

BUILDING Resilience

EQUIPPING OUR KIDS WITH THE SKILLS TO THRIVE ONLINE

The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) and Roblox are working together to help parents feel more confident **helping kids and teens navigate their online lives**. While much of what kids and teens will find online is safe, we do need to be aware of the risks and **learn to communicate with our children** about negative or unsafe experiences they may have online. Ultimately, the more we can help **build digital resilience skills** in our kids and teens, the safer they will be online.

While you might want to protect your child from seeing or hearing things online that you deem inappropriate or will upset them, this is an impossible task. **Creating an environment where open dialogue is not only respected but also expected is important**, especially as they get older. Let them know that they are safe talking to you.

The digital world might feel overwhelming, so **here are some important topics** to get you started.

Privacy

Privacy is a complicated issue, both online and in real life. Much of online life is built around advertising revenue that depends on accessing user data. Parents should know that there are rules in place to help protect that data for websites, apps, and online services that target children. For children under 13, there are protections that are outlined in the [Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule \(COPPA\)](#).

- **Help set your child up for success online by explaining basic guidelines about keeping personal information private, setting up private social media accounts, and understanding location settings.**
- **Parents should follow the privacy guidelines they set out for their children, and when those rules need to differ for adults in the house, make sure to explain why. For example, you might have a job where it's important that people can find you online.**

Remember: As your kids turn into teenagers, they will want privacy...from you. If you ask permission at an early age to share images and videos of your children, you set a foundation of trust. It can be hypocritical to spend time talking to kids and teens about keeping their information private but then turn around and share about them on social media. Show your kids and teens you value their privacy by treating it with respect.



Bad Actors

The internet is a big place, and just like in any community, there might be some people who don't have the best intentions. We know there are scammers, bullies, and strangers online, and it is helpful to be honest with young people about this reality.

➔ **Describe ways your kid or teen can be on the lookout for bad actors. For example, they should hesitate and get help before engaging with people who ask for personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, or credit card numbers. Remind them not to engage with those who bully or troll others.**

Remember: Try to teach your children about these risks without terrifying them. As parents, we want to empower kids and teens with the tools and confidence to take action when they come across a bad actor or bully. Find balance in how you talk about these topics so kids and teens understand the risks while still appreciating the positive and empowering sides of digital life.



Red Flags

Most young people experience situations online that might be difficult (e.g. feeling left out, a mean friend, jealousy, etc.) but don't cross the line into dangerous or life-threatening situations. However, we recognize the online world can have potential negative impacts on mental and physical health. These risks, though rare, can include radicalization or accessing extremist content, sexting, pornography, or even grooming or sexual exploitation.

Technology is getting better at finding and stopping these behaviors all the time, and kids and teens are being educated around these topics at school. As a parent, being alert to potential signals and taking action can help you and your family feel more in control. Red flags could include:

- ➔ **An uncharacteristic change in their behavior (e.g. from being secretive to a significant mood shift to depression and withdrawal)**
- ➔ **Talking about new online friends excessively, or distancing themselves from their usual peer group**
- ➔ **Showing an unhealthy interest in ideologies, religion, or expressing strong views against a particular community group based on faith, ethnic origin, gender, or other characteristics.**

Remember: If you are worried your child may be experiencing a serious online issue, talk with them. Young people are often worried about getting themselves, or others, in trouble. Assure them that your priority is keeping them safe. If you do suspect your child is at risk of, or experiencing harm, reach out to your school, local police or refer to the additional organizations shared below for further advice.

Online spaces provide so much for young people. **Empowering kids and teens to recognize risks and know how to manage them** is one of the best ways to avoid serious harm and **keep online communities safe and healthy.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: The following organizations have resources to help stay informed on online safety, including newsletters on relevant topics.

[Family Online Safety Institute](#)
[ConnectSafely](#)
[Internet Matters](#)

[Cyberbullying Research Center](#)
[Digital Wellness Lab](#)
[Common Sense Media](#)