

# Empowering families and communities

## Teacher Summary Sheet

### Online safety concerns of parents

eSafety research on [parenting and pornography](#)<sup>1</sup> shows the top concerns for parents about their children's safety online are:

- accessing/being exposed to content not appropriate for their age other than pornography (38%)
- contact with strangers/inappropriate invitations to meet offline (37%)
- being bullied online (34%)
- accessing/being exposed to pornography (33%)
- internet/online addiction (31%)

### Factors that can impact a young person's experience of online harm

The [Building resilience in children aged 0-12 practice guide](#)<sup>2</sup> describes factors that can impact a child's response to adversity. Factors within the child and their environment impact their experience. For example:

- Child – coping skills, self-regulation, self-confidence, social skills.
- Family – parenting, family relationships, family connectedness.
- Community – connections with peers, education, opportunities to take part in healthy risk-taking.
- Societal – policies, social and cultural values, legislation.

### Early years and technology use

#### Pre-school internet use

eSafety research on [digital parenting](#)<sup>3</sup> found that 81% of parents with pre-schoolers say their children use the internet.

#### Statement on young children and digital technologies

The Early Childhood Australia [Statement on young children and digital technologies](#),<sup>4</sup> provides advice on early technology use. For example, when young children use technology, try to focus on:

- Using technology to promote healthy social interaction between children, peers and adults.
- Modelling self-regulation strategies such as tech-free sleep spaces.
- Providing opportunities for turn-taking practice – the foundation of collaboration.

#### eSafety resources

The eSafety [iParent](#)<sup>5</sup> site has up-to-date resources for parents of pre-schoolers, including:

- eSafety guidance for parents of pre-schoolers
- Your child's first smartphone

## Managing screen time

### Managing screen time is a top concern for families

eSafety research on [managing screen time](#)<sup>6</sup> found most families with children aged 6-17 years, feel their children spend too much time online.

- families with kids (52%)
- families with teens (68%)

Parents use a variety of strategies to manage screen time, including:

- viewing what's on their child's screen
- observing the child
- monitoring the child's internet use
- using parental controls
- checking on them

### 10 conversation starters about managing screen time

Sonia Livingstone and Alicia Blum-Ross's blog post, [The trouble with 'screen time rules'](#),<sup>7</sup> advises parents to consider the overall health of their child rather than simply monitoring device use.

Encourage students to reflect on the impact of screen time on their lives. Classroom discussion starters include:

1. What's your favourite thing to do online at the moment?
2. What do you get out of your time online?
3. What hobbies make you happy at the moment?
4. What's the best thing about connecting with your friends – online or in person?
5. Do you think it's a good idea to use apps or device features to help you switch off from technology at night?
6. What are some of positive/negative impacts of spending a lot of time online?
7. Do you feel like you are getting enough sleep?
8. Are you enjoying your time at school or do you find yourself getting distracted?
9. What's your favourite way to get moving?
10. How can we use technology to spend more time together?

### Tools for managing screen time

Devices or apps with screen time management features can help families make decisions about technology use. Some of the most popular tools in this category include:

- [Apple Screen Time](#)<sup>8</sup>
- [Android Digital Wellbeing](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Google FamilyLink](#)<sup>10</sup>

## Starting conversations about managing screen time in families

Create events and opportunities for families to share their experiences managing screen time. These could include:

- Organising a student/parent forum or homework task to discuss the results of the [eSafety Screen Smart Parent Tour](#)<sup>11</sup>.
- Sharing screen time management tips in your newsletter or on social media. The Screen Smart parent tour includes tips that may be useful.

## Online pornography

### Online pornography education

eSafety research on [parenting and pornography](#)<sup>12</sup> shows that 77% of families with children between 6 and 17, consider it their responsibility to educate them about pornography.

### How parents reacted to finding out their child had been exposed to pornography

- spoke to them frankly (61%)
- increased monitoring/supervision of what they do online (19%)
- installed internet filters (20%)
- talked to the person who sent/showed them the material (19%)

While half of parents told us they know where to access parental information and resources about children and pornography, a quarter of the parents surveyed do not.

### eSafety resources

The eSafety iParent site offers clear guidance for families about how to discuss [online pornography](#)<sup>13</sup> with children of different ages:

- 0-8 years: if they have seen it, avoid punishing them.
- 8-12 years: build trust and start an ongoing conversation.
- 12 years and above: start to talk about thoughts they may be having and the difference between pornography and real life.

Further advice on [talking to young people about pornography](#)<sup>14</sup> can be found on the [Raising Children Network](#)<sup>15</sup> site.

## Other family and community engagement strategies

### Keeping families and communities informed

Schools can communicate about online safety policies and procedures to families by:

- Sharing how the school deals with online safety issues e.g. cyberbullying or accessing inappropriate content at school.
- Providing information about support services available to families such as, [KidsHelpline](#)<sup>15</sup> and [Parentline](#)<sup>16</sup>.

## Community online safety campaigns

Holding special days and events can raise awareness of online safety in your wider community. Examples may include:

- Hosting a [Safer Internet Day](#)<sup>17</sup> event.
- Promoting online safety through a social media campaign.
- Organising a school movie night to show an age-appropriate documentary.

## Family and community feedback

Ask young people, families and members of the community to offer opinions and ideas about online safety. For example:

- [Donna Cross](#)<sup>18</sup> suggests a whiteboard or feedback wall in the school foyer for students and families to comment on online safety issues as they come up.
- Survey students and parents to keep in touch with the most relevant online safety issues in your school community.

## References

<sup>1</sup>The Office of the eSafety Commissioner. (2018). Parenting and pornography. Retrieved from [esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library](https://esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library)

<sup>2</sup>Beyond Blue Ltd. (2017). Retrieved from [beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/children/building-resilience-in-children-aged-0-12](https://beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/children/building-resilience-in-children-aged-0-12)

<sup>3</sup>The Office of the eSafety Commissioner. (2018). State of play – youth, kids and digital dangers. Retrieved from [esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library](https://esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library)

<sup>4</sup>Early Childhood Australia (ECA). (2018). Statement on young children and digital technologies. Canberra, ACT: ECA. [dx.doi.org/10.23965/ECA.001](https://dx.doi.org/10.23965/ECA.001)

<sup>5</sup>[esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent](https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent)

<sup>6</sup>The Office of the eSafety Commissioner. (2018). Managing screen time. Retrieved from [esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library/digital-parenting-managing-screen-time](https://esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library/digital-parenting-managing-screen-time)

<sup>7</sup>[blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2017/06/08/the-trouble-with-screen-time-rules/](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2017/06/08/the-trouble-with-screen-time-rules/)

<sup>8</sup>[support.apple.com/en-au/HT208982](https://support.apple.com/en-au/HT208982)

<sup>9</sup>[wellbeing.google/](https://wellbeing.google/)

<sup>10</sup>[families.google.com/familylink/](https://families.google.com/familylink/)

<sup>11</sup>[esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/screen-smart-tour](https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/screen-smart-tour)

<sup>12</sup>The Office of the eSafety Commissioner. (2018). Parenting and pornography. Retrieved from [esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library](https://esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library)

<sup>13</sup>[esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/online-risks/online-pornography](https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/online-risks/online-pornography)

<sup>14</sup>[raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology/pornography-sexting/pornography-talking-with-teens](https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology/pornography-sexting/pornography-talking-with-teens)

<sup>15</sup>[kidshelpline.com.au/](https://kidshelpline.com.au/)

<sup>16</sup>[parentline.com.au/about](https://parentline.com.au/about)

<sup>17</sup>[esafety.gov.au/saferinternetday](https://esafety.gov.au/saferinternetday)

<sup>18</sup>[friendlyschools.com.au/cyberstrong](https://friendlyschools.com.au/cyberstrong)