

Tips & Advice

Issue VII

Back to School? Time to talk online safety.

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You probably have a list of things to get done before your kids get back to school. It may include getting school supplies, figuring out carpools, and scheduling afterschool programs. There's one more thing we hope you can squeeze into your list – talking to your kids about being safe online.

Your kids are probably online all throughout the year, but during the school year they may be more connected – at the library, at school and at home. The good news is that it's easy to have these conversations– whether you're a techie or not.

Here are some ways to make these conversations easy and painless.

- **Use everyday opportunities to talk to your kids about being online.** For example, news stories about cyberbullying or texting while driving can spur a conversation with kids about their experiences and your expectations.
- **Communicate your expectations and how they apply in an online context.** Sharing your values clearly can help your kids make smarter and more thoughtful decisions when they face tricky situations. For instance, be specific about what's off-limits — and what you consider to be unacceptable behavior.
- **Resist the urge to rush through these conversations with your kids.** Most kids need to hear information repeated, in small doses, for it to sink in. If you keep talking with your kids, your patience and persistence will pay off in the long run.
- **Work hard to keep the lines of communication open, even if you learn your kid has done something online that you find inappropriate.** Listening and taking their feelings into account helps keep conversations afloat. You may not have all the answers, and being honest about that can go a long way.

For more tips on talking with your kids about online safety, visit ftc.gov/kidsonline.

Other tips to help protect your child when online.

Talk to your kids about what they're doing online. Find out which games, social networking sites, and other online activities your kids are into and make sure you are comfortable with them.

• **Talk to your children about the implications of providing personal information.**

• **Help your kids understand what information should stay private.**

Tell your kids why it's important to keep information like Social Security numbers, street addresses, phone numbers, and financial information private.

What is COPPA?

COPPA stands for the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. This act helps parents to control what personal information is collected from children under the age of 13. Find more information on the FTC website at this link: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-protecting-your-childs-privacy-online#whatis>



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Sources/Resources:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/08/back-school-time-talk-online-safety>

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