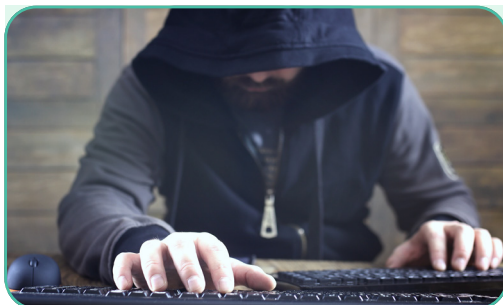




Talking Tips to Protect Your Child from Online Predators and Grooming

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website <https://thrive.psu.edu>, and sign up today!



Explain what and who is an online predator.

Online predators can be teenagers or adults who are pretending to be children or classmates or other children who are pretending to be your friends. Explain to your child how, in an online format, you don't really know who anyone is because they can have fake accounts and false identities.

Describe safe online relationships.

Talk about relationships in real life and how they are different from online relationships. Describe what a risky relationship may be like online and discuss how to look for dangerous or potentially harmful signs.



Discuss privacy and information safety.

Tell your child about privacy and what that means. Discuss the issues that come with sharing information, and consider how to keep yourself safe.

Talk about the dangers of social media.

Review the dangers of social media usage. Talk about the different kinds of scams that pervade the internet and false information that is shared.





Bring up selfies.

Describe, and be specific while also age suitable, what is an appropriate selfie and what is inappropriate. This topic could help you to start the conversation about predators and photos.

Reinforce safety rules.

Remind your child about the rules for online usage in your home. Reinforce that you are keeping them safe by being responsible for their online safety.



Discuss grooming.

Talk to your child about grooming and explain that it is when a person tries to develop a relationship with a child or their family so they can sexually abuse the child.



Have a heart to heart – let your child know they can always talk to you.

Keep an open mind, be responsive, and do not get upset if your child comes to you to discuss difficult situations. Having open and honest communication with your child on a regular basis will let them know you are always there to listen and help.



Adapted from: <https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/child-social-situations/online-activities-social-media/9-ways-to-protect-your-child-from-online-predators>