

Internet Safety at Home

As adults and children alike have turned to digital tools for school, work, and socialization, **online safety matters now more than ever.**

Here are **five tips** for keeping kids safer online, adapted to fit the current “safer at home” environment.

Tip 1:

Keep the Ground Rules



Even if our online habits have changed significantly, you can still set boundaries that work for your family and schedule. Involving children in setting these rules may help them stick to the guidelines.

Consider:

- Distance learning tasks **before** social media or gaming
- **No devices** during meals
- At least **___ minutes** of non-electronic activities per day
- **“Digital curfew”**: no devices after a certain hour

Tip 2:

Modify How You Monitor



Even the strictest monitoring programs and content blockers can't ensure that children are totally protected online. The best tools for keeping kids safe are time, attention and active conversation about digital behaviors.

Consider: Setting up **workstations** for children and teens that provide **quick visual access** to the screens for **easy check-ins** from parents/caretakers as they telework or complete household tasks.

Tip 3:

Engage with the Platforms



Take advantage of this time at home and online to get more familiar with the technology platforms your child likes to use. Taking a genuine interest in the games and platforms your child enjoys will help you better understand what your child is doing online.

Consider: If you're teleworking, **take a short break** to join your child on a round on the **game console**, or forward a funny **meme or video** you saw on one of the social media channels they use. It's a quick way to show you're willing and able to be **involved** in your child's online life.

Tip 4:

Chat IRL



Chat "in real life" with your children. With our social lives being conducted entirely online these days, it's important to have face-to-face discussions about how children and teens are maintaining healthy relationships online, and to give them opportunities to also talk about anything unhealthy or uncomfortable happening to them online.

Consider: Showing that you're willing to **listen and respond calmly**, even if what you hear is uncomfortable or troubling.

Tip 5:

Don't Take the Tech



Taking away internet access because a child has made a mistake online rarely solves the problem. Taking access away during a lockdown would likely do far more harm than good. Beyond affecting a child's ability to complete distance-learning tasks, it would all but completely isolate them from friends and other family; a support system that is essential right now. Find ways to give consequences that don't involve removing online access entirely.

Consider: If you must, **limit access** (shorter window for digital socializing, gaming, restricted use to certain public areas of the house, etc.) **rather than** removing it entirely.

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