

Sexting

Tips for Parents & Youth

During this pandemic there has been a dramatic increase in our nation's youth online activities. The ICAC Task Forces are seeing a rise in self-generated sexually explicit material by children... from some younger than 8-years old. This material is also known as sexting, nudes or Child Sexual Abuse Material (child pornography). With a generation of youth as online content creators, it is important for parents to have open communication with their children about content sharing. With both boys and girls involved in sexting behaviors, parents need to have age appropriate conversations with their children, beginning as soon as they have access to any technological device. Conversations with youth should include these sentiments with a clear follow up explanation as to why it is so important to NOT SEND, NOT ask others and NOT share sexually explicit images or videos.

JAMA Pediatrics, Prevalence of Multiple Forms of Sexting Behavior Among Youth, April 2018:
14.8% teens sent and 27.4% received a sext
12% forwarded a sext without consent

Sender

- The time to decide if you'll send a nude is long before you are asked...the decision should be "no".
- Plan & practice your response to the requester
- Remember, once shared, you no longer control the material
- Support friends that don't ask, share or forward images / videos
- Show respect & avoid blaming or bullying others
- Report incident to CyberTipline, School Resource Officer, Law Enforcement, Counselor & social media provider / host

Requester

- It is NOT okay to ask
- It applies undue pressure
- It is an abuse of power
- Consequence includes school / sport team / extracurricular activity discipline
- It can create criminal / legal issues

Sharer

- It is a gross violation of trust
- It constitutes cyber abuse
- It presents criminal / legal issues
- Consequence includes school / sport team / extracurricular activity discipline

Conversation Starters for Parents

- Have you ever been asked or pressured to send nude images? What would you do if asked?
- Do you know kids who have sent nudes? How do you feel about that?
- Have you heard of kids sharing nudes without consent? What do you think about that?
- Have you ever received nudes? What did you do with it?
- What do you think happens to kids if a nude is found on someone's phone?

Resources

- ICAC Task Force Internet Safety; <https://www.icactaskforce.org/Pages/InternetSafety.aspx>
- NCMEC; <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/isyoudisplayexplicitcontentoutthere>
- NCMEC/NetSmartz; <https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/topics/sexting>
- CyberTipline; <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline>
- Family Online Safety Institute; <https://www.fosi.org/>
- ConnectSafely; <https://www.connectsafely.org/>
- That's Not Cool; <https://thatsnotcool.com/>