Grades K–5 Family Tips

Help Kids Make Friends and Interact Safely Online

Soon after kids start reading and writing, they often begin interacting with others online. Whether they're chatting within games or texting family members, kids need the skills to interact respectfully. These skills will help kids -- and the people they're communicating with -- have positive experiences online.

Check out these 4 tips

1

Give them the right words.

Kids learn about appropriate verbal and physical communication from watching you. But online conversations can be invisible. Occasionally, narrate as you're writing texts or social media comments when your kids are in earshot.

2

Play a game of telephone.

Discuss how a message can change depending on the person delivering it or the delivery method. Read a question like "What are you doing?" with different tones of voice. Talk about how emoji and punctuation can help communicate tone and emotion in text messages.

3

Help kids navigate online friendships.

In the beginning, you might limit all communication with strangers online. As kids get older, you can monitor any online chatting. And once they're more independent, you can discuss which methods of communication are appropriate as well as which types of information to keep private from online-only friends.

4

Develop their instincts.

Help kids trust their guts so they can exit iffy or inappropriate online conversations. Discuss different scenarios and ask how they would feel and what they would do.

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