Parent Tip Sheet: Protecting Your Child's Online Privacy

actua
Youth · STEM · Innovation
Jeunesse · STIM · Innovation

We teach kids not to talk to strangers in the park and we also need to teach them not to talk to strangers online either. Protecting their privacy helps shield them from bad actors who might try to trick or harm vulnerable youth, as well as from cyberbullying, misuse of their pictures, and identity theft. In today's digital world, safeguarding your child's online privacy is crucial. This guide breaks down online privacy in simple terms.

PRACTICAL PRIVACY TOOLS

PASSWORD PROTECTION

Kids need strong passwords to keep their accounts safe. Never use "1234" or their pet's name. **Encourage strong, unique passwords** (uppercase, lowercase, numbers, symbols), like **"$uperH#r0!"**.
Use password managers to keep passwords secure, like LastPass or Google Password Manager. Practice creating strong passwords with your child.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Built-in parental control features on digital devices can block inappropriate content and limit how much time kids spend online. **Search online for instructions on setting up parental controls**, as they differ depending on the type of device. Look up "parental controls" and your child's phone/tablet brand (like "parental controls iPhone").

LOCATION TRACKING

Location tracking shares where your child is. **Teach them not to share it with strangers** or on public posts.
Show them how to turn off location sharing in apps like Snapchat or games.

KEY INFORMATION TO KEEP PRIVATE

There is some personal information that we should avoid sharing online, including:

- Full name (especially with their address)
- Home address
- Phone number
- School name and location
- Birthdate (this can be used to steal identities!)
- Credit card or bank info
- Passwords (even with friends!)
- Anything that could help someone find them

TEACHING ONLINE PRIVACY

KEEP IT SIMPLE
Use words they understand and real-life examples:
"Just like we don't give our address and phone number to everyone, we don't share them online either."

"IF IT FEELS WEIRD, TELL ME"
Teach them to come to you if anything online makes them uncomfortable.

BE A ROLE MODEL
Demonstrate good online privacy practices. Show your children how you adjust privacy settings and how you're cautious about sharing your own personal information online.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adopt a positive and collaborative approach to online safety discussions. Fear-based methods can shut down communication and limit opportunities for learning and growth.

Empower your child to explore the digital world safely.

Online privacy is an ongoing journey that requires open communication.

Adapt your approach to your child's age and digital sophistication — the rules should change as they grow.

WEBSITES
WITH RESOURCES WE LIKE

MediaSmarts
mediasmarts.ca

Common Sense Media
commonsensemedia.org

Cybertip.ca
cybertip.ca

A critical part of engaging youth in technology is ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to be responsible and empowered online. Actua's Cyber Smart Education Project empowers youth to explore, create and connect responsibly online. Visit **actua.ca** for additional information and resources on keeping youth safe online.