

Online Safety at Home

Offenders need three things to be able to groom or seduce their child target: time, access, and interpersonal skill (Lanning, 2010). When thinking about prevention, those three main points are a good place to do an initial inventory of online safety skills.

TIME

- Does my child have breaks from online time to also live unplugged?
- Could we make a list of technology-free activities and encourage a certain number to try each day?
- How can we model moments of connection? Does our family take time together to unplug and check-in face to face?
- Do I also create moments and spaces where I am away from technology to give my child my full attention?

ACCESS

- Have we established guidelines on which apps and websites are off limits? Are the kids involved and invested in the reasoning behind these decisions?
- Does my child know that most people do use the internet well, but that there are people who don't know the rules? Do they know to watch out for people who may seem too good to be true or those who make them uncomfortable?
- Are they aware that if they tell me about someone using the internet to harm or cause concern, that I won't take their access away, but that we will work together to make it safer?
- Have we talked about isolating behavior? Healthy friends and adults want to be one of many people who care about you. Unhealthy friends and adults try to separate us from the people who love us. Does my child know they can come and talk to me if someone is trying to have access to them all the time?

INTERPERSONAL SKILL

- Does my child have good, age-appropriate information about how bodies work? Do they know that if someone does want to talk to them about sex online that is a big warning sign and they should let me know?
- Have we talked through "What If" scenarios about online safety concerns so my child has had a chance to do some problem solving and talk through fears?
- Does my child have a safety net of five adults that they can talk to if they meet someone who doesn't know the rules about safety? If any adult or friend, including one on their net, is causing worry or concern, do they know that they can reach out to someone else in their safety net?
- Does my child know what is important to me when it comes to how members of our family make choices online? For example, why does our family avoid using racist language online? Why is that important to us? Having conversations about our own deal breakers and their 'whys' behind those deal breakers help our kids lean into our family's expectations.