

PRESS RELEASE

Two thirds of parents don't talk to their children about online safety issues including porn, extremism and fake news – and they don't follow their own rules on screen time

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As technology advances, we are all entering an unknown digital future.

Parent Zone, the country's leading online parenting organisation, decided to investigate how the first generation of digital parents have been doing at keeping their families safe online – by asking their children.

How does the next generation think the previous one is handling issues like sexting, sharenting and online abuse in its many forms? Are the online rules they set their children being practised by the adults enforcing them?

We spoke to 1000 young people aged between 12 and 16 around the UK. [Their answers](#) offer a fascinating insight into how they live their lives online – and how their parents react to it.

'They think we don't notice but we do. They use it more than me'

Over 60% of parents (60.3%) set screen time rules but nearly two thirds of children say their parents don't follow their own rules.

And over a third of respondents said they thought their parents had let them use social media too young.

'They try to track me so I use fake accounts so I can have some privacy'

71.3% of respondents think their parents don't respect their privacy online, with nearly 30% of parents checking their child's devices (29%) and a similar number (28.8%) reading their texts.

'I'd like them to talk to me but they seem embarrassed'

When we asked whether they thought their parents were doing a good job talking about difficult subjects they might come across online (violence, porn or sexualised images, political or religious extremism, sexism, fake news or cyberbullying) 66.3% said their parents don't talk about those things.

'My dad tried to tell me about porn. It was a joke. Don't think he's seen porn, he kept talking about mucky magazines. Tragic'

Only 1.9% of respondents thought their parents had done a good job talking to them about online porn or sexualised images.

Following the research, Parent Zone offers these 5 tips to help the first generation of digital parents raise digitally resilient children.

1) Show an interest in your children's online lives, but don't pry.

Giving your child space is not the same as being disinterested. It's fine to ask questions about who they are spending time with online, but how would you have felt if your own mum or dad had listened in on your phone calls to your friend or read your diaries?

2) Get to know the apps and services they use.

Understanding the appeal of live streaming or Snapchat streaks will make your child more likely to come to you if they have a problem. **Parent Info** is a free online service for parents, produced by digital parenting experts, Parent Zone, and CEOP, the child protection command of the National Crime agency. It offers expert content and advice via schools' own websites, including regularly updated guides for parents to the apps and services children and young people love.

3) Learn to talk about difficult subjects in a way both you and your child feel comfortable with.

This has never been easy as a parent, but there are ways to avoid those embarrassing chats. Talking doesn't just happen face to face – if your child spends their time staring at the phone screen, use it to start conversations or share advice and information.

4) Lead by example. No more 'do as I say, not what I do.'

Our study shows the vast majority of children still care what their parents think, and look to them as role models.

5) Give children freedom to explore – but provide boundaries and a safety blanket should things go wrong.

No parent wants to put their child at risk deliberately, but if children never take risks, and if they never encounter challenging situations, they will never learn to cope with them when you're not around to protect them.

To find out more about how to help children and young people in the digital world or to sign up your school for the free newsfeed service, go to www.Parentinfo.org.uk.

About Parent Zone

Parent Zone is the leading organisation supporting parents in the digital age. Our founder and CEO Vicki Shotbolt is the official parents' representative on the government body, the UK Council For Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS). Parent Zone works with parents, schools and companies to make the internet work for families by offering expert advice and content.

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