

Protecting our kids in the cyber world



Technology has changed our world. Conversations that used to occur between friends in the street, or on a wall mounted phone are now being had with friends (and even people we have never met) at any time of the day or night, across a variety of sites and modes.

Many kids know more about the mobile phones, apps and internet programs in their home than their parents do.

As parents we are responsible for our children's online behaviour. Children need education, supervision, and monitoring when they are using any electronic devices, particularly those that can access the internet and allow connection and conversation with other parties.

Consider setting some limits around how much time your child spends on technology. Screen time is taking away valuable family connection time in many families. Get outside and play, take the dog for a walk together, build something, bake something, grab a milkshake together, or meet some friends at the park.

Technology-free time is good for growing brains, and tends to make kids happier and calmer when done regularly.

Privacy settings should be checked and double checked by adults to ensure that children are not revealing their location, contact details, or other personal and private information about themselves or you family.

Stay involved with your child's internet and phone usage – if you don't have a good idea of how their phone or apps work, ask them show you.

Reassure your child that they will not be in trouble if they report inappropriate content to you, and that you will help them sort the problem out if they come to you.

Without supervision, children can either unintentionally or purposely find content that is disturbing, elicit or inappropriate. Just as we wouldn't allow our child to wander aimlessly through the streets of a large city, we should not be allowing our children unrestricted and unsupervised access to the internet.



WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Talk with your child about some of the dangers of the internet, and about what to do if they stumble on a site with inappropriate content. Just as we talk with our children about "strange danger", we also need to ensure that our children tell us if they receive requests or contact from strangers on the internet.

Children should also be taught how to respond to inappropriate comments or pictures that are sent to them by someone:

- Show a parent/carer
- Save the evidence (screenshot)
- Delete the message/pic
- Block the person who sent the inappropriate message.
- Report to ACMS (Australian Communications and Media Authority) if the content is illegal or offensive www.acma.gov.au/hotline

