

What Parents Should to Keep their Kids and Children Safe Online

PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

OPENING UP ABOUT ONLINE DANGERS

Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/online-child-sexual-exploitation/online-dangers-infographic.html>

This resource is appropriate for parents of youth aged 12-14

Abstract

Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) and cyberbullying are serious problems that affect young people every day.

Regular discussions about your kids' online activity can help them recognize potential risks and help them stay safe online.

Here are some tips to help you start the conversation.

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HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT

ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (OCSE) AND CYBERBULLYING

- **Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE)** and cyberbullying are serious problems that affect young people every day.
- Regular discussions about your kids' online activity can help them recognize potential risks and help them stay safe online. Here are some tips to help you start the conversation.

OCSE IS ON THE RISE IN CANADA

ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- When children and teens are tricked into seeing or participating in sexual encounters online.
- 45% increase in reports of online child exploitation in just one year (2022-2023)
Source: [Reports From the Public Processed in 2023](#)

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILDREN MAY BE SEXUALLY EXPLOITED

- start spending more time online
- have gifts you didn't get them
- seem more moody, troubled or secretive
- use new sexual words or phrases
- isolate themselves in the bedroom or bathroom
- have stomach aches, headaches or trouble sleeping
- **Having open conversations with your kids can help prevent OCSE.**

SEXUAL CONTENT CAN BE CONFUSING

SEXUAL IMAGES AND VIDEOS

- May be found on websites or apps, and in videos, ads or games
- Can make youth feel curious, but also uncomfortable, upset or confused
- Can spread unhealthy ideas about relationships, sexuality and consent

SEXTING

- Sexting means consensually creating, sending, or sharing sexual messages, images, or videos with someone else.
- While it is normal for teens to want to explore their sexuality, some may share sexual content of themselves with their peers.
- These shared pictures and videos can have harmful outcomes, like being reshared without the sender's consent or knowledge.

YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

- "If a sexual image or video of you has been shared online, you're not alone. Contact [NeedHelpNow.ca](https://www.needhelpnow.ca)
- Offers guidance for youth (under 18) whose intimate images or videos have been shared without consent.

ONLINE PREDATORS BUILD CHILDREN'S TRUST

GROOMING

When someone builds trust with a child or teen online to gain access to and control them.

- Can be done by a stranger or someone the child knows
- Often from an adult pretending to be someone younger
- The child may be asked to send sexual content or meet in person

YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

- "It's OK to make friends on the internet. It's NOT OK for them, or anyone, to make you uncomfortable by talking about sex or sending sexual images and videos."

OCSE CAN HAPPEN IN AN INSTANT

CAPPING

When someone takes sexual recordings or screenshots of a child or teen over video call.

- Can involve strangers pretending to be other children
- Often happens without the child knowing
- Can lead to sexual blackmail (sextortion)

YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

- "It's OK for you to make friends online. It's NOT OK for those 'friends' to take screenshots or recordings of you without your permission."

SOME DANGERS CAN LEAD TO OTHERS

SEXTORTION

A type of blackmail where someone's sexual images or videos are used to threaten them into sending more content, paying money or meeting other demands.

- Usually the result of sexting, capping or grooming.
- Can come from someone your child knows or a stranger.

- **Should/must be reported at [Cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca)**

YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

- **"It's OK to be curious about sex and your sexuality.**
- **It's NOT OK to be pressured into sending sexual videos or pictures."**

ONLINE BULLYING IMPACTS REAL LIFE

CYBERBULLYING

When someone is mean or tries to threaten, hurt or embarrass someone else online.

- Making fun of or calling someone names
- Sharing someone's embarrassing or sexual images
- Spreading hurtful gossip, rumours or lies
- **Only 25% of youth who were cyberbullied told their parents about it**

Source: Cyberbullying Public Awareness Research 2022

SPEAKING UP STOPS BULLIES

If your child sees someone being bullied online, they can help stop cyberbullying by:

- **Checking in** with the person being bullied
- **Speaking up** if it's safe
- **Seeking help** from a safe adult

YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

- It's OK to send messages, make comments and share posts online.
- It's NOT OK to do those things to hurt other people — whether you know them or not.

ABOVE ALL ELSE, YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

- "I may not always agree with your choices, but I will always care about your safety.
- You can talk to me if you experience something upsetting or scary online.
- You'll never get in trouble for asking for help."

YOUR CHILD IS NOT ALONE - HELP IS AVAILABLE

CRISIS AND HELP LINES

9-1-1 IMMEDIATE DANGER

- **Call 9-1-1** if you or a family member is in immediate risk or danger.

9-8-8 SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE

- **Call or text 9-8-8** if you or someone you know is thinking of suicide.

[CYBERTIP.CA](https://cybertip.ca)

- Canada's national tipline that serves as a central hub for the public to report illegal online activities and materials involving minors (youth).
 - Online Reporting: <https://cybertip.ca/en/report/>
 - Phone: Call the toll-free tipline at **1-800-532-9135**.

[NEEDHELPNOW.CA](https://needhelpnow.ca)

- Offers guidance for youth (under 18) whose intimate images or videos have been shared without consent.

[KIDS HELP PHONE](https://kids.help.phone)

- Provides 24/7 confidential support for youth via
 - Phone (**1-800-668-6868**)
 - Text (**text CONNECT to 686868**)