Every online safety conversation matters

The internet connects us with the world, including family and friends locally and overseas, through messages, live video chat and even playing online games. Being online can be positive and fun and help children and young people learn and connect with others. But sometimes it can expose children and young people to risks.

Together we can help keep all children and young people safe. This advice sheet helps families learn more about online child exploitation and how to get help and support.

The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) and the Australian Federal Police-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation have developed conversation starters to help you talk with your child to keep them safe from harm.

What is online child exploitation?

Online child exploitation is the use of technology or the internet to abuse a child, and to create and share child abuse material online. This type of abuse is a real and growing challenge.

Children or young people can be tricked or blackmailed into sending photos or videos of themselves with no clothes on. When children or young people are blackmailed for money or for more photos or videos with no clothes on, this is called 'sexual extortion'.
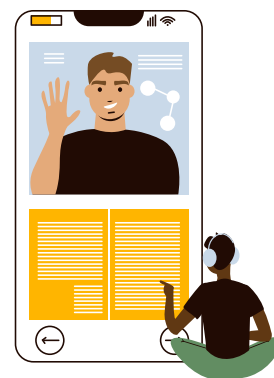
CASE STUDY

A 15-year-old male joined a video call on a messaging app from someone they thought was a person their own age. The boy was tricked into sending images of himself with no clothes on, and the other person started to blackmail the boy for money, threatening to share the images with his family.

Source: Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation

Experiencing online child exploitation can impact a child and young person's mental health and wellbeing, now and in the future. So, it's important that all children and young people know that if it happens to them, it's not their fault and they can get help and support.

What is online grooming?

Online grooming is when an adult makes contact online with someone under the age of 16 with the intention of abusing them. The offence happens when the offender is talking to the child or young person, so no physical contact needs to occur for police to step in and investigate.

CASE STUDY

A 13-year-old female was playing an online game and was talking to a person in the in-game chat. The person manipulated the girl to continue talking on another platform and then tricked her into performing acts with no clothes on.

Source: Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation

Australian Government | eSafety Commissioner | Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation | THINK U KNOW .org.au

Supporting a child if they experience abuse

If your child tells you they have experienced abuse try to remain calm and take action to support them:

- Do not blame your child – they have done nothing wrong
- Make sure they are safe
- Listen and believe them
- Collect evidence including screenshots, URLs and usernames
- Make a report to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation and get support for your child

Getting help from the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation

If you are in Australia and a child is in **immediate danger**, or at risk of harm call Triple Zero (000).

To make a report, complete the online form at

🔍 www.accce.gov.au/report

Your report to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation will be looked at by specialist investigators in the Australian Federal Police. After your report has been assessed, the police will be in contact over email or phone to talk about what has happened and to make sure that your child is safe.

For anonymous reporting contact Crime Stoppers at crimestoppers.com.au or **1800 333 000**.

You can also contact your local police on **131 444**.

Support your child to get content taken down and get more help

eSafety can help get content taken down and provide further support and advice. Make a report to eSafety by completing the online form at

🔍 www.eSafety.gov.au/report

Search for the 'eSafety Guide' to learn more about how to stay safe on games, apps and social media.

There are many agencies that support children and young people who have experienced online child exploitation or online grooming. These are listed at accce.gov.au/help-and-support/who-can-help.

Reporting online child abuse material

It is illegal to view, share or produce suggestive or explicit images of children. This content can be reported directly to the platform and at

🔍 www.eSafety.gov.au/report

Where to get more information

The AFP's ThinkUKnow program has a range of resources for families and children around preventing online child exploitation. These are available at www.thinkuknow.org.au.

🔍 www.thinkuknow.org.au

eSafety has a range of resources and free webinars for families and children around online safety. These are available at

🔍 www.eSafety.gov.au/parents