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Revisit Online Safety Practices

By Catlin Bootsma

Living in the digital era means a whole new dimension of safety concerns as kids learn to use and interact on the internet. The internet is an ever-changing landscape, with new apps and games regularly being developed. By staying informed about new technologies as well as kids' online behavior, you'll be equipped to help them navigate the positive and the potentially dangerous aspects of being online.

This is an article for caring adults, in addition to those who are parents. For those who have children, as you consider your family's internet use, here are a few safety concerns to review:



Make sure strong passwords are in place and security settings are regularly updated: If you want to limit your children's access to the internet, be sure to keep your passwords up-to-date. It is all too easy for young children to turn on the TV, computer, or Smartphone when it isn't password protected and come across material you don't want them to see.

Install and regularly check accountability software: There are many options out there now to protect your children from accessing illicit material and using sites or apps you don't want them to engage in. Using software such as [Covenant Eyes](#)¹ will not only set these sorts of boundaries, it will also report on your kids' search terms and online activity. Accountability Software is a fundamental tool to be paired with educating your kids about safe online activity.

Encourage kids to be responsible online: Having regular conversations with your kids about how to be safe online is essential. Consider setting up house rules about screen time that helps them to be responsible, accountable and safe. [This site](#)² has a great example of rules for kids about appropriate messaging, not disclosing information online, and more.

Decide on online safety rules for your family: If your children use social media, YouTube, online gaming, or anything that allows access to interaction with others, you'll want to decide what sort of interaction you want to allow. Privacy settings can allow you to turn off online interactions with others on games; make social media profiles "private" so strangers can't access your child; and more. But, always remember that just because one youth's account is set to private, doesn't mean that the information will stay that way—as one account is only as safe as the other affiliated accounts. This is to say that if another child who has an affiliation with your child's account, yet does not have any privacy settings enabled, then there is a great possibility that your child's information is not as private or secure as you expect. These settings can change as technology develops, so be sure to check back in and readjust!

Your guidance is helping kids to develop healthy habits online. Don't forget that they'll learn not only from your conversations with them, but from what they see you do. Taking frequent breaks from being online and using the internet well will speak volumes about what place the internet should play in their lives.

References

1 <https://www.covenanteyes.com/services/>

2 <https://www.safekids.com/kids-rules-for-online-safety/>

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