Australian Government | eSafetyCommissioner

Research about young people with disability using the internet

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www.esafety.gov.au

About our research

eSafety did **research** about how young people with disability use the internet.

eSafety helps people be safe online when they use the internet.

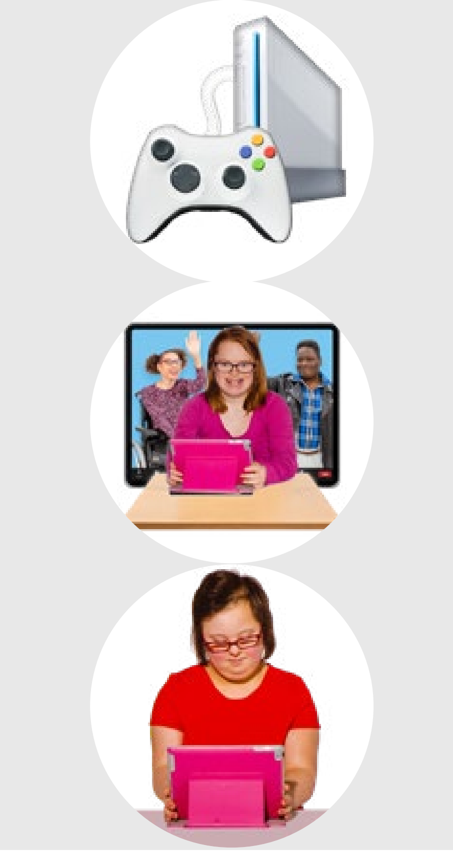
Research is when we look into something to find out more about it.

This information says what we found out in our research.

Why we did the research

We did this research to help young people with disability be safe online.

We know young people with disability spend lots of time online.



They do things online like

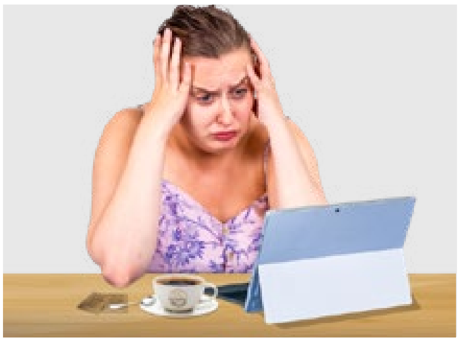
- Playing games

- Talking to friends and family

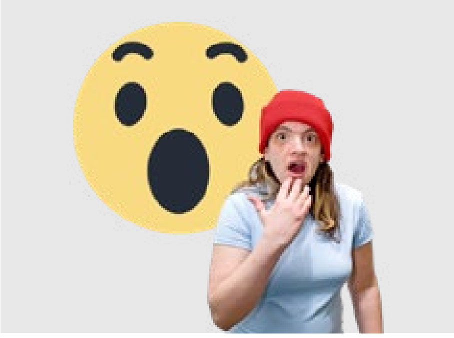
- Looking for information.

We know they spend more time online than young people who do not have disability.

Many young people with disability feel they can be more themselves when they are online.

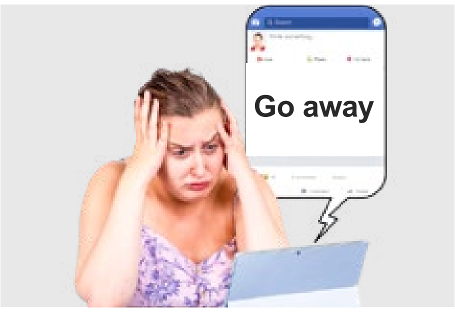


We also know that bad things can happen online to young people with disability.



They might see things online that they are not old enough to see.

Another bad thing that can happen is **cyberbullying**.



Cyberbulling is when people are very mean to you online.

Our research looked into

- How young people with disability feel when they use the internet
- What they like about being online
- What bad things can happen to them online
- How they feel when bad things happen to them online.

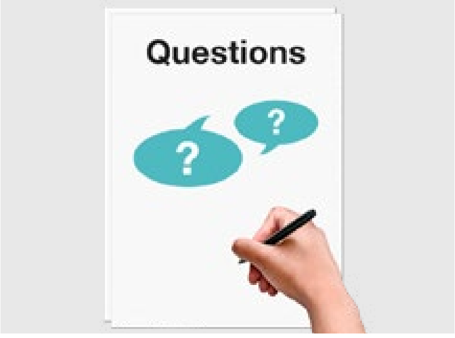
We also looked into how parents feel about their child with disability being online.

We will use what we found to make new programs for young people with disability.

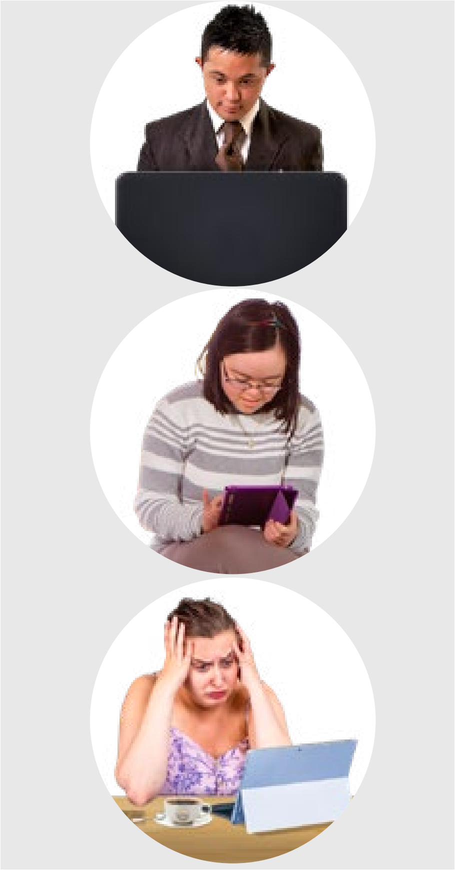
The programs will be about how to stay safe online.

How we did the research

To do this research we did an online **survey**.



A **survey** is a list of questions.



The survey asked things like

- How young people with disability get on the internet

- What they do online

- If any bad things have happened to them online.

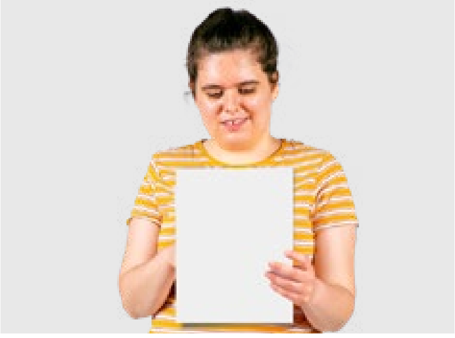
The online survey was for

- Young people with disability

- Parents and **caregivers** of young people with disability.

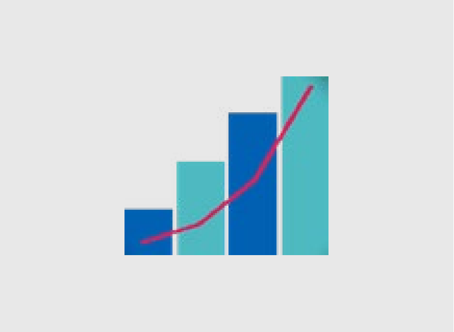
A **caregiver** is someone who looks after another person.

Many of the young people who did the survey had a **learning disability**.



Learning disability means it is about how you do things like read and write.

Things that made the research hard

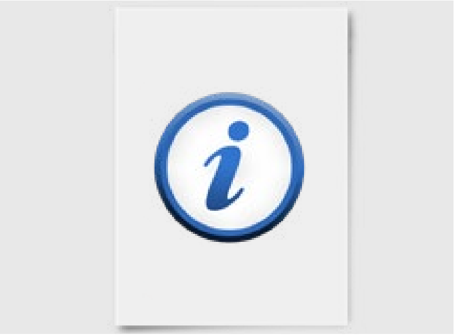


There were some things that were hard when we did the research.

We did not ask if the young people were told by a doctor that they have a disability.

We only asked the parents and caregivers

- If their child has a disability
- What kind of disability they have.



That means we did not get all the information about the disability of the young person.

Some parents might not know if their child has a **mental health** disability.

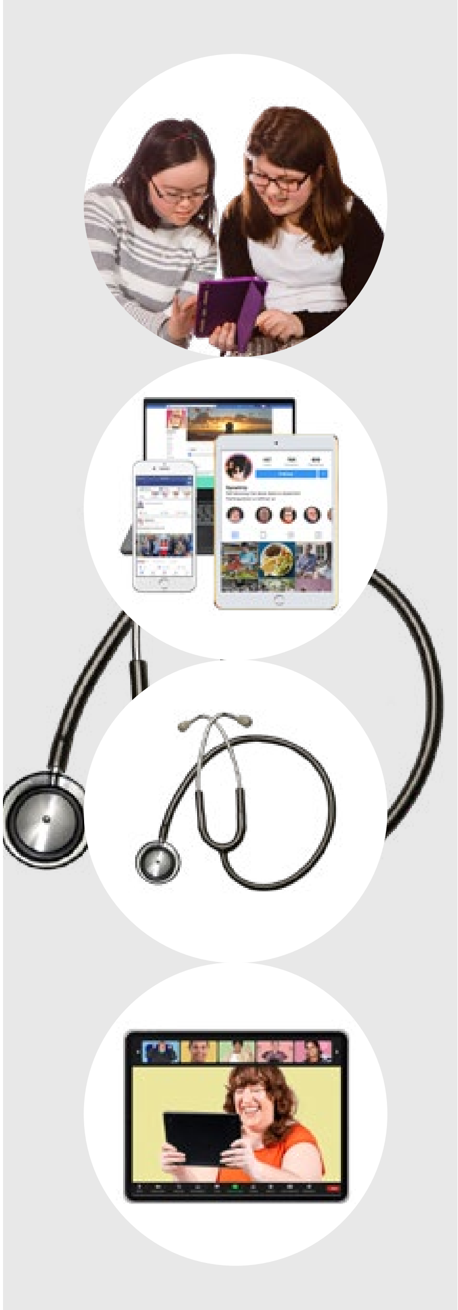
Mental health means how you think and feel.

Many young people with disability did the survey with a parent in the same room.

They might have said some things in the survey just because their parents were there.

What we found out

We found out that lots of young people with disability like to do things online.



It is where they can

- Have fun
- Make new friends
- Get information about things like health
- Get support from others.

Many young people with disability use **social media**.

Social media are websites you can use to chat with people.

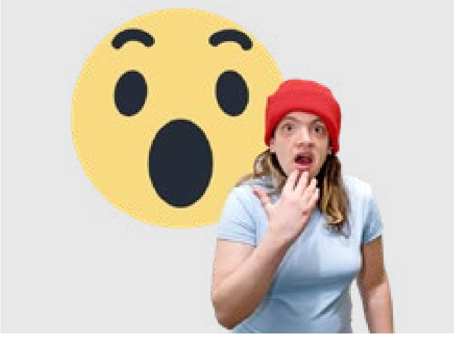
This might be Instagram and Snapchat.

Social media is a good way for many young people to share ideas with others.

Many young people with disability feel they can be who they are on social media.

Social media helps them feel

- Good about themselves
- Part of the community.



When bad things happen to them online they often sort it out in a quick and good way.

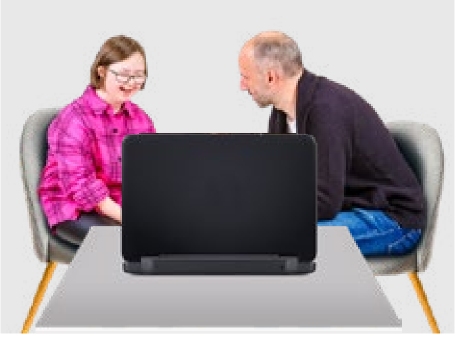
They might

- Block or unfriend the person
- Tell someone they trust
- Delete what the person sent them.

Many parents and caregivers support their child to feel better if something bad happens online.

What parents and caregivers do to keep their children safe online

Parents and caregivers have ways to help keep their children safe online.



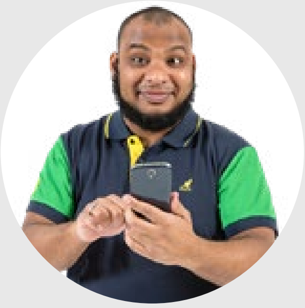
Many parents and caregivers will talk to their child about how to be safe online.

Many parents and caregivers have rules for when their child is online.

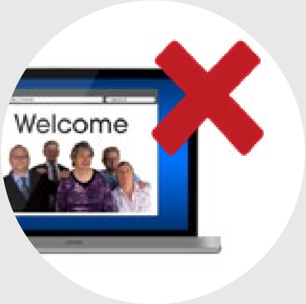
These might be rules like

- Which websites their child can use
- How long their child can be online.

Many parents and caregivers use tools like software to



- Check what their child does online



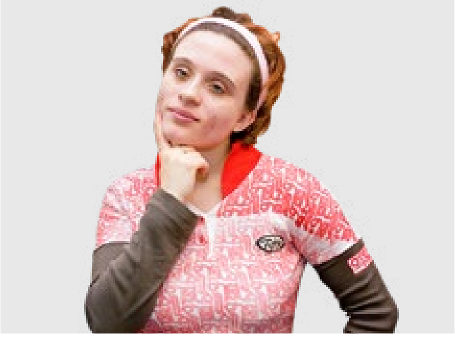
- Block some websites so that their child can not use them

- Block some of the people that want to be friends with their child

- Have time rules.

What we can learn from the research

Our research found that some young people with disability spend a lot of time online.

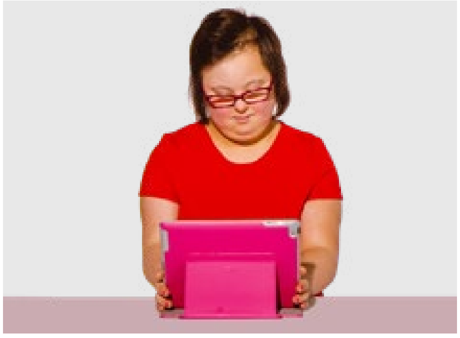


This can be bad for their health and mental health.

They might

- Skip meals
- Have trouble sleeping
- Get into fights with their family.

We learned things from our research that can help young people with disability and their families.



Young people with disability should learn more skills to plan how much time they are online.

Families need to talk more about how to be safe online.

Families should set rules that are easy to follow for everyone in the family.

Parents and caregivers need to use their different ways of checking their child online more.

This might be checking

- What the child does online

- How much time the child spends online

- Which websites the child uses.

More information

You can contact eSafety for more information about this research.

You can

- Send an email to **enquiries@esafety.gov.au**

- Go to their website at **www.esafety.gov.au/research**

You can call a free support service if something in this research made you feel sad.

The **Kids Help Line** supports young people from 5 to 25 years old.

You can call them on **1800 551 800**.

13Yarn supports young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

You can call them on **13 92 76**.