place to explore, there are some things that may not be safe or appropriate for them to engage with, just like there are certain activities that require protection in real life.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Understanding Safety First: Talk to your child about how the internet is a huge place, with all sorts of content—some of it fun and interesting, and some of it not always safe for younger people. Explain that, just like how wearing a life jacket keeps you safe in the water, parental controls are a way of helping to keep them safe online. They help prevent unwanted or harmful content from showing up, and keep things fun while ensuring they don't accidentally stumble across something that makes them uncomfortable.

2. When They See Something Uncomfortable: Let your child know that they might come across videos, images, or even messages that make them feel uneasy or uncomfortable. This is totally normal, and it's okay to feel that way. They should know that if this happens, they can rely on the "life jacket" of parental controls to keep them safe and protected. And most importantly, they should always feel comfortable telling you if something makes them uncomfortable.

3. Contact from Strangers: Make sure your child knows that any messages or contact from people they don't know in real life should be treated with caution. Just like you wouldn't swim in dangerous waters without a life jacket, they shouldn't engage with strangers online without being careful. Encourage them to talk to you if anyone reaches out, so you can help figure out if it's safe or not.

4. Encouraging Questions: Reassure your child that they can always come to you with questions or concerns about their online experience. Whether it's something they saw, a person they talked to, or anything else that feels off, you want to maintain an open line of communication. Make sure they understand that they won't be criticized for seeking help.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "If you were wearing a life jacket while swimming in the ocean, how do you think it would help keep you safe? What are some ways we can use parental controls to help keep you safe online?" This encourages them to think about the idea of "protection" in a familiar way and apply it to online safety.
- "Sometimes we might see things online that make us uncomfortable or confused—how do you think we can handle that together?" This opens the door for discussions about online discomfort, setting the stage for them to talk about what they've encountered.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

As teens gain independence online, they often feel they have a good grasp of internet safety. But with increasing complexity in digital platforms and new online risks, it's helpful to involve them in understanding tools like parental controls, which are more than just restrictions—they're resources for safe, balanced online experiences. By involving them in the setup and emphasizing these controls as tools for their protection, older kids can better appreciate and understand the importance of layered digital safety across their network, device, and apps. This partnership can also ease concerns about parental controls and foster a stronger, more respectful approach to online safety.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Discuss Specific Risks and How Parental Controls Help: Talk about real examples that resonate with them, such as accidentally stumbling on phishing sites or being tempted by risky downloads while studying or gaming. Parental controls aren't just for blocking—they also protect devices and private information from threats, ensuring safe browsing, especially for younger siblings or guests.

2. Invite Them to Be Part of the Setup Process: Ask if they'd like to explore router settings with you or check out device-level controls. Show how tools like network-level parental controls on the Wi-Fi can set different limits on specific devices, and explore options together, like filtering content or setting internet off times during study hours.

3. Emphasize Balance and Autonomy: Reassure them that the goal is to foster safe habits, not to control every action. Highlight that these controls can be adjusted over time, allowing more flexibility as they build trust and show responsible behaviour online.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How would you recognize if a link or pop-up might be unsafe?" Encourage them to consider things like shortened URLs, unfamiliar or misspelled web addresses, and pop-ups that seem out of place. If something doesn't feel right, they should avoid clicking and seek advice from you.
- "What's your take on setting up certain boundaries for different devices or family members? How do you think this could affect everyone's online experience?" Invite them to think about how different family members might need different levels of support and how layered controls help balance online safety with access.
- "How do you feel about using parental controls to filter content or set limits on certain activities during key times, like study hours or bedtime?" This question allows them to voice their thoughts on finding a healthy balance between freedom and safety, and how they can work together with you to establish appropriate boundaries.

Learning How To Analyze Media

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about analyzing media, the focus is on introducing basic critical thinking skills in a fun and engaging manner. At this age, children are avid consumers of media content like cartoons, games, and YouTube videos, often without understanding the intent behind what they see. By teaching them to think about media messages, you help them develop a healthy skepticism and become more mindful viewers.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

- 1. Making Media Analysis an Interactive Game:** Encourage your child to take on the role of a "media detective" who solves mysteries about their favourite shows, ads, or games. This approach makes critical thinking feel like a fun game rather than a serious lesson.
- 2. Using Familiar Examples:** Use examples from content they regularly interact with, such as their favourite cartoon characters or toy commercials. Ask simple questions like, "Why do you think this character is saying that?" or "Why does this ad make the toy look so exciting?" This helps make abstract concepts more concrete and relevant.
- 3. Breaking Down Ideas into Manageable Parts:** Instead of overwhelming them with too much information, focus on one small question at a time. For example, ask "Who made this video?" or "Do you think this is trying to sell something?" This approach keeps the conversation light and manageable.
- 4. Creating a Safe Space for Questions:** Foster an environment where asking questions is encouraged. This builds a foundation of curiosity and lets them know it's okay to question what they see.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think the person who made this show or game wants you to feel? How can you tell?" This question encourages them to consider the creator's intention and the emotional impact of the content.
- "Can you spot something in this ad or video that tries to make you want something? What is it, and why do you think it's there?" This helps them recognize persuasive elements and the purpose behind advertisements.
- "Why do you think this character in the cartoon is acting this way? What do you think they want to show us?" This encourages them to think about the motivations behind characters' actions and the story being told.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids are exposed to a wider array of media, including social media, news, and influencer messaging. At this age, they are developing their identities and opinions, making it crucial to equip them with the skills to analyze and evaluate the content they encounter critically. The goal is to guide them in understanding the intentions behind media messages, recognizing biases, and making informed decisions about what they consume.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

- 1. Recognizing Their Media Awareness:** Start by acknowledging your child's experience and frame the conversation as a way to refine their skills.
- 2. Relating Media Analysis to Real-Life Impacts:** Connect media analysis to scenarios they encounter daily, such as identifying clickbait, understanding how influencers promote products, or spotting fake news.
- 3. Exploring How Media Shapes Beliefs and Opinions:** Encourage discussions about how media content can influence public perception and personal beliefs. This helps them see that what they watch, read, or engage with can impact how they view the world and themselves.
- 4. Empowering Them to Verify Information:** Teach them to research by checking sources, looking beyond headlines, and comparing different viewpoints. Reinforce that questioning information is a sign of strength and intelligence, not cynicism.
- 5. Encouraging a Balanced Perspective:** Highlight that no media source is entirely unbiased and that consuming a variety of perspectives leads to a more rounded understanding. This helps them recognize that media can have a slant and encourages them to seek out diverse viewpoints.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How does this media piece align with or challenge your own views? What factors influence your opinion?" This prompts them to reflect on how media influences their beliefs and the factors that shape their opinions.
- "Have you seen any examples of media that seemed misleading or biased? How did you figure that out?" This encourages them to think critically about media bias and misinformation and reflect on their responses to it.
- "How do you think the media you consume affects your perspective on current events?" This helps them consider the impact of media on their views about specific issues.
- "Think of a piece of media that made you feel strongly—whether scared, upset, or excited. What triggered that reaction?" This helps them identify how emotional manipulation works in media, affecting their mindset.





Social Media Platforms & Their Risks

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

Start off by introducing social media as a place where people can share pictures, videos, and ideas with friends and family. It's where you can see what your friends are up to, discover new things, and get inspired by creative content from people around the world. But just like in the real world, there are some important rules to follow to stay safe online.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Exploring Social Media as a Space with Different "Zones":

Begin by comparing social media to different areas in a theme park. Some areas, like roller coasters or big slides, might be too intense or not appropriate for younger kids. Explain that just like how certain rides are for specific ages, there are parts of social media that might not be suitable for everyone. They should understand the importance of recognizing what is safe and appropriate for them, and what's best to avoid.

2. Breaking Down Safety Steps: Instead of diving straight into all the risks, start by explaining that sometimes people post things that aren't real or might be intended to make others feel bad. For example, someone might post a picture that looks perfect, but it doesn't show the full story behind it. Help them recognize that just because something looks great online, it doesn't mean it's true or something they should compare themselves to. Encourage them to ask questions and talk about how certain posts or images make them feel.

3. Introduce the Concept of Online Kindness: Help them understand that being kind online is just as important as being kind in person. Unlike face-to-face interactions, some people online may say things they wouldn't normally say in person because they don't see the impact of their words. But those words can still hurt others, and it's important to be aware of how they treat people in both the real world and online.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "Let's pretend you saw a video where someone is having the best day ever. Do you think every day is like that for them? Why do you think people like to show only their happiest moments?" This question encourages them to think critically about what they see and understand that not everything online is real or perfect.
- "If you wanted to share something with just me or close family, how would you do that safely?" This introduces the concept of privacy settings and sharing only with trusted people.
- "How do you decide who to follow on TikTok for Kids or YouTube Kids? What makes someone a good person to watch or connect with?" This helps them reflect on their choices when it comes to following influencers or creators, fostering an understanding of healthy online relationships.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Social media is a central part of many teens' lives, where they connect, share, and explore. However, each platform has unique features and risks, from privacy concerns and exposure to harmful content and the impact of algorithms designed to keep users engaged. Teens may face pressures related to follower counts, snap scores, and the portrayal of idealized lives. These dynamics can affect their self-esteem, privacy, and online safety. It's essential to discuss how these platforms work, the risks they pose, and ways to navigate them wisely.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Emphasizing Privacy and Control: Start by discussing privacy settings and the importance of controlling who sees their posts, stories, or shared location. Explore how they feel about the personal boundaries they set online and why they think privacy matters in different social media contexts.

2. Examining Social Comparisons and Pressure: Talk about how social media can sometimes create pressure to look a certain way or live up to certain standards. Encourage them to think about whether what they see online feels real or staged, and how it affects their own sense of self-worth.

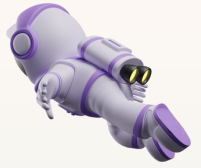
3. Discussing the Power of Algorithms and Screen Time: Explain how algorithms on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are designed to capture attention. Discuss their own experience with these platforms and whether they've noticed how endless scrolling or notifications pull them back in, even when they don't intend to stay online.

4. Helping Them Recognize Red Flags: Share tips on spotting harmful content or unwanted interactions, like unsolicited messages or "too good to be true" posts. Reinforce that blocking and reporting can be useful tools for protecting themselves and others.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How do you decide who to connect with or follow on social media? What makes someone worth following or unfollowing?" This helps them think critically about online relationships and the influence others have on their online experience.
- "Have you ever felt pressured by what you see online? What do you think would help ease that pressure?" This opens up a conversation about social comparison, the need for validation, and how to find balance.
- "Have you ever come across content that didn't feel right, like a stranger reaching out or a post that seemed suspicious? What did you do?" This empowers them to recognize risky situations and consider proactive responses.

Influencers



Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about influencers, the goal is to help them understand that not everything they see online is real or trustworthy. We want to teach them how to think critically about the content they encounter while keeping the conversation fun and relatable. Think of it as helping them become savvy “detectives” who can spot the truth in the world of influencers.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Making Influencers Relatable: Start by explaining that influencers are like characters in their favourite cartoons or shows, but instead of just acting, they're sharing things they like or do in real life. For example, you might talk about popular toy unboxers, like those who open and review new toys on YouTube. They make the toys seem super fun, but it's important to understand that they might be paid or given the toys for free by the companies to talk about them.

2. Creating a Detective Game: Encourage your child to think like a detective when watching influencer content. Ask them to consider what makes a video fun or interesting and to look for clues about whether the influencer is being honest and genuine with the products they unbox and promote.

3. Encouraging Curiosity: Make it easy for your child to ask questions about the influencers they follow. You can help them understand that it's okay to wonder about where the toys, snacks, or other things in videos come from. Create a comfortable environment where they feel safe sharing their thoughts. You might ask, “Do you think it's always real when someone says a toy is the best one ever?”

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- “If you could be an influencer, what would you want to tell your friends about? How would you make sure what you share is true?” This encourages them to reflect on authenticity and honesty.
- “What do you think influencers might get from companies when they show their toys or snacks? Is it just fun, or do you think there's more?” This helps them understand the concept of advertising and the potential for bias.
- “Can you think of a time when someone you trust told you something about a toy or game? How did that make you feel compared to what an influencer says?” This helps reinforce the importance of personal recommendations versus online endorsements.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids frequently engage with influencers across various platforms, from beauty and fashion to gaming and lifestyle. With influencers occupying a unique space between celebrity and friend, their recommendations often feel personal and trustworthy, which can strongly influence young audiences. This conversation starter will help teens recognize and question the commercial and curated aspects of influencer content so they can make informed choices about what to follow and believe.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Discussing the Role of Influencers as Paid Promoters: Begin by exploring how influencers make money, especially through brand deals, product placements, and affiliate links. This can help teens understand the financial motivations behind their favourite content creators' recommendations.

2. Highlighting the Power of Social Influence: Ask about a time they bought something because it was recommended by an influencer, but it didn't live up to their expectations. This can help them recognize that while influencers have a lot of power to create trends and generate interest, not every product or recommendation is truly worth buying.

3. Exploring the Difference Between Authenticity and Advertising: Help them notice cues that indicate paid promotion, such as hashtags like #ad or quick sponsorship mentions, and discuss how this might affect the content's trustworthiness. Encourage them to research products independently or wait before buying, as a way to build habits that prioritize critical thinking over impulse.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- “Have you ever bought something because an influencer recommended it? How did you know if it was a good choice or just something they were paid to promote?” This question helps your teen think critically about the authenticity of influencer recommendations and whether they are based on real value or paid promotions.
- “Do you know how influencers make money from their posts? How do you think that might affect what they choose to promote, especially if it's not something that's actually good for you?” This opens up a conversation about the commercial side of influencer content and encourages teens to question whether all promoted products are truly safe or beneficial.
- “Can you spot when an influencer is promoting something harmful or unrealistic, like products that claim to ‘fix’ things about your appearance? What red flags should you watch out for?” This encourages teens to think about the potential dangers of certain influencer promotions, especially when they involve unhealthy or unrealistic beauty standards, quick fixes, or harmful trends.



Shaping the Future: Discussing AI

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

For younger children, the focus should be on nurturing curiosity and excitement about technology without overwhelming them with concerns about the future. You might start by discussing how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is like a tool that helps people solve problems or make things easier. Engage them with simple examples, such as how AI can help doctors diagnose illnesses or make video games more fun to play.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Making AI a Friendly Helper: Describe AI as a kind of "invisible helper" that's built into things they use every day, like apps or games. Explain that just like how they might ask an adult for help, they can ask AI-powered devices questions, and they'll try their best to answer.

2. Using Familiar Examples: Show them how AI works by pointing to things they already know, like asking Alexa for the weather or using YouTube Kids. You could say, "When you ask Alexa what the weather is, she thinks really fast and gives you an answer! That's AI helping out."

3. Comparing AI to a Friend Who Learns: Explain that AI learns from what they do, just like how their friends learn their favourite games or foods. For example, say, "Have you noticed how Netflix shows you more cartoons after you watch one? It's like Netflix learns what you enjoy and tries to help you find more things you might like!"

4. Encouraging Curiosity About How AI Works: Prompt them to think about how things work behind the scenes. Ask them fun questions like, "What do you think happens when you ask Siri to tell you a joke?" to spark their interest in the technology.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think robots or computers will do in the future?" This opens up a creative discussion about the potential of technology and helps them imagine future possibilities.
- "Why do you think Netflix or YouTube shows you certain videos or shows?" This question introduces them to the idea of AI learning from their choices to make suggestions.
- "If you could invent a robot, what would it do?" This encourages them to think creatively about the role of AI in solving problems or making everyday tasks more fun.



Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

As older kids think more seriously about their future, it's essential to explore how AI is shaping not only careers but also education, therapy, and everyday life. AI is a powerful tool that can enhance learning and support, but it also brings challenges, like ethical concerns, biases, and risks of over-reliance. Help your teen understand how they can benefit from AI responsibly, while developing the unique human skills—like empathy, creativity, and adaptability—that will set them apart in a tech-driven world.

Here's How to Approach The Conversation:

Encourage Responsible Use of AI in Schoolwork: With AI tools like essay generators and problem solvers widely available, it's important for teens to understand the line between using AI for support and misusing it. Help them see that while AI can enhance their studies—suggesting ideas, organizing research, or explaining concepts—over-reliance could lead to gaps in their education.

Explain How AI Mistakes Can Happen: AI systems work by analyzing patterns in data, but they're not perfect. Sometimes, these systems can flag legitimate work as plagiarism or misidentify online behaviour as harmful. Make sure your child knows that these mistakes happen, not because of something they did, but because AI isn't infallible.

Encourage Blending Interests with Technology: Whether it's art, sports, health or business help them see how AI and technology can enhance those interests. For example, AI can help athletes improve performance with data analytics or help artists create new forms of digital media.

Importance of AI Ethics and Bias Awareness: As AI becomes more embedded in daily life, bias and ethics have become critical topics. Explain how AI can unintentionally carry biases, affecting everything from job screenings to loan approvals, due to the data they're trained on.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How do you think you can combine your passion with technology in the future?" This encourages them to think about how their interests can intersect with AI to create new opportunities.
- "How do you feel about using AI in school? When might it be helpful or harmful?" Encourage your child to think critically about AI's role in their education, helping them weigh its benefits and potential risks, like over-reliance or misuse. This also includes mistakes that AI could make.
- "How do you feel about using AI as a tool in therapy? Can it help people, or are there things only a human therapist can understand?" AI can help track progress, and suggest coping strategies, but it may not fully understand complex emotions or provide the same connection as a human therapist.

Privacy Pseudonymity When Creating Accounts

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger children about privacy and pseudonymity when creating accounts, it's important to keep the conversation light-hearted and relatable, framing privacy as an empowering part of their online experience. The goal is to help them understand that privacy is about protecting their personal information and making smart choices when they're online.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Relate Privacy to Everyday Concepts: Start by connecting online privacy to something they already understand, like personal boundaries. Explain that, just like they wouldn't share private details with everyone in person, they should keep that information private online. This helps them feel safe while enjoying their online activities.

2. Create Fun, Imaginative Usernames Together: Turn creating usernames into a fun activity. Show them that their online name can be anything, like their favourite animal, or a combination of things they love, as long as it doesn't include personal details. "Pizza.Cat13" or "purple__ninja8" are great names that keep them safe while letting their personality shine. Doing this together makes them feel included and teaches them how to make smart choices.

3. Encourage Using Avatars Instead of Real Pictures: Explain that using avatars (fun, cartoon-style images) is a great way to express themselves online without revealing personal photos. Just like they wouldn't give away their photos to someone they don't know in person, they should be careful about using real pictures online.

4. Be Their Privacy Partner: Let your child know that they can count on you to help them with their online accounts. Explain that setting up accounts together isn't just about safety—it's also about having fun as a team. This way, they learn to always involve you when they need to share information online, building trust and comfort.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What kind of fun name would you like to use if you could be any character online?" This makes the conversation engaging and encourages creativity while steering clear of personal information.
- "If a game asks for your birthdate, what do you think we should do? Is it okay to say we're older than we really are?" This encourages them to think about age restrictions and the importance of providing accurate information, while also considering how to keep their real birthdate private when following the age requirements.
- "What's an animal, colour, or word you'd like to use in a secret agent name if you were one?" This helps them think of usernames that are fun but still protect their identity.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

As kids grow older, their desire for independence and connection online increases, and so does their exposure to privacy risks. Conversations about privacy and pseudonymity should respect their growing autonomy while guiding them to make thoughtful decisions about their online presence—especially as their actions online can affect their future.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Respect Their Growing Independence: Acknowledge that your teen is capable of making their own decisions and that you trust them to navigate the digital world within some limits. This respect sets a collaborative tone rather than a controlling one, which can help them feel more open to talking with you about their online habits.

2. Power of Pseudonymity Beyond Just Usernames: Explain that pseudonymity isn't just about hiding behind a screen name—it's about choosing what personal details to share, when, and with whom. Encourage them to use creative usernames and avatars, especially on less familiar or public platforms, and to avoid sharing information like their school, hometown, or daily routines in public posts. It's not about secrecy, but about having control over their digital footprint.

3. Talk About Privacy in Real-World Terms: Frame privacy as a real-world skill—just like locking the door to their room or choosing who to share personal stories with. Discuss how the decisions they make online about what to share and where affect their privacy, security, and reputation in the long run. Emphasize that oversharing could lead to issues like identity theft or financial fraud down the road.

4. Encourage Multi-Layered Digital Safety Habits: Instead of focusing only on usernames, emphasize the importance of setting up multiple email addresses for different uses, avoiding single sign-ons, and using ad blockers to protect their data. These habits help them understand that privacy is about more than just being careful with their name; it's about being smart with all the ways their information could be used.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "When you create usernames, how do you decide which parts of your real identity to include?" This prompts them to reflect on the balance between self-expression and privacy.
- "What do you think are the risks of using your real name or pictures of yourself on social media?" This opens up a discussion on privacy, identity theft, and personal safety, including the financial risks of oversharing.
- "If an app asks for your personal info, like your location or contacts, how do you decide whether to allow it?" This question challenges them to think critically about data permissions and online safety.

Privacy Settings On Social Media

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When introducing younger kids to social media privacy settings, the goal is to help them understand privacy in a fun and relatable way. Instead of thinking of it as just a "setting," help them picture it as a way to protect their own "online art gallery," where they decide who can come in and see their drawings, videos, or stories. This approach can be especially helpful for parents who might not realize that kids are using social platforms like YouTube Kids, TikTok for Kids, or apps with similar child-friendly versions.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Making Privacy Settings Fun: Describe privacy settings as the "museum rules" for their online art gallery, where only people they choose can enter and view their special creations. Explain that, just like they wouldn't want strangers wandering through their art gallery, they need to make sure only friends and family can see their posts and interact with them. For example, platforms like YouTube Kids let parents control what their children can watch, and TikTok for Kids (or the regular TikTok app with proper parental controls) has strict privacy settings to protect younger users, limiting who can see or comment on their videos.

2. Using a Creative Scenario: Ask them to imagine their social media as a gallery where they put up pictures and stories, with special doors that only let in the people they trust. Tell them that privacy settings help decide who gets a "ticket" to enter and enjoy their gallery, making sure it's a safe place for them to share their art and ideas.

3. Breaking It Down Into Steps: Start by showing them the option to make their gallery private, so only certain people can "visit." Then, talk about options for controlling who can leave "comments," tags, or likes, and let them decide how they want to handle each part.

4. Encouraging Safe Habits: Explain that it's good to check these "rules" every once in a while, just like they might check their favourite art supplies to make sure everything's in place.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "If you had your own art gallery, who would you want to invite to see it? Just family and friends or everyone?" This helps them consider privacy in a context they enjoy.
- "How would you feel if someone you didn't know came into your gallery? Why might it be better to keep it invite-only?" This emphasizes the importance of trusted connections online.
- "What kind of rules would you make for visitors in your art gallery? Who should be allowed to leave comments or ask questions about your artwork?" This introduces the idea of controlling interactions that feels safe.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids and teens are actively building their online presence, sharing personal stories, connecting with friends, and exploring new interests. However, with this visibility comes a need for awareness about privacy settings to control who can access their posts, photos, and other information. Empowering them to understand and utilize privacy settings helps protect their digital footprint and teaches them the importance of setting boundaries online.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Start With Personal Relevance: Begin by explaining that privacy settings are less about restricting freedom and more about choosing who has access to personal moments and thoughts. Relate this to how they wouldn't want just anyone walking into their room uninvited—privacy settings work similarly for their online spaces.

2. Discuss Control Over Online Sharing: Ask them to think about who they feel comfortable sharing different types of content with. Help them see privacy settings as tools to filter this audience, allowing them to share freely without feeling exposed to strangers or uninvited contacts.

3. Highlight Potential Privacy Risks: Without sounding alarming, bring up potential privacy risks they might not consider, such as strangers commenting on their posts, having their photos shared without permission, or even advertisers using their information. This can help them understand why it's beneficial to keep some details within a trusted circle.

4. Empower Their Ownership of Online Safety: Reinforce that understanding and using these settings means they're in control. Remind them that by adjusting their privacy settings, they're deciding who gets to be part of their online world, reinforcing the message that privacy is both their right and their responsibility.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What types of posts do you feel comfortable sharing with everyone versus just friends or family?" This question helps them reflect on content boundaries and decide what feels right to share widely.
- "Do you know how to control who can tag you in photos or see your location?" This encourages them to consider specific privacy settings and whether they have control over these features.
- "Have you ever thought about how advertisers or strangers might see your social media? Does that change how you feel about what you post?" This prompts them to think about unseen viewers and the broader impact of having an open profile.





Online Gaming Interactions

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about staying safe while playing games online, the goal is to help them understand that gaming is fun, but there are some "codes" they need to know to stay safe. Teach them to be digital explorers who can recognize "safety rules" that protect their online adventures.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Making Safety Rules Fun: Invite your child to think of online games as an adventure like a treasure hunt. Explain that just like in a treasure hunt, they might come across "pretend friends" who aren't really playing fair and might want to take their "treasures." This could mean asking for passwords or personal info, like what school they go to.

2. Using Easy Examples: Explain that if someone in the game says, "I'll give you cool new powers if you tell me what your password is," that's a sign they aren't a real friend. Let them know they should tell you right away because it's never good if someone is trying to take the treasure out of their game.

3. Celebrating Safe Choices: Encourage them to let you know if someone asks for information or tries to move the game to another place like a chat app. Praise them for recognizing "sneaky treasure takers," and remind them how smart they are for telling you.

4. Online Misrepresentation: Explain that just like kids can make their accounts look like they're older, adults can also make their accounts look like they're younger or even pretend to be kids. This is a way for people to pretend to be someone else, and it's hard to know who they really are just by looking at their profile. Encourage them to always be cautious and to talk to you if they meet someone online they're not sure about.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "If someone asked you to tell them something private about yourself to get a cool prize in a game, what would you do?" This encourages them to recognize when someone is fishing for private details, like passwords or personal information.
- "What if someone said, 'Let's talk on a different app where we can plan more of the game'? Why might that be a bad idea?" This helps them understand that staying in the game itself is safer, and they don't need to move to other platforms for communication.
- "Do you think it's always easy to tell who someone really is online? Why or why not?" This helps them think critically about online identities and reinforces the idea that not everyone may be truthful about who they are.
- "Who are the only people we can share personal details with, like where we live or go to school?" This reinforces that personal information should stay within a trusted circle, such as family and close friends.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Online gaming may be a significant part of your teen's social life, offering an exciting platform for entertainment and connecting with others. But with the vast opportunities for social interaction, it's important to guide them through navigating the online world safely. As they engage with other players, understanding the potential risks—like scams, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour—can help them make better decisions and protect themselves.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Understanding Their Gaming Social Circle: Acknowledge how important gaming is to your teen, particularly its social aspect. Frame the conversation around the idea that just like in real life, interactions in online spaces need boundaries and caution.

2. Relating Gaming Interactions to Real-Life Scenarios: Use examples from games they play to highlight specific situations that could go wrong, such as meeting strangers or dealing with toxic behaviour in a chat room. Encourage them to reflect on what makes certain interactions uncomfortable or risky.

3. Exploring the Emotional Impact of Online Gaming Interactions: Discuss the emotional side of gaming, such as how toxic players can affect their mood or self-esteem. This is especially important with competitive games where emotions run high, and online behaviour can take a toll.

4. Setting Boundaries and Knowing When to Walk Away: Teach them about setting boundaries, such as reporting or blocking inappropriate players. Emphasize that leaving a game or muting someone is a valid option to protect their mental health and enjoyment.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "Have you ever been in a situation where someone tried to get you to share personal details in exchange for something in a game, like skins or upgrades?" This question helps your teen reflect on potential scams and understand the risks of sharing information in exchange for in-game items. Discuss how scammers prey on these desires.
- "How do you handle toxic players or bullying during a game? Do you think your emotions are impacted by their comments or behaviour?" Encourage them to reflect on how negative interactions affect their mindset and gaming experience. This also opens up a discussion about recognizing and dealing with cyberbullying.
- "If someone you don't know asks to chat outside of the game, how would you handle that? What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable about these requests?" This prompts your teen to think critically about the risk of moving interactions to external platforms and the importance of maintaining privacy and boundaries.

What If Your Child Is Uncomfortable Talking To You About Sextortion?

Supporting Your Child Through Online Challenges They May Encounter

It's important to recognize that your child may not always feel comfortable coming to you if they are being cyberbullied, sextorted, or facing other online harms. These situations can be deeply emotional, overwhelming, and often embarrassing for teens, who may worry about being judged, blamed, or shamed. This fear can make it difficult for them to open up, even to the people they trust most.

Encouraging open communication about online safety is crucial to help your child feel more comfortable discussing these sensitive topics. Make sure they know that they can come to you for support, but also reassure them that seeking help from others, such as a trusted friend, school counsellor, or professional services, is perfectly okay. The goal is to make sure they know they're not alone, and there are many places they can turn to for help if something goes wrong online. It's also important to recognize that your child may be approached by friends or peers who are dealing with cyberbullying, sextortion, or other online risks but want to keep it a secret from their own parents. While your child may feel uncomfortable breaking that trust or sharing information about a friend's problem, reassure them that the best way to help a friend is to support them in getting the right kind of help. It's okay for them to encourage their friends to talk to an adult or report an issue, even if they want to keep it confidential from their parents.

However, even with the best intentions and an open line of communication, your child may still struggle to confide in you. It's essential to let them know it's okay if they seek help elsewhere, such as from school counsellors, or professional support services.

Providing them with access to reputable online resources for reporting cyberbullying, sextortion, or any other online harm is another key step. The resources listed offer confidential support and practical advice, giving your child options to seek help outside of family discussions.

Remember, the goal is not just to be a safety net but to empower your child with the resources and confidence to handle these challenges, knowing they have support—both from you and from other trusted avenues. Building this supportive environment can make a significant difference in how your child navigates the digital world as they grow older.

How to Foster Open Communication

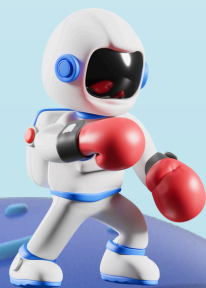
Approach with Empathy: Encourage conversations about online experiences and listen without immediate judgment or reaction. Let your child know that you're there to listen, not to react harshly or punish them. Acknowledging their feelings and providing reassurance can go a long way in building the trust they need to share when something feels wrong.

Non-judgmental Reassurance: Teens may fear that their online activity will result in consequences like having their devices taken away or losing their internet access. Reassure them that their safety and well-being are more important than punishment and that they can talk to you without fear of losing their devices. Let them know that they can reach out to trusted adults (like teachers, counselors, or family members) for support, even if it's not immediately with you.

Set Up Trusted Contacts: Make sure your child has easy access to trusted contacts on their device who they can reach out to if they are ever in need of help. These contacts can include you, a school counselor, or a trusted adult outside the family. Adding these contacts to their phone or device—so they don't have to search for them in moments of stress—makes it easier for them to get support when they need it most.

Resources To Provide Your Children

- [KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- [NeedHelpNow.ca](https://www.needhelpnow.ca)
- [Cybertip](https://www.cybertip.org)
- [Thorn.org](https://www.thorn.org)
- [Bullying Canada](https://www.bullyingcanada.ca)
- [StopSextortion.com](https://www.stopsextortion.com)
- Tools to combat child sexual abuse: [Project Arachnid](https://www.projectarachnid.org)



Screen Time

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

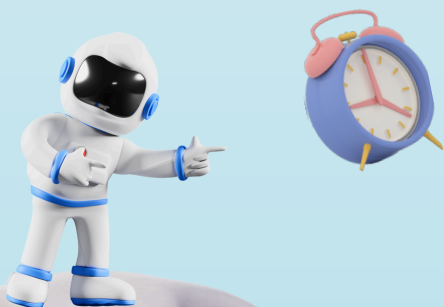
When discussing screen time with younger kids, the aim is to help them understand the importance of balance while making it feel relevant to their daily activities. Children in this age group often enjoy games, shows, or educational apps, and they may not realize how too much screen time can affect their mood or energy levels.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

- 1. Frame Screen Time as a "Battery" Game:** Explain that just like their favourite game devices or toys need to recharge, their bodies and minds also need "charging" breaks from screens to stay strong and happy. This analogy helps them understand why balance is important without making it feel like a restriction.
- 2. Create Simple Rules Together:** Collaborate with your child to set fun rules, such as "screen time in the morning, playtime in the afternoon." Involving them makes the idea of screen limits feel less like a rule and more like a team plan.
- 3. Focus on How Screens Make Them Feel:** Ask your child to notice how they feel after screen time—excited, sleepy, or maybe cranky? Encourage them to describe these feelings, which helps build awareness and self-regulation in a gentle, non-judgmental way.
- 4. Introduce "Screen-Free Zones":** Designate certain times or places, like the dinner table, bathrooms or bedrooms, as "no-screen zones." Make it a family routine, so screen breaks feel like a normal, shared habit rather than a rule.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How does your body feel after watching your favourite show or playing a game? Are you tired, excited, or something else?" This question helps them tune into their own physical and emotional responses to screen time.
- "If you could be a 'Screen Break Hero,' how would you use your superpowers to balance screen time with other fun activities?" This encourages them to see screen breaks as empowering choices rather than limitations.
- "What other activities do you enjoy that make you feel as happy as watching a show or playing a game?" This question gently promotes a variety of interests and helps them recognize other activities they love.



Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids spend a significant amount of their day on screens, not just for school but also for socializing, entertainment, and personal interests. At this age, it's important to help them reflect on how screen time influences their well-being and productivity, building self-awareness about digital habits so they can make choices that support a healthy balance.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

- 1. Discussing the Effects of Screen Time on Daily Life:** Begin by connecting screen time to things they care about, like having energy for hobbies, focusing on school, or enjoying time with friends and family. This can make the topic relevant rather than just a rule to follow.
- 2. Understanding Digital Overload and Dopamine Loops:** Explain how apps and games are designed to keep us engaged through rewards (like notifications or level-ups) that activate dopamine, a chemical in the brain associated with pleasure and reward. Encourage them to notice when they feel a pull to keep scrolling or playing beyond what they intended.
- 3. Setting Personal Boundaries:** Support them in creating personal screen limits, especially around activities like binge-watching or gaming that can lead to hours passing without realizing it. Frame this as a way to gain control rather than a restriction.
- 4. Building Digital Habits that Energize, Not Drain:** Encourage them to explore what types of screen activities feel positive and energizing versus those that lead to feeling tired or unmotivated. This helps them understand that not all screen time is equal and that some choices may lead to better focus and mood.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you notice about how you feel after spending a few hours online? Do certain apps make you feel different than others?" This question encourages them to think about the emotional and physical effects of screen time and to distinguish between different types of online activities.
- "Have you ever noticed a time when it's hard to stop scrolling or gaming? What do you think keeps you coming back?" This prompts reflection on the design of digital platforms and how they can influence habits, helping them see the role of technology in shaping screen use.
- "What would a balanced day with screens look like for you? What would help you stick to that?" This question helps them define their own version of balance and think about practical steps to achieve it, fostering a sense of ownership over their screen habits.

Cyberbullying Awareness

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about cyberbullying, the goal is to help them understand how words and actions online can impact feelings, just like in-person interactions. We want to make sure they understand that digital spaces, like games and chats, should feel safe and friendly. Think of it as teaching them how to be "kindness superheroes" who know how to spot and stop hurtful behaviours online.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Cyberbullying Awareness For Kids: Invite your child to imagine their online world as a playground where everyone should feel happy and safe. Explain that, just like they would tell a teacher if someone was being mean at school, it's important to tell an adult if they see mean behaviour online too. You could turn this into a fun role-playing game where they practice "spotting" and "reporting" pretend hurtful messages.

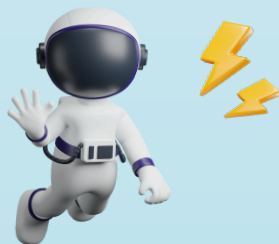
2. Breaking Down the Basics: Instead of overwhelming them with too much information, focus on one aspect of cyberbullying at a time. For instance, start by explaining that kind messages make people feel good, while mean messages can hurt feelings, even if they're online. Once they understand this, you can introduce other steps, like knowing when to ask for help if they see or experience mean behaviour.

3. Celebrating Kindness Superpowers: Praise them when they show kindness and empathy online or tell you about something that didn't feel right. Positive reinforcement will help them feel proud of standing up for themselves and others in their digital playground.

4. Encouraging Questions: Create a safe environment where they feel comfortable asking questions. This builds a foundation of curiosity and helps them feel confident about seeking help when they don't understand or feel uncomfortable online.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What would you do if someone said something mean to you or your friend online?" This helps them think about how to react to hurtful messages.
- "How do you think we should treat people in online games or chats?" This reinforces the importance of kindness in digital spaces.
- "If you ever feel upset by something someone says online, who could you talk to?" This encourages them to share feelings and seek support from trusted adults.



Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

At this age, teens are immersed in social media and other digital spaces, where they interact with friends, classmates, and sometimes even strangers. The goal is to help them understand the real impact of cyberbullying, recognize its signs, and empower them to take constructive steps if they or someone they know experiences it.

Here's How To Approach the Conversation:

1. Connecting Cyberbullying to Real-Life Impact: Discuss how cyberbullying differs from face-to-face interactions by focusing on how it can persist beyond school hours and reach into a person's private time and space, making it harder to escape.

2. Understanding Different Forms of Cyberbullying: Talk about specific tactics cyberbullies may use, like sending threatening messages, creating fake accounts, sharing embarrassing content, or even spreading harmful rumours through group chats. Understanding these behaviours can help them recognize signs early on.

3. Empowering Them to Set Boundaries: Encourage them to set clear boundaries online, like blocking or muting anyone who crosses the line. Remind them that it's okay to step back or take a break from social media when things become overwhelming.

4. Discussing Steps for Seeking Help: Let them know that they don't have to deal with cyberbullying alone. Encourage them to come to you or another trusted adult if they ever feel targeted. Explain how documenting instances, like taking screenshots, can help if they decide to report it.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "Have you seen any situations online where someone was treated badly or unfairly? How did people around them respond?" This encourages your teen to consider how cyberbullying affects not only the person targeted but also those who witness it.
- "If someone ever started bothering you online, how do you think you'd want to handle it? Do you feel like you'd have the support you need?" This helps them think through possible responses and opens the door for you to offer support.
- "Have you ever heard about people setting up fake accounts or using private messages to send threats? How do you think that might impact someone who receives them?" This encourages empathy and awareness of how cyberbullying tactics affect others emotionally and psychologically.

Combatting Unhealthy Body Image Part 1.

Action Figures, Online Games, Weight Training, Supplements

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

Young children are influenced by the media they consume, which often portrays men with exaggeratedly large muscles and an emphasis on toughness and aggression. This can set unrealistic expectations for how they should look and act, often suggesting that showing vulnerability is not acceptable. As a parent, you can help your child develop a healthy body image by addressing these influences early on.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

Youtubers and Content Creators: If your child follows specific content creators on YouTube or other video platforms, use their content as a discussion point:

- "Do the Youtubers you watch ever talk about their appearance or give tips on how to look a certain way? How does that make you feel?"
- "Have you noticed if certain types of videos or content creators get more views or likes based on their appearance? What do you think about that?"
- "What do you think about the pressure some content creators might feel to look a certain way to attract more followers?"

Action Figures and Toys: If your child enjoys playing with action figures that have exaggerated muscles, use this as an opportunity to ask questions that encourage critical thinking:

- "Do you think someone needs to have big muscles to be a hero? Can you think of heroes who use their brains or kindness instead of muscles?"
- "Why do you think this toy was designed with such large muscles? What message might that send?"
- "How do these action figures compare to people you know, like family members or teachers?"
- "Do you ever compare your body to the characters you see in video games or on TV?"
- "Do you think it's okay for boys to show their feelings, or do you feel like they always have to be tough?"

Online Gaming and Avatars: If your child is drawn to mobile apps or games that feature avatars or characters with exaggerated physiques, this can be an excellent opportunity for discussion:

- "What do you think about how the 'good' characters and 'bad' characters look in this game?"
- "Do you notice if the characters in these games all have similar body types? How does that make you feel about your own body?"
- "When you create your avatar, do you feel like you need to make it look a certain way? Why do you think that is?"
- "What do you think would happen if avatars in games showed more diverse body types? Would that change how you play or interact with others online?"
- "Do you think being a hero in a game always requires physical strength, or can other traits be just as important?"

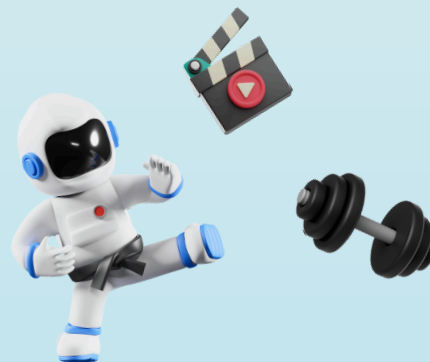
Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

As teenagers approach adulthood, they become increasingly attuned to the messages about masculinity and body image that media portrays. With the rise of social media, streaming platforms, and digital content, these messages can be pervasive and powerful. Often, children encounter idealized and hyper-masculine representations that may influence their self-perception and health choices. It's crucial to have open conversations to help them navigate these pressures and develop a healthy self-image.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

Interest in Weight Training or Supplements: Open up a conversation with your child about the portrayal of masculine bodies in social media. Many children may not realize that the extremely muscular physiques they see are often not just a product of dedicated workouts and diet but are frequently amplified by the use of performance-enhancing substances. Many teenagers are drawn to fitness apps or online workout challenges, which often promise quick results. These tools can sometimes contribute to unhealthy expectations or behaviours. It's important for them to understand that these images are not always realistic or healthy to aspire to.

- "What made you want to start weight training or use supplements?"
- "What do you admire about the popular fitness figures in the media you consume?"
- "What do you think about the frequency and intensity of workouts promoted by these challenges? Are they balanced with proper recovery and nutrition?"
- "How do the transformations or body images you see online make you feel about your own body? Do they seem attainable, healthy or realistic to you?"
- "Have you noticed any common themes in the fitness content you follow? What do you think is real versus what might be edited or exaggerated?"



Combatting Unhealthy Body Image Part 2.

Music Videos, Virtual Wardrobes, Fashion Apps, Online Shopping and Online Relationships

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

From an early age, children are often surrounded by media portraying slender celebrities and influencers alongside other masculine figures. Whether through dolls, animated characters, or the fashion choices of TV personalities, there's a heavy emphasis on being slim, attractive, and socially admired. This constant exposure can foster worries about body image and create pressure to meet these unattainable ideals.

Celebrity Culture and Music Videos: When your child shows interest in music videos or celebrity culture that highlights certain body images:

- "What do you think about how the singers or dancers in this video look?"
- "Is there a difference between how they look on stage and how people look in everyday life?"
- "What do you think makes a good performer—how they look, or how they make you feel with their music?"
- "Do you think it's okay for celebrities to always look perfect, or do you think they should be more like everyone else?"

Dolls and Virtual Wardrobes and Games: If your child enjoys playing with or is interested in customizing virtual wardrobes on apps, use this as an opportunity to discuss media influence:

- "What do you like most about this doll?"
- "Do the dolls that are skinnier or more dressed up seem more popular? Why do you think that is?"
- "Do you think the models in these magazines or virtual outfits look like people you see around you? Why do you think the magazine or app features them this way?"
- "What do you find most exciting about the outfits and styles you see in these magazines or apps?"

TV Shows and Movies: When watching shows or movies that feature thin, attractive feminine characters, ask your child what she thinks:

- "Do you think all grownups look like the characters in this show?"
- "Is it more important to be kind and smart, or just to look pretty?"
- "What do you think makes you strong or confident in real life?"
- "Do you ever compare yourself to people you see on TV or in movies? How does it make you feel?"

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

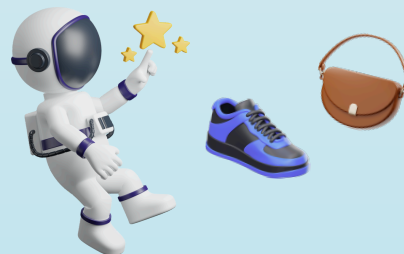
As teenagers navigate the digital landscape, they are frequently exposed to images and content that can influence their body image and self-esteem. Social media, streaming services, and online platforms offer a constant stream of idealized beauty standards and lifestyle portrayals, which can be challenging to differentiate from reality. It's essential to engage in open discussions to help them build a healthy self-image and understand the nuances of digital media.

Fashion Apps and Online Shopping: When your child spends time browsing fashion apps or online stores that showcase specific body types:

- "What kind of clothes do you see most often when you're shopping online?"
- "Do the models in these apps look like people you know in real life? Why do you think the store chose those models?"
- "How does looking at these clothes and models make you feel about your own style?"
- "Do you think it's important to dress a certain way to fit in, or is it more important to wear what makes you feel comfortable and confident?"

Online Relationships: As your child navigates online relationships, discuss how digital interactions can affect their perception of relationships with others:

- Perceptions and Self-Esteem:
 - "How does the way people present themselves on online profiles compare to real-life interactions? Does it change how you feel about yourself?"
 - "Do you think the way profiles are curated influences what people find attractive? How might this affect your self-image?"
- Healthy Relationships:
 - "What qualities do you value in a partner? How do those qualities align with the expectations you see online?"
 - "How can you ensure that your interactions with online profiles reflect your true self and values, rather than external pressures?"





Combatting Unhealthy Body Image Part 3.

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about body image, it's important to help them recognize that everyone is unique and beautiful, no matter how they look on the outside. At this age, children are just beginning to develop their sense of self and are often exposed to media that shows what it means to be attractive. Our goal is to help them understand that these media portrayals aren't always real and that there is no one "right" way to look.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Make It a Fun Exploration of Media Messages: Encourage your child to think of themselves as a "media detective" who's investigating the images they see in their favourite shows or ads. Ask them to point out things that look different from how they might look in real life or things that don't seem very realistic. This approach makes critical thinking about body image fun and less intimidating.

2. Use Real Examples from Their World: Take a look at an ad, game, or TV show they enjoy and ask questions like, "Do you think everyone looks like this in real life?" or "Why do you think they made this character look like that?" This brings the idea of media influence to their level of experience and shows them how to think critically about the images they see.

3. Keep It Simple and Clear: Start by talking about how the people in media, including on social media or TV, might edit their photos or choose certain angles to look a certain way. Ask, "Do you think the person in this photo looks like they do in real life? What do you think is different?" This keeps the conversation manageable and introduces the idea of edited, curated content in a non-judgmental way.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think this ad or show wants people to feel about their looks? Do you think it shows what real people look like?" This question helps kids think about the intent behind the images they see and encourages them to question whether those images represent reality.
- "Why do you think they want the character in this ad or game to look a certain way? Do you think it's showing us something that's real or just a picture made to look cool?" This encourages kids to think about the purpose behind the image—whether it's trying to sell something or create a certain feeling.
- "What's something special about the way you look that makes you, you? How do you think the person in this photo or video might feel about their own looks?" This question shifts the focus to the child's unique qualities and fosters a sense of appreciation for their own appearance, separate from the media's influence.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

In the age of social media, body image concerns are no longer just a personal matter but are deeply intertwined with how we present ourselves online. For teens, this can mean feeling pressured to meet certain beauty standards that are often unrealistic. It's essential to help them develop a healthy body image, free from the constant comparison to influencers, celebrities, and edited images they encounter every day. By approaching the topic openly and thoughtfully, you can empower your teen to appreciate their body as it is and focus on strengths beyond appearance.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Encourage Critical Thinking About Social Media: Help your teen understand how social media platforms often present an edited, curated version of reality. Discuss how influencers and celebrities may not always reflect real life, and how photos are often edited or filtered to conform to an idealized image.

2. Highlight the Role of Self-Worth Beyond Looks: Make sure your teen knows that beauty is subjective and that true value is found in qualities like kindness, intelligence, talent, and integrity. Encourage them to focus on these attributes, rather than the ever-changing beauty standards set by media.

3. Discuss the Dangers of Comparison Culture: Talk about the impacts of constantly comparing oneself to others, especially online. Ask them how often they feel pressured by the need to look a certain way or have a specific body type.

4. Promote a Balanced Approach to Fitness: If your teen is concerned about their body, discuss how fitness should be about health and well-being, not just appearance. Encourage physical activities that make them feel good, whether it's dancing, hiking, or team sports, rather than focusing on extreme body modification.

5. Address the Influence of Media: Talk about how advertisers and media outlets benefit from promoting insecurities. Explain how they can protect themselves from falling into this trap by questioning the motives behind ads and beauty standards.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How do you feel when you see photos that seem perfect but might not be real? What do you think could be behind those images?" This question encourages your teen to question the authenticity of online images and to recognize the pressures created by perfect representations.
- "What do you think is the impact of comparing yourself to others on social media?" Encourage your teen to reflect on how constant comparison can harm their self-image and what steps they can take to break the cycle.

Password Best Practices

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When discussing the importance of keeping passwords private with young children, using relatable examples can be very effective.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Explaining Passwords as Secret Codes: Ask your child to imagine that passwords are like secret codes for their special online spaces, such as games or school websites. Just like a secret code protects a hidden treasure, a password protects their online accounts.

2. Sharing Passwords vs. Trust: Sharing passwords might seem like a way to show trust, similar to giving a friendship bracelet. However, if a friend has their password, they might accidentally or intentionally change things or cause problems. Emphasize that, while friends are important, some things, like passwords, should remain private to keep everyone safe.

3. Alternative Ways to Show Trust: Encourage them to find other ways to demonstrate trust and friendship that don't involve sharing their passwords. For example, they could share their favourite games or help each other with schoolwork without giving out their secret codes.

4. Introducing a Password Manager: Explain that just like they have a toy box to keep their treasures safe, they can have a digital "box" to store their passwords. Introduce the idea of a password manager—a tool that helps them keep track of their passwords so they don't have to remember them all. This can be a fun and easy way for them to learn good digital habits and security from an early age. You can also let them know that it's never too young to start using a password manager, and it can help them feel more confident about managing their online space securely.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "Why do you think it's important to keep your passwords secret?" This helps them understand the role of passwords in protecting their online accounts.
- "What might happen if you share your password with a friend?" This encourages them to think about potential risks.
- "Can you think of other ways to show trust and friendship without sharing your passwords?" This prompts them to consider alternative ways to build trust.
- "What would happen if you forgot your password and didn't have it saved anywhere?" This is a good opportunity to talk about how a password manager can help store and remember their passwords safely.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

When your child starts using online accounts and passwords, it's important to discuss password security. Whether or not you choose to know their passwords is a personal decision. Many parents respect their child's privacy, while others stay more involved. Regardless, the focus should be on teaching them how to protect their online information and make smart security choices.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Inventory and Assessment: You can ask your child to make a list of all their accounts and review their current passwords. They should consider whether their passwords are strong, too repetitive or if any need updating to enhance security.

2. Privacy and Respect: As children get older, they may prefer to keep their passwords private, which is usually okay. Respect their privacy and avoid insisting on knowing their passwords. Instead, focus on educating them about the importance of strong, secure passwords.

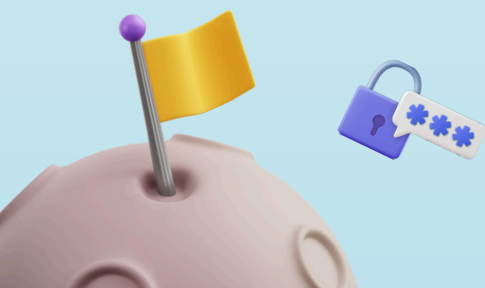
3. Education Over Involvement: Emphasize the importance of creating strong passwords by explaining the risks associated with weak ones. For instance, weak passwords can lead to account hacks or personal information theft, which could result in identity fraud or misuse of information.

- **Weak vs. Strong Passwords:** Explain that simple passwords like "123456" or "password" are easy for hackers to guess, while complex passwords that combine letters, numbers, and special characters are much harder to crack.

4. Using Two-Factor Authentication (2FA): 2FA adds an extra layer of security, requiring a second verification (like a text or app notification) along with their password, making it much harder for hackers to break in. Explain that 2FA should be used on all important accounts, like social media, email, and banking. If a platform doesn't offer 2FA, they should question if it's secure enough to use. Think of 2FA as an extra lock on the door—it's a little more effort but adds important protection.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "Do you know why having a strong password is important?" This helps them understand the risks and the importance of security.
- "What steps can you take to make sure your passwords are secure?" This prompts them to think about best practices for creating and maintaining strong passwords.
- "What would you do if an account you use doesn't offer 2FA?" This helps your child think critically about their online security and whether or not they should continue using that platform.



Phishing & Scams

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

For younger children, phishing might not always be directly relevant, as they may not use email or social media. However, it's still important to teach them how to recognize and avoid situations where someone could try to trick them into sharing personal details, whether through games, online chats, or even attempts to steal gaming assets.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

Simple Explanation About Tricksters: Explain that some people on the internet might try to trick them into giving away personal information, like their name, address, or even in-game items and passwords.

Basic Rules For Sharing: Set clear, easy-to-follow rules about not sharing personal information online without asking you first. This includes asking for your opinion before clicking on unfamiliar sites or downloading apps. When they come to you for help, having an open conversation (or setting a restriction if that's what you choose to do) would help determine the range of boundaries when it comes to sharing information online.

Parental Permissions: Make sure to explore internet safety settings together so they can safely explore while knowing how to keep their information protected.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think someone could do with your name or where you live?" This helps them think about the potential consequences of sharing personal information.
- "If a game or app asks for information about you, what do you think you should do?" This encourages them to consider their actions in specific situations.
- "Why do you think it's important to check with me before clicking on something online?" This opens up a discussion about the importance of guidance and safety.



Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids may have already encountered or heard about phishing attempts, even if they don't understand all the categories of phishing. This conversation can help them recognize the signs and respond appropriately.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

Understanding Phishing: Explain that phishing is when someone pretends to be someone they know or trust, like a friend, family member, or even a company, in order to steal personal information. This could be done through emails, texts, phone calls, or even social media messages. Sometimes scammers will try to trick them into clicking on links, opening attachments, or even paying money for something that seems too good to be true.

Critical Thinking: Encourage them to think carefully about any messages they receive. Explain that just because a message looks like it's from someone they know doesn't mean it's really from them—scammers can fake phone numbers (caller ID spoofing) or email addresses. Show them how to hover over links before clicking to see where they lead, and remind them that there's no such thing as a "safe" attachment type. Also, they should never provide personal details, passwords, or payment information without double-checking.

Open Communication: Emphasize the importance of telling you if they think they've been scammed or if they're contacted by someone unfamiliar. Let them know that it's not their fault if something goes wrong, and that you're there to help, no matter what. Provide them with various resources that can help them as well.

Safety Tip

Remind them not to communicate with strangers online and to block any suspicious accounts or numbers.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What would make you suspicious of a message or email you receive online?" This encourages them to think about potential warning signs.
- "Can you think of a situation where it might be difficult to tell if a message is real or fake? How would you handle it?" This helps them explore challenging scenarios and consider their responses.
- "If you ever realized you gave out personal information to someone online, what do you think your next step should be?" This prompts them to think about taking proactive steps in case something goes wrong.

Safe Browsing

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

For younger kids, it's important to create a safe and controlled online environment, as they may not yet have the critical thinking skills to navigate the web safely on their own.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Safe Browsing Habits: Explain that while the internet can be a fun and helpful place, not all websites and ads are safe. Tell them that some ads are designed to look fun or interesting, but they might actually be dangerous. To keep them safe, they should only visit websites that you have bookmarked for them.

2. Supervised Use: Let them know that it's important to always have a parent or trusted adult nearby when they are using the internet, especially when they need to search for something or watch a video for school.

3. Ad Blockers: Explain that you've installed special software called an ad blocker on their devices to help keep them safe by stopping ads from showing up. This way, they can focus on what they're doing without worrying about seeing something they shouldn't.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think makes a website fun and safe to use?" This invites them to share their thoughts on what a good website looks like and helps reinforce the idea of safety online.
- "What would you do if you saw something on a website that didn't feel right to you?" This encourages them to think about how they would react in a situation that makes them uncomfortable.
- "Why do you think it's important to check with me before visiting a new website or watching a video?" This helps them understand the value of parental guidance and checking in before exploring new content online.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids have more freedom online and may already be familiar with some online risks since they have more sites they could visit, games they play, social media accounts, and experience from educational purposes, online learning, or research projects.

Here's How to Approach The Conversation:

1. Equipping Them With The Knowledge And Tools:

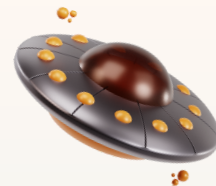
- **Understanding Malvertising:** Explain that while they might be used to seeing ads online, not all of them are safe. Some ads are designed to trick them into clicking, which could lead to harmful consequences like viruses or stolen information. Encourage them to use an ad blocker to help prevent these risks.
- **Safe Browsing Practices:** Teach them to always check URLs before clicking links. Make sure they know to look for HTTPS at the beginning of web addresses and double-check the spelling to avoid falling for typo-squatting scams.
- **Bookmarks:** You can also encourage them to use bookmarks for trusted websites so they don't accidentally land on malicious sites from search results or ads.

2. Open Communication: Let them know that if they ever feel unsure about something online or if they think they've encountered a scam, they can always come to you for help. Emphasize that it's okay to ask questions and that staying safe online is a team effort.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How could you decide if a website or link is safe to click on?" This question encourages them to reflect on their decision-making process when browsing the internet.
- "Can you tell me about a time when you were unsure if an ad or link was real or fake? How did you handle it?" This prompts them to share their experiences and think critically about how they navigate online risks.
- "What steps do you take to make sure your personal information stays safe when you're online?" This helps them consider the actions they can take to protect their privacy and security online.





Checking & Installing Security Software

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about checking and installing security software, you can help them imagine their device as a “special fort” filled with cool things they love. Just like they might keep their fort safe from dirt or damage, their device also needs some protection to stay in top shape. You can explain that security software helps make sure everything inside the fort stays safe and fun.

Here’s How To Approach The Conversation:

Making Security Software Fun: Explain that sometimes “pests” might sneak into their fort and cause trouble. Tell them that security software is like a “broom” that sweeps away these tricky pests so their treasure stays safe.

Keeping It Simple: Avoid technical details and focus on simple concepts like “updating.” Tell them that just like they might have to “recharge” or “clean” their toys, their device also needs “clean-ups” (updates) to stay healthy and strong.

Showing Them How to Check for Updates: Show your child where the update button is on their device. Explain that updates are like giving the device extra energy to stay strong and ready. Let them press the button to check for updates (with supervision) so they can see how easy it is to keep their “special fort” protected.

Creating a Routine Together: Set a regular time, like “Special Fort Friday,” to check the security settings together. Use this time to talk about keeping the device clean and safe. It’s a hands-on way for them to learn that device safety is an important habit, just like brushing their teeth.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- “How do you think we could keep our “special fort” safe from sneaky bugs that try to get inside?” This encourages them to think about security software as a protective tool that guards their favourite games, photos, and videos from digital “bugs.”
- “If you had a magic broom to keep your device clean, what would it look like?” This helps them imagine security software as a fun, protective tool.
- “How often do you think we should check that our “special fort” is clean?” This question helps them understand the importance of regular safety checks.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Checking your security software isn’t just a technical task—it’s about keeping your device and data safe from online threats. By making regular updates and scans part of your routine, you’re taking a proactive step in protecting your digital life.

Here’s How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Understanding Security Software Importance: Start by emphasizing that just like locking the door to their room keeps things private, security software protects their devices from unwanted intrusions. Highlight that hackers and malware can target anyone’s device, so checking security software is as important as keeping their passwords safe.

2. Connecting It to Daily Use: Relate security software to apps they use every day. For example, mention that social media accounts or gaming profiles can sometimes be hacked, and good security software helps reduce these risks. Explain how checking the security status on their devices can help keep their personal data and accounts safe.

3. Encouraging Awareness of Updates and Alerts: Encourage them to see updates as something that strengthens their device, not just an interruption. Explain how these updates often address security gaps hackers exploit and suggest setting a reminder to check for updates or scan reports every few weeks.

4. Building Digital Responsibility: Frame this routine as part of digital responsibility, just like keeping their online behaviour respectful. Remind them that security alerts aren’t something to ignore—taking a few minutes to address them can prevent bigger problems down the line.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- “Have you checked your security software recently to see if there are any new updates or scan reports?” This prompts them to take action and form a habit of regular checks.
- “If your phone or laptop suddenly alerted you to a security issue, what would you do next?” This helps them think through how to handle alerts independently.
- “Why do you think hackers or malware target everyday users and not just big companies?” This engages them in understanding that personal devices can be targeted and why cybersecurity is crucial for everyone.



Avoiding Using Public Wi-Fi

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about staying safe online, it's important to keep the conversation simple and positive.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

Importance Of Being Careful With Public Wi-Fi: You can start by explaining that public Wi-Fi is the internet you can use when you're out and about, like at a café, mall or at the library. It's like the Wi-Fi at home, but since lots of people can use it, we need to be extra careful.

Why We Need to Be Careful: Tell them that some public Wi-Fi networks might not be as safe as the one at home, and it's possible for someone to see what they're doing online if they're not careful. It's a little like sharing a big playground with everyone—you want to make sure your toys (like your information) stay safe.

What to Do Instead: Encourage them to wait until they're home to go online. Let them know that home is the best place to use the internet because it's safer. If they really need to go online while they're out, tell them they should ask you first.

Making It Fun: You can turn it into a game by creating a list of their favourite websites and making sure they know to stick to those when they're online. You could even set up special bookmarks on their device so they know exactly where to go.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "Why do you think it's good to use the internet at home instead of when we're out?" This helps them understand that home is a safer place to use the internet.
- "What would you do if you wanted to watch a video or play a game when we're not at home?" This encourages them to think about asking for help when they're out and want to use the internet.
- "Can you show me which websites you like to visit?" This allows them to share their favourite sites with you and reinforces safe browsing habits.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids are likely to be more independent online, so it's important to discuss the risks and safe practices when using public Wi-Fi, especially if they can't always rely on mobile data.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

Understanding Public Wi-Fi: Explain that public Wi-Fi is the internet they can access in places like cafés, libraries, or malls. While it can be convenient, public Wi-Fi isn't always as secure as the home network, which means others might be able to see what they're doing online.

The Risks: Talk to them about how using public Wi-Fi can sometimes expose their devices to risks, like hackers trying to steal personal information or send harmful content. It's a bit like walking through a crowded place—keeping their valuables close is key to staying safe.

Smart Alternatives: If having enough mobile data isn't financially feasible, discuss other ways to stay safe.

- **Limit Public Wi-Fi Use:** Suggest that they only use public Wi-Fi for non-sensitive activities, like browsing for homework help or watching videos. For anything more personal, like checking bank accounts or logging into important accounts, they should wait until they're on a secure connection at home.
- **Use Secure Networks:** Encourage them to connect only to public Wi-Fi from trusted places, like well-known cafes or libraries, and always ensure the network is marked as "secured."
- **Offline Activities:** Suggest downloading content at home to use offline when they're out, such as saving music, videos, or articles. This way, they can still enjoy their favourite content without needing an internet connection.

Open Communication: Let them know they can always talk to you if they're unsure about whether it's safe to use a certain Wi-Fi network. Encourage them to ask questions or share concerns whenever they're in doubt.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you usually use the internet for when you're out, and how do you decide when it's safe to connect?" This question helps them reflect on their current habits and encourages safer decision-making.
- "If you can't use mobile data, what are some things you could do to stay safe online while using public Wi-Fi?" This encourages them to think creatively about using the internet securely, even without access to mobile data.
- "Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to use public Wi-Fi? How did you make sure it was safe?" This question prompts them to share their experiences and discuss what they might do differently in the future.



Virtual Private Network (VPNs)

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

A Virtual Private Network, or VPN, is a tool that creates a private, secure connection online, masking your location and encrypting your data. For teens, VPNs can be a double-edged sword—while they enhance online privacy, they can also bypass important safety controls, making it crucial to understand when and how to use them responsibly.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Framing VPNs as Both a Tool and a Responsibility: Start by explaining that a VPN can protect their online privacy and security, but it's also a powerful tool that requires careful use. Help them see VPNs not just as a way to browse privately, but also as something that comes with the responsibility to use wisely.

2. Relating VPN Use to Real-Life Situations: Talk about situations where a VPN can be genuinely beneficial, like securing data on public Wi-Fi at a coffee shop or protecting their location when gaming online. But also, address that VPNs can bypass school or home restrictions, which can lead to consequences.

3. Discussing Privacy and Boundaries: Engage in a conversation about why privacy is important to them. Explain that while VPNs can shield their data from prying eyes, they can also make it harder for parents to protect them online. This is a chance to talk about healthy boundaries between personal privacy and parental guidance.

4. Researching VPN Providers: Emphasize that not all VPNs are created equal—many free VPNs are actually data aggregators, meaning they collect and sell personal information. VPNs must be thoroughly researched to ensure they're secure and trustworthy before using them.

5. Emphasizing the Importance of Trust and Transparency: Remind them that online safety is a shared goal, not just a rule to follow. Encourage an open-door policy where they can talk to you about any online concerns or needs for more privacy, rather than using a VPN to get around safety restrictions you have put in place. Let them know that trust can lead to more freedom when it comes to online activities.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- “When do you think using a VPN could be helpful or necessary? Are there situations where you think it could be overused?” This prompts them to think about when VPN use is practical and when it might cross boundaries. This question encourages your child to think critically about both the positive and negative sides of using a VPN. It helps them understand that while a VPN can offer privacy benefits, it can also come with potential risks (e.g. bypassing parental controls, or using untrustworthy free VPN services). This gives them a chance to weigh both sides and consider when and how to use a VPN responsibly.
- “If you were to use a VPN, what would your main reason be? How do you think it would help you online?” This allows them to express why they might see VPNs as useful, encouraging honesty.
- “What are some potential downsides of using a VPN, especially when it comes to parental controls or restrictions? How do you think we could balance privacy with online safety?” This encourages them to think critically about VPNs and discuss a balance between privacy and safety openly.
- “What do you know about free VPN services? How do you think they might make money, and what could that mean for your privacy?” This question encourages them to question the trade-off of using free VPN services, which often make money by selling or collecting user data. It highlights the importance of researching VPN providers and making sure they're trustworthy. By asking this question, you help them become aware that some “free” tools come with hidden costs, like privacy risks. This is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of trusted VPN providers, especially for teens, who may not yet recognize the potential downsides of “free” services.



Adding Admin Accounts To Your Child's Device

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger kids about adding admin accounts to their devices, it's essential to explain that these accounts help keep their digital environment safe and enjoyable. We want them to understand that just like they have rules at home or in school, their devices need special rules too.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Breaking Down Steps: Focus on how admin accounts allow parents to manage what kids can access. For example, you could say, "When we set up this special account, it will help us decide together what games you can download. This way, I can keep an eye out for any sneaky apps that might not be good for you."

2. Relating It to Their Playtime: Connect the concept to something they understand. You might say, "Think of your device like a treasure chest. With my admin account, I'll help make sure that only the best treasures (games and apps) get added. This way, you can enjoy your device without worrying about finding anything that's not safe."

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "How do you think having my special account will help us pick the right games and keep out the ones that aren't good for you?" This encourages them to think about the purpose of the admin account.
- "What kinds of games or apps do you think we should check together before adding them to your treasure chest?" This allows them to participate in the decision-making process.
- "Why do you think it's important for us to work together to keep your device safe and fun?" This reinforces the idea of teamwork in managing their digital space.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids are navigating a complex digital landscape where they encounter various apps, games, and online content. As they gain more independence with their devices, it's essential to help them understand the importance of digital safety and responsible device management.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Connecting Admin Accounts to Their Freedom: Explain that setting up a parental administration account is not about restricting their freedom but rather about creating a safe space for exploration. Discuss how having this account allows them to experiment with new apps and features while minimizing risks.

2. Exploring Real-Life Scenarios: Share relatable examples, such as a friend who downloaded an app that turned out to be full of ads or made an unexpected purchase. Ask them how they think they could avoid similar situations, reinforcing the idea that a little oversight can go a long way in preventing mishaps.

3. Encouraging Ownership and Responsibility: Discuss the idea of shared responsibility. Ask how they would feel about setting up an admin account together, emphasizing that it's a team effort to ensure their device remains a fun and safe environment. This approach can help them feel involved in the decision-making process.

4. Promoting Digital Independence with Support: Highlight that having an admin account doesn't mean you'll be hovering over them constantly. Instead, it's about giving them the freedom to enjoy their device while knowing they have your support if they encounter something questionable. This fosters trust and encourages them to come to you with any concerns.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What types of apps, games, or platforms do you enjoy using most, like social media or streaming services? How do you think setting up an admin account could help you use those safely?" This prompts them to think about their interests across different platforms and how safety measures can enhance their experience.
- "Have you ever downloaded something or signed up for a service that didn't turn out as expected? What happened, and how did you handle it?" This encourages reflection on past experiences with downloads and subscriptions, leading to a discussion on how admin accounts can help avoid similar issues.
- "How do you think having an admin account will help you take charge of your own digital space while keeping it safe? Can you think of any rules or guidelines we might want to set together for using your favourite platforms?" This empowers them to contribute to the conversation about safety measures, making it a collaborative effort.



Appropriate Apps & Social Media

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When talking to younger children about the apps they use, it's important to keep the conversation light and friendly.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Understanding the App: Ask your child to share with you what they like about the apps they're playing on. Encourage them to show you how the apps work and what makes them fun. This helps you get to know their interests and ensures they're enjoying apps that are just right for them.

2. Choosing Safe and Fun Apps Together: Let your child know that whenever they find a new app they want to try, they can tell you all about it. Explain that you'll check it out together to make sure it's fun and safe for them to play with. This way, you can help them pick the best apps.

3. Setting Up a Team Plan: Make a simple plan where you and your child always choose and download apps together. This way, they know that you're there to help them pick the coolest and safest apps to enjoy. Make sure that apps have policies that must be read and reviewed before downloading.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What's your favourite thing to do in the apps you play on?" This lets them talk about what they love, making the conversation fun and positive.
- "Can you show me how your favourite app works? What's the best part?" This encourages them to share their experience and helps you understand what they enjoy.
- "If you find a new game or app that looks fun, how do you think we should check it out?" This question guides them to see that it's a team effort to pick out new apps.



Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

As your child grows older, they'll naturally want more independence when it comes to choosing and using apps. It's important to strike a balance between giving them freedom and ensuring they make smart, safe choices.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Respecting Their Independence: Acknowledge that your older child is becoming more responsible and capable of making decisions about the apps they use. While you trust their judgment, emphasize the importance of making informed choices regarding privacy settings, app permissions, and managing distractions.

2. Discussing Social Media and App Safety: Talk openly about the types of apps they're using, including social media platforms. Explain age restrictions and why they exist, encouraging them to think about the responsibilities that come with using these platforms. Remind them that social media apps often track data and might not always be as private as they seem.

3. Reviewing App Permissions: Encourage them to regularly review the permissions apps ask for. For example, does an app that's just for chatting really need access to their location or camera? Explain that some apps ask for broad permissions that aren't necessary for their function. If an app is asking for more access than it needs, suggest they either deny the permission or, if possible, delete the app.

4. Managing Notifications: Explain the importance of managing notifications for both reducing distractions and minimizing the app's ability to track their behaviour. Too many notifications can interfere with their focus, while some apps may use notifications as a way to keep them engaged and gather data on their habits. Suggest setting up apps to give fewer notifications or turning them off completely for apps they don't need constant updates from.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think are the benefits and drawbacks of using social media apps?" This prompts a thoughtful discussion about the pros and cons of social media, helping them weigh the impact of their choices.
- "What steps do you take to ensure the apps you download are safe and trustworthy?" This encourages them to be proactive in researching apps and making informed decisions.
- "How do you think using certain apps might affect your well-being, both positively and negatively?" This question helps them consider the broader impact of app usage on their mental health and daily life.

Disabling In-App Purchases

Conversations With Younger Kids (5-10)

When discussing how to keep their devices safe from unexpected charges, it's important to frame the conversation in a easy and relatable way.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Making Device Security Fun: Start by explaining how some games on your tablet can cost money like how certain things at the store do. They can show you fun things to buy, like special costumes for your character or extra levels to play, but we need to be careful. Just like how we wouldn't want to accidentally spend all our allowance on toys without asking, we need to make sure we don't spend money on games without checking first!"

2. Breaking Down Steps: You can make this interactive by asking them questions. "What if you were playing a game where you can dress up a character, and it says you can get a sparkly outfit for \$5? What do you think we should do before clicking the buy button?" This encourages them to think about the importance of asking for your permission first. You can guide them to understand that it's always a good idea to check in with you before making a purchase.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "If you found a super fun game that wanted you to spend money to get special items, how would you let me know?" This question encourages your child to think about communication and the importance of involving you in their decisions. It also reinforces the idea that they can always come to you for help.
- "What do you think might happen if we don't ask before buying things in a game? Can you think of any sneaky ways they might try to get us to spend money?" This helps them think critically about marketing strategies used in games and apps. By discussing the potential consequences of unasked purchases, you're teaching them to be more aware of the environment around them.
- "Why do you think some games want us to spend money? Is it just for fun, or could there be other reasons?" This opens up a discussion about the business side of gaming. It helps them understand that while games can be entertaining, developers might create in-app purchases to make money, and being aware of that can help them make better choices.

Conversations With Older Kids (11-18)

Older kids are becoming increasingly savvy in navigating digital environments, often encountering various apps that promise free content but can lead to unexpected costs through in-app purchases. As they explore their interests and preferences, it's crucial to help them understand the implications of these purchases and develop responsible habits around digital spending.

Here's How To Approach The Conversation:

1. Recognizing Their Digital Savvy: Start by acknowledging their familiarity with apps and online games, and frame the conversation as an opportunity to enhance their financial literacy in the digital space.

2. Connecting Digital Spending to Real-Life Impacts: Discuss how in-app purchases can seem harmless but can lead to significant charges if not managed wisely. Use examples they might relate to, like their favourite games or social media platforms, where they might encounter ads promoting enticing virtual items or subscriptions.

3. Exploring the Psychology Behind App Design: Encourage discussions about how apps are designed to be engaging and sometimes manipulative, using techniques to encourage spending. This can include things like timed offers, flashy graphics, or social pressure to keep up with friends.

4. Empowering Them to Set Limits: Talk about setting personal boundaries for app spending. Ask them what strategies they think might help them avoid impulsive purchases, like budgeting or disabling certain features. Reinforce the idea that being mindful about spending is a valuable skill.

5. Encouraging Open Communication About Purchases: Highlight the importance of discussing any potential in-app purchases with you before going through with them. This helps build trust and ensures they feel comfortable sharing their interests without fear of reprimand.

Questions Parents Could Ask:

- "What do you think makes an app or game so appealing that you might be tempted to spend money on it?" This prompts them to think critically about marketing tactics and their own reactions to them.
- "Have you ever accidentally made an in-app purchase? How did that make you feel, and what do you think could be done to prevent it next time?" This encourages reflection on their past experiences and fosters discussions about preventative measures.
- "How do you feel about spending money in apps? Do you think it's something you should do only when necessary, or do you see it as a fun part of gaming? Why?" This question prompts them to consider their values around money and fun in the context of gaming and app usage.

