

Parenting in the Age of Social Media

Resources for Parents and Schools

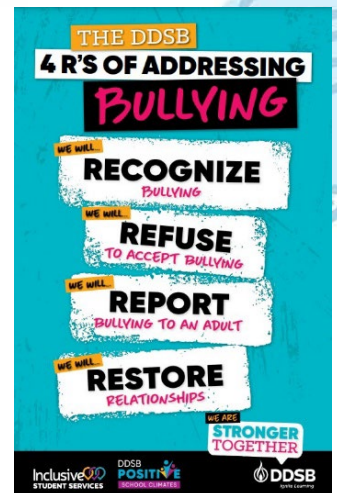
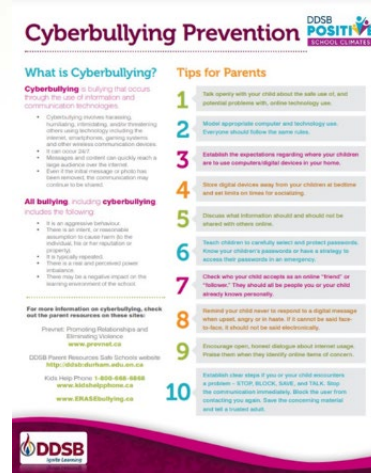
Don't be scared!

You hear a lot of scary stuff about kids and the internet, but the fact is that most kids do just fine. Think of the internet as being like a swimming pool: the best way to keep your kids safe there is to teach them how to stay safe.

Posters

Talk to your kids.

Don't wait until things have already gone wrong to talk to your kids about online issues, and don't just have one "big talk." What your kids need from you is guidance, so they're prepared to deal with problems before they happen, support from you when things do go wrong, and for you to reinforce these messages by continuing to talk to them as they get older and are more able to make decisions for themselves. The three main sections of this guide have lots of tips on how to talk about all of the major online issues. If you have older kids and haven't talked to them about the internet yet, don't worry: it's never too late to start!



Online Supports

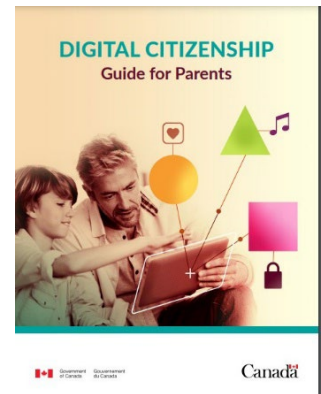
Be a part of your kids' media lives.



What your kids are watching, playing, reading and listening to is a big part of the person they're turning into, and their online lives can be just as important to them as the "real world." Younger kids are usually glad when their parents show an interest in the things they like, so get them to show you how their new favourite game works or why they're so excited about joining a new social network. You can also use media to talk about sensitive issues: kids may be more comfortable talking about sexting or bullying when you're discussing a character in a TV show than someone they know.

Be the person your kids come to when they have problems online.

A lot of the time, kids don't want to go to their parents when things go wrong because they're afraid they'll get in trouble. When your kids start going online make sure they know clear procedures on what to do if things go wrong, like if they can't figure out a game or they accidentally access something unpleasant. (Check out the "How do I talk about..." and "How do I ..." sections [Digital Citizenship Guide for Parents](#)) If they're in the habit of coming to you about the little things, they'll be a lot more likely to talk to you about the big ones.



Set rules and communicate values.

The internet may seem like the Wild West sometimes, but the rules you set still affect how kids behave online. What's most important is that your rules are a way of getting across the values you want your kids to live by, that way they'll keep living by them even when they're grown up and out on their own.

