

Empower Your Child To Make Smart Choices Online

Teaching children about online safety encourages them to make good choices, according to North Texas Daily. This is reassuring news for the 76% of parents who [worry about their child's safety](#) when using the internet. [While education is crucial](#), it's important not to forget about empowerment. When the two are done together, kids will be as safe as possible when browsing the net.

Be open to questions

One out of six parents say they never or hardly ever speak to their child about online safety. This encourages children not to talk about what they're seeing and doing online. The best thing you can do is be as open as possible about the internet and let your child know that they can openly talk to you. It's estimated that 20% of youths have seen unwanted sexual material online. They'll probably find this embarrassing. If you start a conversation about this topic, your child will feel more confident about asking open questions about this type of content. You can then guide them and help them to make appropriate decisions in the future.

Give a sense of responsibility

57% of teenagers say they've [made friends with people online](#). Your teen may not have done this, but someone in their friendship group is likely to have. Explain to your teen, that [chatting to strangers on the net](#) can lead to grooming. A great way to make them understand the seriousness of this is to ask them to look out for their friends. If a close friend has suddenly become distant or secretive, is constantly talking about

their new friend, is having mood swings, or is using inappropriate language all of sudden, they may be at risk. Tell your teen if they've ever worried about a friend for these reasons, to raise it with you. This will give them a sense of responsibility and will help to protect both them and their friends too.

Offer choices

One of the best ways to empower your child to be safer online is to offer them choices. For example, most social media sites have [a minimum age requirement of 13](#). When your child reaches this age, allow them to join only one social media site, but let them choose which one. Limiting the amount of time online is also a way to stay safe. Rather than telling your child they only have one hour online time after school, let your child choose when they use this hour.

Online safety is one of the most important things you can teach your child. But rather than preaching to them about it, persuade them to make the best decisions themselves.