

WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

A Reference Guide for Parents Online Child Sexual Exploitation

Abstract

- Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) is one of the most disturbing public safety issues facing society today. It continues to harm past and present generations of children in Canada and abroad.
- Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) is a serious crime where children are forced, tricked, or manipulated into participating in sexual activities online or creating sexual content.
- It involves various illegal acts and has seen a significant increase in recent years, particularly in Canada where police-reported incidents rose by 59% in 2023 from 2022.

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for the



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ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) is a serious crime where children are forced, tricked, or manipulated into participating in sexual activities online or creating sexual content.
- It involves various illegal acts and has seen a significant increase in recent years, particularly in Canada where police-reported incidents rose by 59% in 2023 from 2022.

STATISTICS

- Online child sexual exploitation and abuse is on the rise in Canada.
- In 2023, there were 19,516 police-reported incidents, a 59% increase from 2022.

2014 TO 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2023, most incidents (87%) involved making or distributing child pornography. Incidents of online sexual offences against children made up the remaining 13% of incidents. Of these offences, luring made up the majority (65%)
- Between 2014 and 2022, seven in ten victims were girls between 12 to 17 years old
- Between 2014 and 2022, nine in ten people accused were men and boys. They were generally much older than the victims, except in cases of non-consensual distribution of intimate images. In these instances, victims and the accused were 15 years old on average

UNDER REPORTING

Only a fraction of incidents is reported to police and the courts. This means the problem is bigger than official data suggests.

- In 2024-25, Cybertip.ca, Canada's national tipline for reporting the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, received 28,453 reports from the public
- In 2024-25, approximately 13 million takedown notices were issued to electronic service providers (ESPs) through Project Arachnid, a tool operated by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection that crawls the web in search of images of child sexual abuse and flags them for removal
- In 2023-24, there were 2,600 reports of sexual extortion

FORMS OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

OCSE manifests in several ways, all of which are illegal in Canada under the Criminal Code:

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL (CSAM):

- This includes any visual, audio, or written depiction of child sexual abuse, often referred to as child pornography. Canadian law also covers digitally generated content, such as AI-generated images.

GROOMING AND LURING:

- This is the process where offenders build trust and a relationship with a child online, often by pretending to be a peer or a supportive adult, to eventually convince them to engage in sexual activities, send explicit images, or meet in person.

SEXTING AND SELF-GENERATED MATERIAL:

- This involves youth-generated explicit images or videos, which are often shared without consent and can be used for further exploitation.

SEXUAL EXTORTION ("SEXTORTION"):

- This form of blackmail involves threatening to release a victim's private sexual images or videos unless they provide more content, pay money, or meet other demands.

LIVE STREAMING:

- This involves the real-time viewing of child sexual abuse, often with the offender directing the abuse.

MADE TO ORDER CONTENT

- Ordering videos/images to suit the offender's preferences.

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

- Prevention involves ongoing education, open communication, and the use of technology safeguards.
- Parents are encouraged to monitor online activities, set privacy settings, and be aware of behavioral changes that might indicate a problem, such as increased secrecy, new gifts, or using new sexual language.

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION (C3P)

- The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children.
- Our goal is to reduce the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, assist in the location of missing children
- C3P helps prevent child victimization by providing free access to their many programs, services, and resources for Canadian families, educators, child-serving organizations, law enforcement, and other parties.

PROTECT KIDS ONLINE CANADA

- Operated by the [Canadian Centre for Child Protection](#), ProtectKidsOnline.ca is designed to assist parents/guardians in protecting their children on the Internet and reducing their risk of victimization.
- Information is regularly gleaned from [Cybertip.ca](#) to create current, developmentally appropriate prevention material.

HELPLINES AND CRISIS SUPPORT

911 Immediate Danger

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

988 Suicide Crisis Helpline

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

Cybertip.ca

- Canada's national tipline that serves as a central hub for the public to report illegal online activities and materials involving minors (under 18 years).
 - Online Reporting: <https://cybertip.ca/en/report/>
 - Phone: Call the toll-free tipline at **1-800-532-9135**

NeedHelpNow.ca

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

Kids Help Phone

- Kids Help Phone is Canada's only national, 24/7, multilingual e-mental health service. It provides free, confidential, and non-judgmental support to children, youth, and young adults.
 - **Phone (1-800-668-6868)**
 - **Text (text CONNECT to 686868)**
 - **Online Chat:** Access Live Chat counselling through their website (<https://kidshelpphone.ca/our-e-mental-health-services/>)