

# Social Media Safety Checklist

FOR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & TEENS

Prevention that works goes beyond rules. Regular conversations, skill-building, and emotional regulation are what keep young people safe - not fear-based messaging.



## Know the risks

### Online Enticement & Grooming

Offenders build rapport through compliments and gifts, then ask kids to move to private apps. Most often someone known to the child.

### Sextortion

Demands more images or money by threatening to share content. Financial sextortion rose 70% in 2025.

It is **never** the child's fault.

### AI-Generated Imagery

Apps create fake explicit images from ordinary photos. Creating or sharing this is illegal - even among peers.

### Youth-Produced Content

"Don't ask for it and don't share it" is more effective than "don't send." Start these conversations before early!

## Privacy & Account Settings

- Set **all** accounts to private (Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, gaming)
- Location services off** on all social media and non-essential apps
- Profile has no full name, school, age, or home location
- Only accept requests from people known in real life
- Two-factor authentication enabled; new apps require parent review

## What We Post & Share

- No photos with home address, school logo, or license plates
- No real-time check-ins or location **tags**
- Data permanency:** disappearing content can still be shared and saved.
- Don't request, share, or forward intimate images of others

**See back for conversation starters, action steps & resources**

# Talk. Practice. Protect.

CONVERSATION STARTERS & NEXT STEPS

## Skills-Based Conversation Starters

### Problem-Solving

- What would you do if someone asked you for an intimate image?
- Who could you go to for help?

### Emotional Regulation

- If something online upset you, what would help you calm down?
- How would it feel if this happened to a friend?

### Assertiveness

- What would you say if a friend pressured you to forward an image?
- What does a secret request feel like?

## “If Something Goes Wrong” Action Ladder

### LOW BARRIER

#### Ignore it.

Walk away from the conversation.  
Always valid and often the right first step.

### NEXT STEP

#### Report to the platform.

Flag the content anonymously.  
Every platform has a report tool.

### BRAVERY STEP

#### Tell a trusted adult.

You are never in trouble for telling —  
even if you made a mistake.

## Caregiver Reminders

- Ask your child to **show you how platforms work** — genuine interest builds trust
- Say: "You will never be in trouble for coming to me — no matter what happened online."
- If something goes wrong: **stay calm, preserve evidence, do not investigate**
- Limit, don't remove access** — removal isolates kids from support

## Resources

### NCMEC CyberTipline

Report online exploitation  
CyberTipline.org  
1-800-843-5678

### Take It Down

(no account needed)

Free image removal for minors  
TakeltDown.NCMEC.org

### DHS Know2Protect

1-833-591-KNOW  
Know2Protect.gov

### Thorn for Parents

Age-based conversation guides  
thorn.org/parents