

# How to

## Talk to Your Kids About Online Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a difficult topic to raise with your child, let alone talk about. Here are ten tips to make this conversation a little easier:

### How

#### 1. Educate Yourself

Sexual exploitation is a complexed, nuanced issue, which can make it a difficult topic to learn about. This is one of the reasons it goes undetected in our communities.

But by reading this webpage, you have taken an important first step. To learn more follow us on social media, join our mailing list and/or enquire about our workshops. You don't have to learn everything straight away, but by remaining connected to us you will increase your knowledge and skills in how to keep children safe.

#### 2. Start Early

Starting early and doing a little bit at a time, can help keep children from feeling overwhelmed.

#### 3. Be a Safe Person

Explain why having this conversation is important to you. You want your child to know how they can keep themselves and others safe, and they can come to you if ever they think or feel that they are not. Be approachable and authentic. This may feel like an uncomfortable topic to discuss with your child at first. But the more you are able to talk to your child about this, the more normalized these conversations can feel and the greater the chance that you will be the person they come to for help.

#### 4. Take the Time

Avoid providing simple answers to an issue as important as sexual exploitation. Instead, take the time to engage in dialogue, and stick to the facts and the truth.

#### 5. Be Patient!

Be patient if your child is not engaging. Keep trying!



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# WHAT

## 6. Tailor the Conversation to the Age of Your Child

Providing young people with information that is age appropriate can make it easier for them to understand that sex is a natural part of human development. It also makes it easier to speak with them about the more complicated aspects of sexual intimacy as they grow older.

## 7. Ask Questions and Outline Boundaries

Be curious. Ask your child about their online activities: What do they like to do online? Who are their online friends? Have they ever seen something that made them feel uncomfortable? What did they feel and/or do about it? Did they know what to do about it?

Let them know what is okay or not okay online (i.e., not sharing private information or images, switching platforms, meeting in real-life, accepting gifts from online-friends), and that whatever happens – you are there for them. They are not alone.

## 8. Value their Opinion

When communicating, remember to speak with your child rather than at your child. This will allow them to feel like an equal rather than a less-than member of the family. When you listen to your child, they will feel their voice matters. As a result, they will be more secure in standing up for themselves and their rights. Also, your child will feel more comfortable coming to you with their issues and concerns.

## 9. Make Use of Available Resources

If you are struggling to connect with your child through conversation, try basing it around a current news article. Ask their opinion on it and explore their thoughts and feelings as well as your own.

## 10. Create a Safety Plan

A safety plan is a document designed to help you and your child discuss and decide what they should do if ever they feel unsafe, and who they can turn to for help. Engaging in this task can make having a conversation about this difficult topic more natural for both of you, as it guides you both through it.



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# Red flags for online exploitation

If an online friend...

- is constantly asking your child to do things that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- is not taking your child's "no" for an answer
- is guilt tripping or threatening your child
- is giving your child online gifts such as cheat codes, admin codes or online gift cards
- is asking your child to switch online platforms (i.e., from a gaming platform to a social media platform)
- is asking your child to meet in real life

...or, if you notice changes in your child's behaviour (i.e., staying up late, hiding their screens or talking about a new online friend)...

...their online friend may be an online exploiter. For next steps, check out our **top 10 tips for staying safer online**.



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# 4 Stages of sexual exploitation

There are usually 4 stages leading to sexual exploitation. Exploiters will use different tactics to gain trust and build a relationship with a young child before they attempt to exploit them. This process can take a long time – months and even years, or it can be very short – within weeks. Sometimes, the parents may also be involved, as the exploiter will try to gain their trust as well.

## **Luring**

Targeting and communicating with a child for the purpose of exploiting them.

**Tactics:** building a connection, identifying, and fulfilling a child's needs, wants, and desires.

## **Grooming**

The exploiter will gain a child's trust and develop a codependent bond with them (and sometimes with the adults in the child's life) for the purpose of exploiting the child.

**Tactics:** gifting, love bombing, making false promises.

## **Recruitment**

The process whereby exploiters seek out and target a young person to be manipulated / forced / lured into sexual exploitation.

**Tactics:** hosting all age parties, peer recruitment, isolation from friends and family, gang links to exploitation.

## **Control**

Exploiters will control their victims and prevent them from coming forward on their own.

**Tactics:** threats, violence, extreme manipulation.

**If you or someone you know is being exploited, please contact us by phone 604 777 7510 or by email [info@childrenofthestreet.com](mailto:info@childrenofthestreet.com). You can also send a message to our confidential text line at 604 866 6799.**



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# 10 Tips for staying safer online

- Have regular conversations about the apps they are using and the people they are connecting with; **set clear boundaries**, and even write them down.
- Depending on the age of your child, you may want them to check with you before playing new games or accepting a friend request. For children under the age of 10, we recommend their **online activities be supervised by a parent or safe adult**.
- Many children do not reach out for support because they are afraid their screen time or devices (tablet, phone etc.) will be taken away. **Make sure your child knows they will not be in trouble if they ask you for help**.
- Remind your child that **online-friends are not necessarily who they say they are**. When a child decides to chat privately or meet an online friend in person, they may consider them to be a friend, as they have likely been chatting for a while. Reaffirm the notion that anyone they do not know from real life is still considered a stranger.
- Advise your child they **should not be switching platforms** and/or add gaming friends to social media.
- **Outline which types of information should not be shared**. e.g.: age, location, personal information, pictures.
- Teach your child to **never accept gifts online** such as money, gift cards, cheat codes or admin codes from online friends.
- Explain that they should **never meet an online friend in person** without a parent or other safe adult present.
- **Create a safety plan** with your child outlining what to do if someone asks them to send sexual images or sends sexual materials to them: stop engaging in conversation, tell a caregiver or other trusted adults (define who is a trusted adult), report, and block the person who is making your child feel unsafe.
- If you notice your child is engaging in risky behaviour online, have a conversation with them about why this behaviour is unsafe and **work together to find a safer solution**.



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# online Safety Plan

Who are my **safe** and **trusted** adults?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

When do I know I need to **ask for help**?

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How can I ensure that I'm being **safe online**?

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What are the **warning signs** that someone might not be a safe person?

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Where can I go if I **need help**?

www \_\_\_\_\_

www \_\_\_\_\_



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**Cybertip.ca** - to report images that shouldn't be online (nude images or sextortion)

**NeedHelpNow.ca**

**NeedHelpNow.ca** - to remove non-consensual image sharing

**STOP SEXTORTION**

**www.stopsextortion.com** - the threat to reveal intimate images to get you to do something you don't want to do



**ProtectKidsOnline.ca** - helps parents/guardians stay on top of the digital world their children are engaging in

**YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENCE LINE**

**Youth Against Violence Line** - 1 800 680 4264

**Kids Help Phone**

**Kids Help Phone** - 1 800 668 6868 or text 686868 - for support 24/7



**Children of the Street Confidential Textline** - 604 866 6779 (Monday to Friday 8:30-4:00pm)



**Onyx** - 1 877 411 7532 / onyx@plea.bc.ca - for a variety of youth friendly supports in Vancouver, Tri-Cities, and Ridge Meadows



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## They're cute, fun and friendly. And that's the problem.

In the world of online gaming, everyone looks friendly — even sexual predators. Online games and their chat functions are a good way for kids to connect with each other, but they also leave kids vulnerable to exploiters who use cute characters and anonymous chats to groom their victims. Know what to watch for and teach your child to game safe.

### Here's a few tips:

- **Have regular conversations** about the games your kids are playing and the people they're playing and chatting with.
- **Teach your children to never accept gifts from gaming friends** such as money, gift cards, or cheat and admin codes.
- **Create a safety plan** with your child outlining what to do if someone asks them to send sexual images or sends sexual materials to them.

Learn more at [Gamesafe.ca](http://Gamesafe.ca)



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