

# How to

# Talk to Your Kids About Online Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a difficult topic to raise with your child, let alone talk about. Here are ten tips to make this conversation a little easier:

## How

### 1. Educate Yourself

Sexual exploitation is a complex, nuanced issue, which can make it a difficult topic to learn about. This is one of the reasons it goes undetected in our communities.

But by reading this webpage, you have taken an important first step. To learn more follow us on social media, join our mailing list and/or enquire about our workshops. You don't have to learn everything straight away, but by remaining connected to us you will increase your knowledge and skills in how to keep children safe.

### 2. Start Early

Starting early and doing a little bit at a time, can help keep children from feeling overwhelmed.

### 3. Be a Safe Person

Explain why having this conversation is important to you. You want your child to know how they can keep themselves and others safe, and they can come to you if ever they think or feel that they are not. Be approachable and authentic. This may feel like an uncomfortable topic to discuss with your child at first. But the more you are able to talk to your child about this, the more normalized these conversations can feel and the greater the chance that you will be the person they come to for help.

### 4. Take the Time

Avoid providing simple answers to an issue as important as sexual exploitation. Instead, take the time to engage in dialogue, and stick to the facts and the truth.

### 5. Be Patient!

Be patient if your child is not engaging. Keep trying!

# WHAT

## 6. Tailor the Conversation to the Age of Your Child

Providing young people with information that is age appropriate can make it easier for them to understand that sex is a natural part of human development. It also makes it easier to speak with them about the more complicated aspects of sexual intimacy as they grow older.

## 7. Ask Questions and Outline Boundaries

Be curious. Ask your child about their online activities: What do they like to do online? Who are their online friends? Have they ever seen something that made them feel uncomfortable? What did they feel and/or do about it? Did they know what to do about it?

Let them know what is okay or not okay online (i.e., not sharing private information or images, switching platforms, meeting in real-life, accepting gifts from online-friends), and that whatever happens – you are there for them. They are not alone.

## 8. Value their Opinion

When communicating, remember to speak with your child rather than at your child. This will allow them to feel like an equal rather than a less-than member of the family. When you listen to your child, they will feel their voice matters. As a result, they will be more secure in standing up for themselves and their rights. Also, your child will feel more comfortable coming to you with their issues and concerns.

## 9. Make Use of Available Resources

If you are struggling to connect with your child through conversation, try basing it around a current news article. Ask their opinion on it and explore their thoughts and feelings as well as your own.

## 10. Create a Safety Plan

A safety plan is a document designed to help you and your child discuss and decide what they should do if ever they feel unsafe, and who they can turn to for help. Engaging in this task can make having a conversation about this difficult topic more natural for both of you, as it guides you both through it.