iKEEPSAFE

PARENT TIPS

for Encouraging Healthy Content Choices

Create a healthy content environment in your home.
Written in collaboration with Dr. Megan Maas.

The most important tip for fostering healthy relationships with technology in the household is to establish yourself as a trusted and supportive listener. We are all able to help youth develop the resilience and skills to navigate the digital environment successfully, despite the social, psychological, and physiological challenges brought up by the violent and sexualized content freely accessible and highly visible to youth online.

Top 10 tips for encouraging healthy content choices:
1. Be a trusted and supportive listener.
2. Implement and continuously reinforce the ACT acronym (Alert, Close, Tell) as a family rule.
3. When you learn a child is interacting with harmful content, take time to collect yourself and avoid reacting negatively or with heightened emotion.
4. Reaffirm your child's decision to tell you when they see unhealthy content: "Good job telling me. I know this takes courage and you have made a wise choice. Please tell me if something like this happens again."
5. Avoid punitive punishments that may discourage youth from coming to you for help or to report a traumatic experience.
6. Monitor young children's digital activity and slowly increase online autonomy with age.
7. Start early with education about the sexualized and violent digital content they will stumble upon.
8. Prepare youth for seeing sexualized content online by educating them about sexual health from an early age.
9. Teach youth that nothing online is private. Allow use of digital devices only in public, family spaces – not private bedrooms.
10. Ask your child about their friends' exposure to sexualized and violent content. Doing so will demonstrate that you can talk about these topics calmly, and will open the door for future discussions.