



# What is online pornography?



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# What is pornography?



**Pornography** (or “porn”) refers to “...writings or images with blunt, often exploitative, sexual content designed solely to arouse a sexual response and satisfy sexual urges”

**Source:** American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology

# How kids find pornography online



- A child may be curious about finding adult content online or they may be influenced by their friends.
- Family members and peers may share inappropriate content with a child.
- A child might type the wrong word into a search engine or accidentally click on a link to pornographic material hidden in spam emails and pop-ups.
- Children can also be exposed to pornography on gaming websites.
- Some popular cartoons have been adapted into pornographic versions, which can be very disturbing for young viewers.



# How to protect your child from online pornography



Young children and teenagers may not fully understand the negative impact of pornography on their lives. As a parent or caregiver, you need to guide your child even when the matter may be uncomfortable to talk about or deal with.

## “Set some ‘house rules’”

- Discuss the issue with all siblings in age-appropriate ways and ensure everyone agrees to play by the same rules.
- Talk about where it is OK and is not OK to use computers or devices.
- Ideally, your child should only use them in open or common spaces of the home like the living room.
- Keep devices out of bedrooms and other enclosed spaces, especially for younger children.

## “Stay engaged”

- Talking regularly and openly with your child about what they are doing online will help build trust and may reduce your desire to monitor your child’s browser history or check up on them without them knowing.

## “Use the available technology”

- Take advantage of the parental controls available on computers, modems and other devices, and ensure the ‘safe search’ mode is enabled on browsers.

**Source:** eSafety Commissioner, Australian Government



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# How to protect your child from online pornography

## “Make sure your child is unlikely to come across inappropriate content on your own devices.”

- Password-protect your devices.
- Delete browser histories.
- Turn off auto-complete setting in web browsers and apps.

## “Build resilience.”

- Age-appropriate conversations about sexualized content can help young people process what they see online and reinforce the importance of consent and respectful relationships.



## Initiate family discussions on pornography.

- Talking about pornography, especially with older children, can help protect them from the potential impacts of accidental exposure.

## “Build trust.”

- Discussions about sex, intimacy, and pornography best take place when your child feels they can trust you.
- Encourage them to come and ask you when they see something they do not understand. No topic is off limits.

# What to do when your child finds pornography online

## “Stay calm”

- If you are upset or angry, your child may feel like they cannot come to you about other concerns in the future.

## “Listen, assess, pause”

- It may be tempting to give a big lecture right there on the spot but sometimes this is not the best option. Take some time to plan your approach to the topic.



## “Reassure your child they are not in trouble”

- When children fear punishment, they may close down emotionally. They may be reluctant to talk, and may struggle to listen or understand. This could lead your child to hide their behavior or not want to approach you in the future.

## “Be sensitive to how they feel”

- It is important to talk with your child about how the content made them feel.
- Does your child feel good, bad, safe, scared, uncomfortable, curious, repulsed or something else? Any or all of these feelings are normal reactions.





## Keep in Mind



Your child can get access to pornography on the Internet either by accident or intentionally. The risk of **harm depends on your child's age** so engage in age-appropriate conversations with them about sensitive content online.



Your child may **not fully understand** the negative impact of pornography. Encountering graphic, violent, or misleading messages about sexual practices and gender stereotypes could give young people the **wrong idea** about sex and intimate relationships.



As a parent or caregiver, do your best to provide guidance to your child, even when certain matters are uncomfortable for you to talk about or deal with.



# Sources

1

**American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology (2022). “Pornography.”**

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**Pexels**

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