

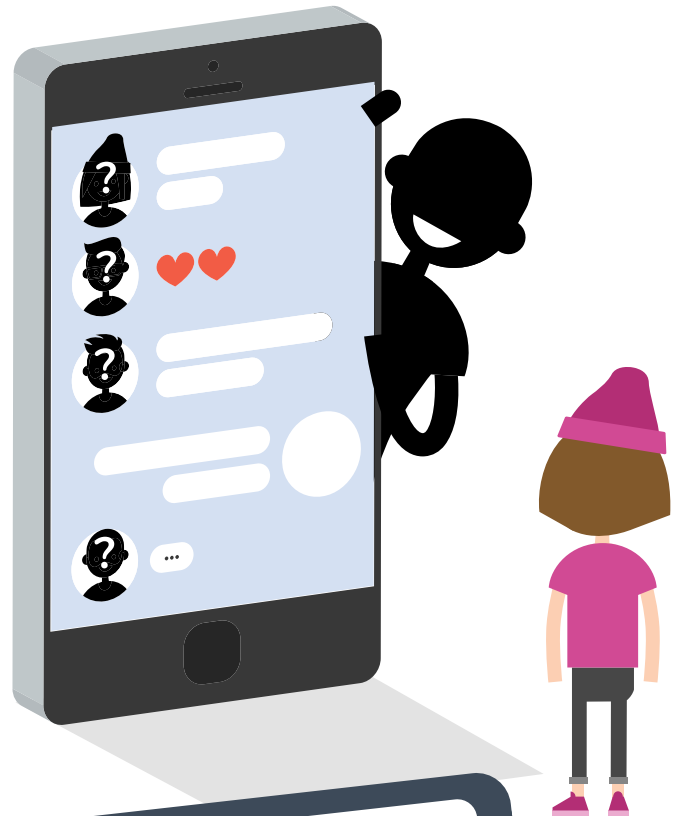
Self-image and identity

AGES 5 TO 7

At this age, children need to understand that although we talk about their digital footprint being an image of them online, not all digital footprints are a true reflection. People can pretend to be other people online. An adult man couldn't pretend to be a young girl in the real world but he can online because you can't see him and, sadly, not everyone is honest.

Your child can take advantage of pretending to be someone else online in order to protect their own privacy. They should learn in school about not using their real full name online, about using a picture that represents them (an avatar) rather than their real photo and about protecting private personal details, such as their address and school.

When you share images and information on social media, talk about how you protect your own privacy by not over-sharing and how you protect their privacy by not sharing things about them. This will help them to develop a feeling of responsibility to others as well as themselves.

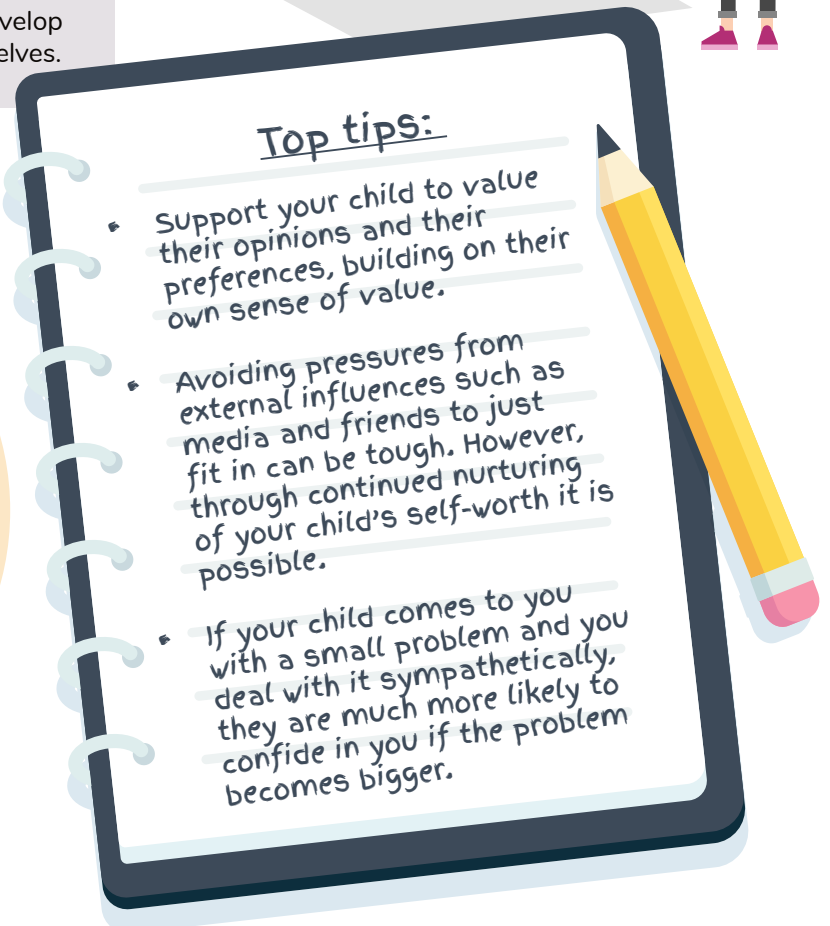


Did You Know?

Almost

2 in 5

children have received negative comments on a photo they have posted. (UK Safer Internet, 2016)





Probably the greatest factor in your child's protection from online threats is their own sense of self and self-esteem. Helping your child to value themselves, their opinions and their preferences contributes to their own sense of value. They are then much less likely to make undesirable choices and less likely to feel under pressure to fit in with the crowd.

Your child should have an ingrained belief that you are on their side, that no matter how big a problem seems and even if they have knowingly done something wrong, you will help them to sort it out. If your child starts to come to you with small problems and you deal with them sympathetically, they are much more likely to confide in you if the problems get bigger.

AGES 7 TO 11

Review the points in ages 5 to 7 and build on them further.

Children will have a more developed sense of their online identity. In some places, such as in closed groups of friends, they might appear as themselves. In other places, they develop strategies to be anonymous, such as using avatars and nicknames in online gaming.

Many children will become more aware of people promoting themselves online and turning this into a successful career. They might follow and admire people who appear to live very public lives. There is nothing wrong with this but you can help them to reach a balanced outlook by talking about the downsides of public life. Use current examples to show how one false move may have negative repercussions if you are in the public eye.

81%

of 8-11s go online for
13 ½ hours per week.
(Ofcom, 2017)

79%

of 5-7s go online for
around 9 hours per
week. (Ofcom, 2017)

