



How can my child engage with others online positively and respectfully?

Navigating the digital world isn't always easy. Parents have a unique role in helping their children have positive online experiences. This fact sheet offers practical information about what respectful digital interactions may look like and why they matter for your child's well-being.

SENSE OF BELONGING

- Positive social media interactions—like friendly messages or emotional support—are linked to higher life satisfaction and emotional well-being.¹¹
- Engaging in shared online experiences (peer discussions or group chats) helps kids feel seen and included.⁷

**Receiving kindness :
Why are positive online experiences important for my child?**

SELF-ESTEEM AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Receiving likes, compliments, or supportive messages online can help kids feel valued. These small moments build confidence, reduce loneliness, and increase feelings of connection.¹⁰
- Positive digital interactions also spark curiosity, resilience, and social engagement.

WAYS TO CONNECT

- Chatting with friends online strengthens existing relationships and improves well-being.³
- Having a mix of familiar and new connections is linked to greater happiness and less loneliness.⁴

HELPS CHILDREN FEEL CONNECTED

When children treat each other with kindness, they're more likely to build real friendships and feel a sense of belonging.³ This makes them want to come back and stay involved.

CREATES POSITIVE COMMUNICATION HABITS

When children learn to share experiences, ask friendly questions, and respond with care, they're practicing how to build healthy relationships online—habits that will carry into later digital experiences.⁸

KEEPS THE SPACE SAFE AND WELCOMING

Respectful behaviour sets the tone for how everyone acts. When children are kind and follow shared rules, the community stays supportive and focused—and avoids bullying or negativity.^{6,8}

STRENGTHENS GROUPS OVER TIME

Being positive and respectful helps create a long-lasting online space where children enjoy spending time. This keeps the community active and supportive.⁸

BUILDS TRUST

When youth feel respected, they're more comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.⁸ This makes the group stronger and encourages others to take part too.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Parental guidance on being kind online can positively impact children by helping them show more empathy, express encouragement, share in others' joy, offer support, and write more thoughtful messages. Guidance around tone, kindness, and inclusion also sets the standard for creating a safe online space.



What does being respectful and kind look like online?

Kids don't always know what respectful behavior looks like online. This page offers tips you can share with your child — using simple, everyday examples of empathy, inclusion, and handling disagreements — to help them practice kindness and build safer, healthier digital habits.



Show empathy

Consider how others might feel when they read your words. Offer support or encouragement if someone seems upset, left out, or unsure.^{1,2}

Pause before posting

Take a moment to ask yourself: Is it kind? Is it true? Is it necessary? Would I say this to someone's face?¹

Respect privacy and consent

Never share someone else's photos, videos, or personal information without their clear permission.^{1,2}

Use respectful language

Be polite and avoid insults, slurs, or teasing. Even jokes can be hurtful—make sure your words are kind and inclusive.¹

Think about your tone

Online messages can be misunderstood. Avoid using ALL CAPS or sarcasm, and be clear about your intentions.¹

Be inclusive

Make sure everyone feels welcome. Avoid inside jokes that exclude others, and celebrate different backgrounds and perspectives.¹

Report harmful behavior

If you see bullying, hate speech, or inappropriate content, report it instead of ignoring or joining in.¹ Click [here](#) to see more ways your child can respond to bullies in our youth infographic.



Disagree respectfully

It's okay to have different opinions—but be calm, curious, and kind. Listen first, and never attack the person.¹

Think long-term

Everything you post becomes part of your digital footprint. Make sure it reflects who you want to be—now and in the future.¹

Lead by example

Kindness online starts with you. When you act respectfully, others are more likely to follow your lead.^{1,5}