

Protecting our Children



#IAmOnWatch  
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# THE HARD TRUTH



1 in 9 girls and 1 in 53 boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault at the hands of an adult (RAINN). Child sex trafficking is the continuum of sexual violence against children in America. At its simplest, child sex trafficking is the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, including child pornography.

In 2018 the United States was named one of the top 3 nations in the world by the Department of State. Sex trafficking is a \$99 Billion industry. Traffickers in America can make \$250K annually selling a child. Health & Human Services estimated that 300K American children were being sold for commercial sex in the United States, but less than 3K (or 1%) were ever identified as survivors of child sex trafficking.

You have the opportunity to help be part of the solution to eradicate child sex trafficking in America by helping protect yourself, your children, and your community. The following document will provide you with some simple ways to help strengthen your child's sense of self, and address a hard issue in an age appropriate manner.

Together, we can be OnWatch to end trafficking in America.

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# AGE 3 TO 5

## MY BODY &

### SAFE TOUCH

Most child sexual abuse cases and child trafficking cases involve someone the child trusts. Sexual predators establish a trust relationship with a child long before they start to abuse the child.

#### TOPICS

- Teach your child anatomically correct terms for their body parts. Make sure that they understand that their "private parts" are meant just for them.
- "Safe" & "Unsafe" Touching - An easy way to explain this is through the bathing suit example. "No one should touch you anywhere your bathing suit covers. No one should ask you to touch them somewhere that their bathing suit covers. No one should show you a part of his/her or someone else's bodies that their bathing suit covers." Remind your child that this includes other children, not just adults.
- At this age a child is going to learn more from what you are doing than a conversation. Don't just tell them boundaries, show them boundaries. For instance, when and when it isn't appropriate to climb into someone's lap.

#### ACTIVITY

- With your child, come up with a list of 5 people who they can trust and can talk to if they feel uncomfortable. Often, sexual predators will tell the child they cannot tell their parents, so making sure your child knows other safe people in whom they can confide in.



# AGE 6 TO 9 BOUNDARIES & CONSENT



Majority of child sex trafficking survivors experience child sexual abuse between the age of 6 to 9 years old. Children who experience sexual abuse often struggle with boundaries, emotional outbursts, and disconnecting from their environment. Here are a few ways to strengthen your child's understanding of boundaries and of consent.

## TOPICS

- Personal Boundaries - Children should choose who they allow into their personal space. A child should not be required to hug individuals, but can respectfully shake someone's hand instead.
- Respecting Other Person's Personal Boundaries - Teach your child to ask permission before moving into someone's personal space. Stress that they need to respect another child's "no" when they do not want to be touched.
- Encourage open dialogue and expression of emotions when they feel uncomfortable. Remind them that it is okay to follow their instincts.
- Address "unsafe secrets" vs. "fun surprises", so your child understands when they need to ask for help.

## ACTIVITIES

- With your child define their "safety network", usually 3 to 5 people. These are people that they can go to whenever they are in trouble. List those people's names and phone numbers on the refrigerator or in a place where they can access them in an emergency.
- Write a series of different types of secrets on pieces of paper. Have your child draw them out of a hat, ask them if it is a "unsafe secret" or "fun surprise", and then discuss why.
- Have your child stand in a "power stance" and practice saying "no" or "I do not like that". This not only helps them protect themselves from sexual abuse, but also from bullying.
- Have an age appropriate "sex talk" when your child starts to ask questions.

# AGE 10 TO 13

## OPEN COMMUNICATION



The average age of entry into the commercial sex market is 12 years old. From the age of 10 to 13, kids go through a lot of changes, and parents need to work to keep the lines of communication open and have the hard conversations to keep their kids safe.

### TOPICS

- A full "Sex Talk" should be addressed by age 10 because most children are starting to be exposed to it through social media, television, or by friends. Make sure that you have an open, honest conversation with your child.
- Reiterate the importance of consent.
- Talk frankly about the dangers in sharing nude or sexually explicit photos of themselves.
- Talk about how sexual predators might approach them on social media, at the mall, or even at school.
- Discuss the dangers of pornography and how your child should respond when they see something that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### ACTIVITIES

- Store safe numbers in your child's phone, the 3 to 5 people they can call for any emergency.
- Create and discuss a device policy with your child, and then sign it together.
- Figure out where your pre-teen is comfortable opening up to you (ex. on a walk, driving to school, etc.) and carve out intentional time with your kid--let them talk and you listen.

# AGE 14 TO 18

## SENSE OF SELF

By the time your child is in high school, they are navigating the challenges of sex, consent, pornography, and life in the digital age. Now, it is important to help them strengthen their sense of self before they graduate high school. You want to empower them to make the best choices that they can for themselves.

### TOPICS

- Gradually remove restrictions on devices, so your teen can learn to be responsible for their own actions. Help them understand the importance of trust.
- Every one of us is leading a complicated life filled with twists and turns. When we know who we are and what we stand for, we are better-prepared to exceed our own expectations and thrive. Help your child define their inner voice.

### ACTIVITIES

- Talk to your child about their motives for doing different activities. Knowledge is power, ask them:
  - How frequently are you saying yes to things that are of little interest to you or things that you really don't want to do?
  - How often are you saying no to things that distract you from achieving your goals or keep you comfortable instead of challenging you to grow?
  - Are you surrounding yourself with peers, teammates, and friends who support you in doing your best or those who may be supporting you in playing small?
  - Are your choices based on what is best for you or on what others may think of you?
- Download eBodyGuard to your teen's phone. It is the ONLY app that is voice activated, has GPS location, and can record evidence that is admissible in court.



# DIGITAL AGE ALL THE THINGS

We live in a wonderful digital age where information, games, and communication with family and friends is at our fingertips. However, that also means that we can allow traffickers and predators to come into our home without ever entering our front door through some of the same tools. There is an ever increasing trend of traffickers grooming kids online through social media apps and gaming chat rooms.

Monitoring your child's devices becomes complex since dozens of new apps are also introduced daily, and the "popular" app among our kids and their peers changes frequently. Additionally, many youth have real and "fake" (for example, RINSTA - real instagram and FINSTA - fake instagram) accounts in the same app - where the child develops two personas and allows the parent to follow the one that presents the more appropriate content. For these reasons, it is important to set expectations with your kids about app safety, while also deploying what we have found to be the best internet safety tools available. Here are some conversation topics and next steps we recommend.

## TOPICS

- The new "stranger danger" - meeting new friends online who may be predators
- Safe and Unsafe information to share with digital friends
- Sexting and Sextortion (see page 9)
- What does your Instagram say about you?

## ACTIVITIES

- Restrict app downloads. Set expectations with your child that new apps can be downloaded once you all have discussed its pros and cons, and decided together usage limitations.
- "Friend or Follow" your child's social media accounts (RINSTA and FINSTA).
- Link your child's device to your app store account or register for the app with your email, so you'll be notified when an app is downloaded and of other updates.
- Set Boundaries for what personal information is shared online.
- Download Bark to all kids devices to provide screening of App usage and content with parental reporting upon suspicious behavior.

# DIGITAL AGE INTERNET USAGE



The internet is a great place! It can also be a scary and unsafe place for those who do not know or have boundaries. A foundation of protecting your kids against traffickers today involves setting healthy boundaries in digital spaces; therefore, it is wise to create an action plan with your kids to promote safer interactions online, healthy internet and device habits, & mental wellbeing.

We encourage you to agree to follow the standards together.

You can help your kids determine a standard of internet use for themselves by walking through the following questions together:

- Describe when/where throughout the day you typically use a computer or phone to access websites/social media apps (e.g., at home, during school hours, on the way to school, etc.).
- Where are Internet-enabled devices you use (computers, laptops, tablets, gaming consoles, electronic books) located (e.g., home, school, etc.)?
- What types of websites/apps are you allowed to/should you access both in and outside of the home?
- What are responsible ways you can use social media (e.g., Instagram, snapchat, etc.)?
- What restrictions can we agree on for how you access the Internet/apps on your phone?
- Can a cell phone be used to access the internet at all times? If so what restrictions are on this?

## ACTIVITY

- Download and sign the Internet Safety Agreement.

# DIGITAL AGE ALL THE THINGS

Today most kids have constant access to a camera and a phone. These aren't bad things. They allow us to stay connected. However, connectivity can also cause us to think some things are ok because they are in a digital space and not "in person". Because of this, it is important to talk to your kids about what kinds of pictures they should and shouldn't take or share.

According to a recently survey, 21% of teen girls and 18% of teen boys have sent/posted nude or semi-nude images of themselves (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2013). Sexting, or sending and receiving nude or partially-nude pics, is woven throughout our culture and our kids are facing it more than we know. It is important that we help them understand the possible consequences when a picture is sent to one person but can end up passed around a school or a friend group. Those consequences can have a lasting impact that include bullying, humiliation, expulsion from school or even a felony for production and distribution of child pornography or sextortion.

Sextortion can look many ways, but at its core, it is the threat to expose sexual images in order to force someone to do something. Threats come from intimate partners or strangers met online attempting to harass, embarrass, and control victims. One in Four victims was threatened before the age of 13 and Two of Three victims was threatened before the age of 16. It is critical that we help our kids understand the risks of sexting that can lead to vulnerabilities and sextortion.

Here are some topics to discuss with your kids. Remember, it is important to problem solve with your child and provide a way for escape if they have found themselves in a compromising situation.

## TOPICS

- Sexting to Sextortion - how they could be vulnerable
- Appropriate and inappropriate images to share
- Here are some questions they can ask themselves before they send a picture:
  - Is this something I would do face-to-face?
  - Would I be okay with this photo being posted in my school's hallway?
  - Would I want someone to ask me for the same thing?
- Action plan-agree on action steps they can take if they are in an uncomfortable situation (tip: Establish a safety network of people who they can ask for help)

# AGREEMENT DEVICE CONTRACT

1. I will only use the apps that we have agreed upon, allow my parent's access to my accounts, and only access agreed upon content.
2. I will alert my parents if a stranger messages me inappropriate content.
3. I will not give out personal information (address, phone, name of my school) without my parents' permission.
4. I will not share my username and passwords with anyone, but my parents.
5. I will be respectful of other people online, including their privacy and personal property.
6. I will not post content that could hurt someone else's feelings or reputation.
7. I will not meet anyone in person without first discussing it with my parents, and we will decide together if it is appropriate.
8. I won't send or post inappropriate photos, even over text message, to friends or strangers.
9. If someone makes me feel uncomfortable or does something that could put me or someone else in danger, I will go directly to my parent or a trusted adult.
10. I will be allowed to spend \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours on a device each day. When I go to bed my devices need to be placed \_\_\_\_\_.

I agree to the above \_\_\_\_\_ (Child's Signature)

I will help my child follow this agreement and will allow reasonable use of the devices as long as these rules and other family rules are followed.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent's Signature)