

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

SEXUAL AND ADULT CONTENT



KNOW THE FACTS

average age of
first exposure
to pornography is
9 YEARS OLD

"Basically... porn is everywhere." Pornography and other explicit material are abundantly available online. Studies show that most children are exposed to pornography by ten years old. The likelihood of exposure - whether accidental or intentional - increases with age. Boys are more likely to be exposed and to seek out sexual content. Viewing pornography can have a harmful impact on what children believe about sex and intimacy. It can also affect their behavior, especially their risky behaviors around sex.

WAYS KIDS ARE EXPOSED



Internet Searches
intentional or
accidental



Videos
Netflix, Youtube,
Zoom-bomb etc.



Gaming
in-game or
in chat



Direct Message
social media
or spam



From Someone
shown or told to look
by friend or sibling



Following Links
from ads or
unknown sources

LEARN MORE

- [Pornography 101](#) from Internet Safety 101
- ["How do I talk to my child about Internet Pornography?"](#) from Common Sense Media
- ["What to Do When Your Child Sees Porn on the Internet"](#) from Parent Map
- ["When your child sees online pornography."](#) from the Modern Parent
- ["Healthy Sexuality in Children and Teens"](#) from Amy Lang at Birds + Bees + Kids
- [Family Online Safety Institute](#)

PREVENTION AT HOME AND SCHOOL



Educate Parents
See the links above or
contact a counselor
or Betsy Noel



Talk at Home
about healthy sexuality
and porn using [amaze.org](#)
and ["It's So Amazing"](#)



Set Family Rules
for device use and
digital safety



Programs at School
Comprehensive sexual
health education at Lab
begins in 3rd grade



Secure Devices
School devices have
Securly and parents should
secure home devices

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD

Planning and Format

- **Prepare** - Get help for yourself from online resources and from school to prepare.
- **Start Early** - Have an initial talk with your child around seven years old, before they've been exposed, if possible.
- **Have Multiple, Short Conversations** - You don't have to cover everything at once. Snippets that are reinforced over time may be easier to deliver, encourages ongoing communication, and will be more effective.
- **Follow Up** - Secure devices, have a family digital use agreement, keep talking as a family, get help from the school.

Content

- **Reassure** - It is developmentally normal for kids to be interested in sex. Children understand that sex is private and may be embarrassed to talk. Children often need to be reassured it is good to talk with trusted adults about it.
- **Ask Questions and Listen** - Use open-ended questions to get a sense of what your child has seen and knows/doesn't know to guide the conversation and next steps. Ask how they *feel* and ask about what they *believe* about sex and pornography.
- **Give the Facts** - Provide an age-appropriate explanation of sex. Young children may not fully understand what sexual behavior is, and older children may need myths busted or misconceptions corrected.
- **Give Your Perspective on Healthy Sexual Relationships** - Distinguish fantasy/acting and reality, emphasize the importance of communication and consent. Talk about your family values and *why*.

Potential Pitfalls

- **Avoid Condemning Technology** - Technology is an integral part of kids' social lives, education, and more. Most kids like technology and condemning it can make it harder for your child to relate to what you're saying.
- **Avoid Punishment at First** - If your child was exposed, build trust by avoiding punishment and encouraging communication. E.g., Avoid closing social media account or taking away devices, though you may need to do so if the behavior persists.

SCHOOL CAN HELP



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Laboratory
Schools



School Counselors

Social and emotional support for your child and advice about having the talk



Dean of Students and Principal

Social emotional support and information about school rules



Betsy Noel, Wellness Coordinator

Advice about these issues, information about school rules and support if your child has been harmed



Information Services

Securing devices and technology safety advice

IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN EXPOSED

- **Your Child's Needs** - Every child processes what they see differently. Focus on how this is affecting *your* child's wellbeing.
- **How it Happened** - Your child may have encountered porn accidentally or intentionally. Both are typical behaviors, but require different kinds of support. For example, a child who came across it accidentally may need help understanding what they've seen. A child who sought it out may need help understanding why that is risky and problematic.
- **Remember What You *Don't* Know** - how it happened, how often, how your child feels, what questions your child might have, and what other information your child may already know or need to understand about pornography. Often, adults assume that children and young adults interpret information in the same way adults do, but children process their experiences through their developmental lens. This can mean that the child's understanding of a word or action may be more limited or incorrect. Encourage their questions, and it is okay to say you don't know the answer.

Your child may feel



CONFUSED



EMBARRASSED



CURIOUS



GROSSED OUT



ANNOYED



OVERWHELMED



EXCITED