



CHILDHOOD 2.0

A Handbook for Raising
Kids in the Digital Age

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Disclaimer

All content provided by the creators of *Childhood 2.0* was created for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult your child's physician or another qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding a potential medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of any content provided here. The filmmakers are not responsible for the claims or advice of linked external websites.

About Childhood 2.0

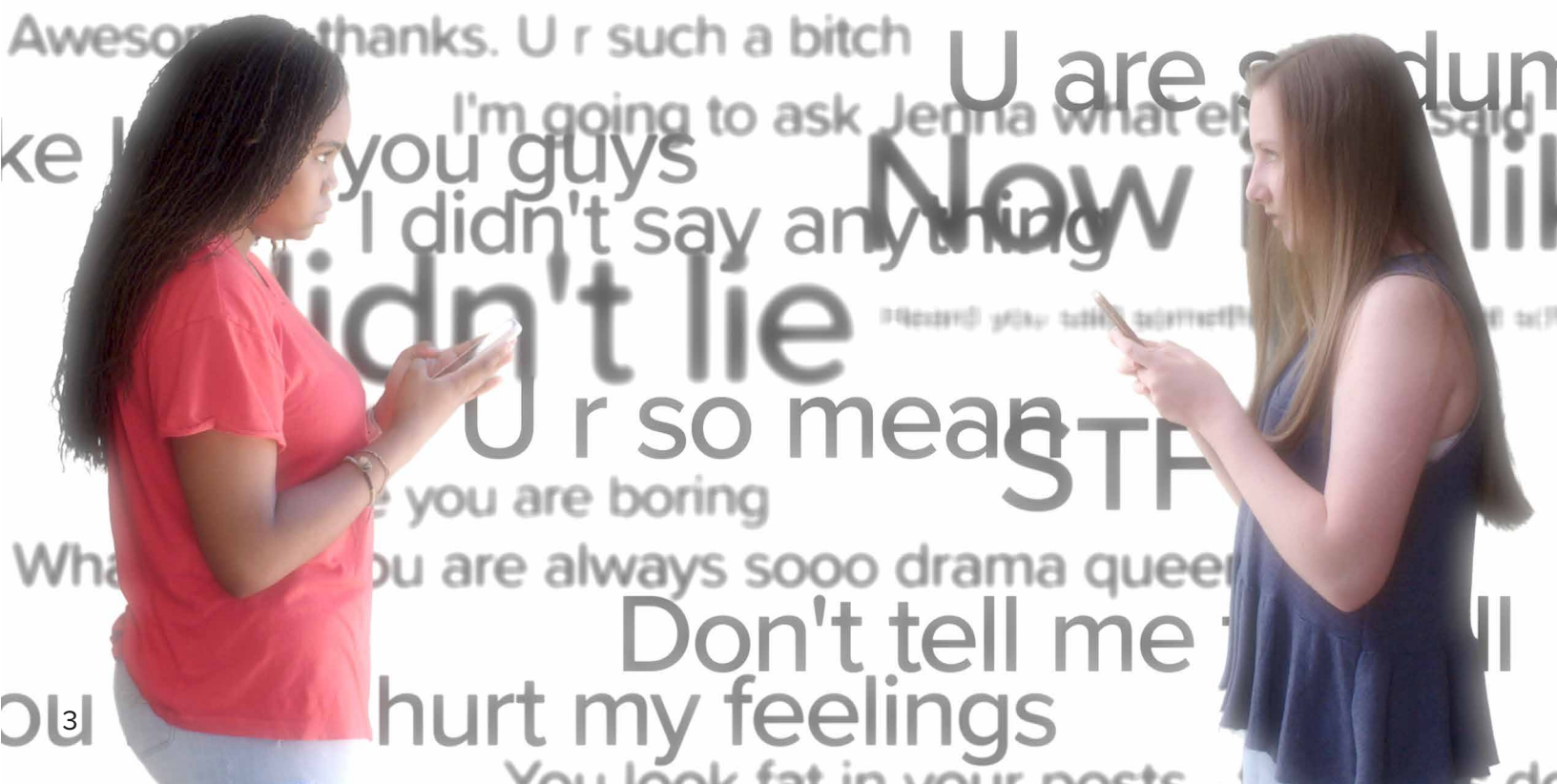
When we were growing up, our parents worried about stranger danger and whether or not we were home by the time the streetlights came on. But for parents raising the first generation of kids with smartphones, everything is different. [Childhood 2.0](#) takes a deep dive into what coming of age really looks like today — and just how much things have changed thanks to technology and social media.

Featuring actual parents and kids as well as industry-leading experts in child safety and development, this documentary is required viewing for anyone that wants to better understand the world their children inhabit as they navigate growing up in the digital age.

Learn how access to social media and ever-evolving technology creates new issues that past generations didn't have to face, including cyberbullying, near-instant access to porn, online predators, a rise in child suicide, and more.

How to Use This Resource

This handbook is a companion piece to *Childhood 2.0*, though it also stands on its own and is helpful for anyone raising kids in the digital age. In it, you'll find information about some of the common issues and digital dangers kids are up against — not only the ones discussed in the documentary, but also common issues like violence and anxiety. Each section includes a list of recommended actions families can take if they suspect their child needs help, along with a list of online links and resources as well as helpful prompts for starting those hard — but important — conversations.



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying happens when someone harasses, threatens, or embarrasses another person online. It includes aggressive or cruel online communications such as texts, direct messages, and social media posts. Some cyberbullies also share personal information, pictures, or videos designed to hurt or shame their targets.

Here are some common warning signs that your child may be experiencing cyberbullying:

- Hesitancy to use devices — or stopping altogether
- Getting emotional before, during, or after using a device
- Being secretive or avoiding discussions about online behavior
- Avoiding school or social activities
- Changes in grades, mood, behavior, sleep, or appetite

Recommended Actions

- **Reassure your child** that you love and support them unconditionally.
- **Don't automatically take away their device.** Show your child that they won't be punished if they tell you the truth about what's happening.
- **Learn about cyberbullying laws in your state.** While there is no federal law against cyberbullying, the laws in every state (except Alaska and Wisconsin) have specific references to it. Check out the [cyberbullying laws](#) where you live.

- **Document everything.** Work with your child to keep a log of all harmful messages. This will be useful should you need to report these events to your child’s school or to law enforcement. **Be sure to include:**
 - › What happened and when
 - › The names / usernames of all bullies and witnesses
 - › What websites / platforms (e.g. Instagram, text messages, etc.) were used
 - › The content of the messages, including screenshots if possible
- **Block the bully.** Instruct your child to unfriend, unfollow, or block the individual(s) antagonizing them.
- **Assess the scope of the problem.** Talk to your child to see if they are being bullied offline as well. Consider contacting their school to see if they have additional insight.

Helpful Resources

- › [Cyberbullying Tactics](#)
- › [Finstas: Where Kids Hide From Parents](#)
- › [How to Stop Cyberbullying](#)
- › [Cyberbullying at School](#)
- › [CyberbullyHelp Resources](#)



Conversation Starters

- Can you tell me about a time someone was mean to you online?
- What would you do if someone started calling you names on Instagram?
- Why do you think it's sometimes easier to write mean things online than to say them in real life?

Sexual Content

While it's normal for kids to become aware of their sexuality as they mature, behaviors such as excessively watching porn or sending sexually explicit messages may require your attention.

- **Ensure your child is developing respect** for others. Share your family's values around sex and emphasize the importance of developing meaningful, respectful relationships.
- **Remind your child about the dangers** of sharing sexual content. Once a message is sent, it can never be retrieved and your child is no longer in control of it. Remind them that even if they trust the person they're communicating with, phones can be lost, stolen, or collected by the recipient's family.

Helpful Resources

- › [State-by-State Differences in Sexting Laws](#)
- › [Pornography: Not Just for Boys \(Teen Girls Struggle, too\)](#)
- › [What Is Age-Appropriate Sexual Curiosity?](#)
- › [I Found Porn on My Child's Computer. Now What?](#)
- › [Sexting: What Parents Need to Know](#)
- › [What to Do If You Find Something Disturbing on Your Teen's Phone](#)
- › [Teenagers Are Sexting — Now What?](#)
- › [When Your Teen Won't Stop Sexting](#)



Conversation Starters

- **Have you ever seen naked people online?**
- **Do any of your friends ever watch porn?**
- **How do you feel when someone sends you a sexual text message?**

Predatory Behavior

As a parent or guardian, you've probably talked to your child about "stranger danger." But predators can also sexually, emotionally, and psychologically abuse children without ever being in the same room with them — although it may eventually lead to in-person abuse.

Online grooming occurs when a predator initiates and cultivates a relationship with a child through the internet, and it can include:

- Sending explicit messages
- Sharing or requesting sexual photos or videos
- Targeted manipulation
- Isolation from family and friends
- Sextortion

Recommended Actions

- **Educate your child.** Tell your child not to talk to people online who they don't know in real life. Teach them to recognize red flags like when someone online asks them to share their full name, address, or where they go to school. Remind them to never send pictures to strangers, even if the photos seem innocent.
- **Show your child you support them** if they tell you they've been contacted by a predator. A calm, empathetic conversation will help your child feel comfortable discussing what's going on. Let them know that it's not their fault.

- **Document everything.** Work with your child to keep a log of all predatory activities. This will be very important should you need to report these events to law enforcement. **Be sure to include:**
 - › What happened and when
 - › The names / usernames of anyone who was involved or witnessed it
 - › What websites / platforms (e.g. Snapchat, text messages, etc.) were used
 - › The content of the messages, including screenshots if possible
- **Take action.** If your child is in contact with someone you believe is dangerous, have your child block, unfriend, and unfollow them immediately. If someone has tried to convince your child to meet them in real life, report them to the police.

Helpful Resources

- [Protecting Your Child From Online Predators](#)
- [Learn the Stages of Online Grooming](#)
- [Recognize the Signs of Sexual Predators](#)
- [How to Combat Online Predators](#)



Conversation Starters

- Has anyone ever made you feel uncomfortable when you were playing online? How did you respond?
- What do you say to a stranger online if they ask what school you go to?
- If someone online said they'd hurt your family if you didn't do something, what would you say?

Self-Harm or Suicidal Content

While self-harm can sometimes be associated with suicidal ideation, the two aren't always connected and can often have different symptoms.

Here are some warning signs of potential self-harm in kids:

- Frequent and unexplained cuts, bruises, scars, or burns
- Insisting on wearing long sleeves or pants — even in warm weather
- Increased anxiety, stress, or depression

Here are some warning signs of potential suicidal ideation in kids:

- Talking about being a burden to others
- Sleeping much more or much less than usual
- Giving away prized possessions
- A sudden improvement in their mood
- Reaching out to people they haven't spoken to in a long time
- Uncharacteristically reckless behavior

Recommended Actions

- **Offer support.** Let your child know you're there for them — fully and unconditionally. Kids are often confused or uncertain about what they're going through, so it's important to validate their feelings.
- **Remove dangerous objects.** Ensure that weapons and medications aren't easily accessible. Consider putting these items behind a lock or completely removing them from your home.
- **Get help for your child.** If your child has expressed suicidal thoughts, talk with your child's school counselor, their physician, or a mental health professional to help your family understand what underlies those thoughts and to develop a treatment plan.

Helpful Resources About Self-Harm

- [Self-Harm Text Hotline](#)
- [To Write Love On Her Arms](#)
- [Help for Cutting and Other Self-Injury](#)
- [What Parent Need to Know About Self-Harm](#)

Helpful Resources About Suicidal Ideation

- [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- [New Study Shows Exactly What I'm Seeing In My Own Pediatric ER, Rising Numbers Of Children Attempting Suicide](#)
- [Learn the Signs of Youth Suicide](#)
- [Symptoms of Mental Health Problems from Children's Hospital Colorado](#)
- [How Communication Can Help Prevent a Tragedy](#)
- [LGBT Suicide: What Parents Need to Know](#)



Conversation Starters

- **Have you ever wanted to hurt yourself?**
- **What do you know about suicide?**
- **What would you do if you were feeling hopeless?**

Anxiety

Many kids have fears and worries, and feeling sad and hopeless from time to time is a part of growing up. However, when kids don't outgrow the fears and worries that are typical in young children, or when there are so many fears and worries that they interfere with school, home, or play activities, it could be a sign of an anxiety disorder.

Examples of different types of anxiety disorders include:

- **Separation anxiety:** Being very afraid when away from parents
- **Phobias:** Having an extreme fear about something specific, such as heights, snakes, or shots
- **Social anxiety:** Being extremely afraid of interacting with other people
- **General anxiety:** Being worried about bad things that might happen in the future
- **Panic disorder:** Having repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected fear along with symptoms like heart pounding, breathlessness, or feeling dizzy, shaky, or sweaty
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** Experiencing intense anxiety, nightmares, and /or physical symptoms after an extremely traumatic event

Recommended Actions

- **Offer support.** Let your child know you're there for them — fully and unconditionally. Tweens and teens don't like to feel patronized or crowded, so let your child drive the conversation.
- **Learn to recognize the signs of anxiety.** If your child isn't able to easily tell you when they're feeling anxious, look for signs of physical complaints that may indicate it: stomachaches, headaches, and vomiting. They may also look clammy or sweaty if their heart is racing from worry. Pay attention to abrupt mood changes, as well.

- **Don't try to get rid of their anxiety — help them manage it.** No parent wants to see their child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to completely get rid of stressors that trigger it. It's to help them learn to identify, tolerate, and find ways to reduce their anxiety.
- **Remind them bad things can happen, but they can overcome a lot.** You can't guarantee that a child's fears are unrealistic — failing a test, getting teased, or messing up a piano solo. But you can express confidence that they'll be okay even if those things do happen. They'll be able to manage these bumps in the road, and when they realize this, their anxiety may lessen.
- **Encourage a healthy lifestyle.** Mental and physical health are closely intertwined. Make sure your child is eating nutritious food, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- **Get help for your child.** It's of utmost importance that you arrange professional help for your child if they need it. Talk with your child's school counselor, their physician, or a mental health professional to help them through their anxiety. Online therapy is also becoming increasingly popular. Services like [Talkspace](#) connect teens with online therapists via text, chat, and video.

Helpful Resources

- › [Childhood Anxiety Disorders](#)
- › [Anxiety Disorders and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder \(OCD\)](#)
- › [What to Do \(and Not Do\) When Children Are Anxious](#)
- › [How To Help A Child Struggling With Anxiety](#)



Conversation Starters

- **How does it feel when you get anxious?**
- **What is a recent situation that made you feel anxious?**
- **What do you do when you're feeling worried or stressed?**

Depression

Childhood depression is different from the normal “blues” or everyday mood changes that kids experience while growing up.

Here are some warning signs of potential depression:

- Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or worthlessness
- Withdrawal from their favorite activities
- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue and low energy
- Physical complaints that do not respond to treatment
- Thoughts or talk of death and /or suicide

Recommended Actions

- **Offer support.** Let your child know you’re there for them — fully and unconditionally. Tweens and teens don’t like to feel patronized or crowded, so let your child drive the conversation.
- **Be gentle but persistent.** Don’t give up if your child isn’t ready to talk at first — the conversations can be stressful for them. Be respectful of their comfort level while still emphasizing your concern.

- **Listen without lecturing.** Resist any urge to criticize, pass judgment, or make ultimatums once your child begins to open up. It's important that your child is communicating.
- **Validate their feelings.** Don't try to "talk your child out of their depression," even if their feelings seem irrational to you. Simply acknowledge the pain and numbness they may be feeling. Let them know it's OK not to feel OK.
- **Encourage a healthy lifestyle.** Mental and physical health are closely intertwined. Make sure your child is eating nutritious food, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- **Get help for your child.** It's of utmost importance that you arrange professional help for your child if they need it. Talk with your child's school counselor, their physician, or a mental health professional to help them through their depression.

Helpful Resources

- [5 Things You Can Do to Help Your Child with Depression](#)
- [How to Talk to Your Teen About Depression](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- [Supporting Your Child with Depression](#)



Conversation Starters

- **What do you think is the difference between being sad and being depressed?**
- **Do you ever wish you were happier?**
- **Do you ever not feel like yourself?**

Sextortion

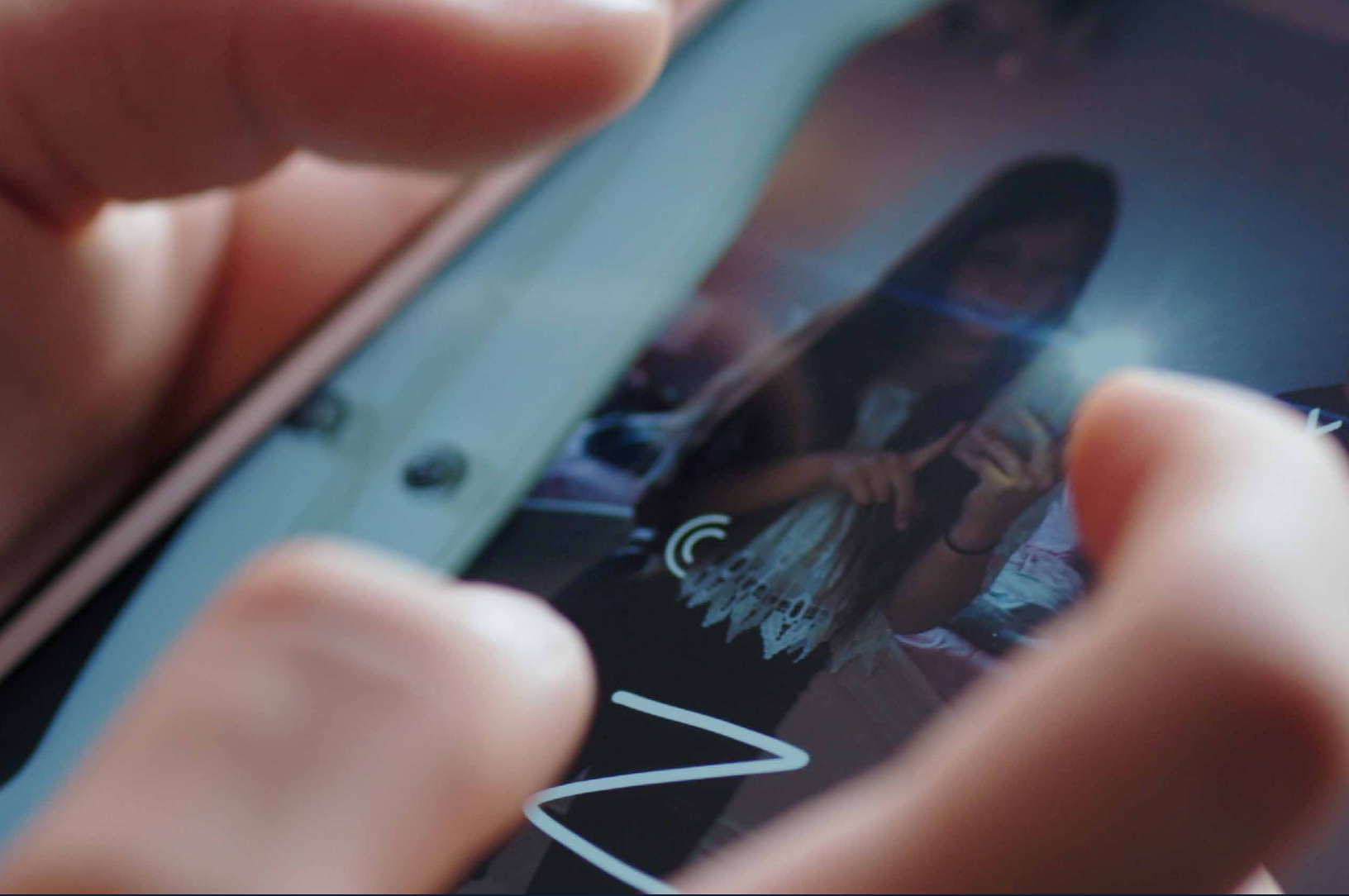
Sextortion occurs when kids are coerced into sending sexually explicit material to another person, often under threat of harm to themselves or someone they love.

Recommended Actions

- **Keep open lines of communication** with your child. Make sure they know they can come to you if they're receiving online communications that make them feel uncomfortable.
- **Check the laws of your state.** It's illegal in many states for adults to exchange sexual content with an underage child — even if it's just text or chat messages.
- **Document everything.** Work with your child to keep a log of all inappropriate activities. This will be very important should you need to report these events to law enforcement.
Be sure to include:
 - › What happened and when
 - › The names / usernames of all perpetrators and witnesses
 - › What websites / platforms (e.g. Snapchat, text messages, etc.) were used
 - › The content of the messages, including screenshots if possible
- **Get help for your child.** Sexually abusive activities like sextortion can have serious emotional effects on a child. Even if they never had a physical interaction with a predator, they still need support — from you and likely from a school counselor, physician, or mental health professional — as they heal from what they've experienced.

Helpful Resources

- [FBI: What is Sextortion?](#)
- [Post-traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#)
- [Tips for Talking to Your Teen About Sextortion](#)



Conversation Starters

- Has anyone ever asked you to share a nude photo of yourself?
- Has anyone ever sent you a picture of their private parts?
- What would you do if a stranger sent you an inappropriate message?

Violence

Kids may not have a good way of processing or understanding the violent content they encounter on the news or stumble upon online. Activities at school may also contribute to their fears, whether it's a school fight, a lockdown drill, a bomb threat, or even a rumor about a school shooting.

Recommended Actions

- **Talk about what's happening at school.** Find out what they're experiencing that may be causing them anxiety. Your child will feel better when they talk about what's happening around them.
- **Encourage your kids to tell someone** about what they see and hear. If your child finds out about a potential threat of violence, make sure they know to report it to a trusted adult.
- **Get help for your child.** Talk with their physician or a mental health professional if you're still concerned about violent behaviors or activities.

Helpful Resources

- [Violent Behavior in Children and Adolescents](#)
- [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#)



Conversation Starters

- **What would you do if you heard that someone you know was bringing a gun to school?**
- **How do active shooter drills make you feel?**
- **Are you ever worried that someone you know will hurt you?**

Discussion Questions

After you've watched the documentary, you'll likely have a lot of thoughts and feelings. Here are some suggested questions to get a conversation started, with options for both you and your kids to answer.

For parents to answer

1. What did you think your parents wouldn't understand when you were a teenager?

Example: When I was 13 in 1993, I would listen to TLC's Crazy Sexy Cool on my Walkman because I was afraid of what my parents would think if they heard the lyrics.

2. Talk about a time you did something risky that your parents never found out about.

Example: I spent a lot of time talking in AOL chat rooms to people who were way older than me. My parents had absolutely no idea what I was doing typing late into the night on the computer in my bedroom — they thought I was just playing games.

3. What's something that makes you feel like you're turning into your parents?

Example: When I was a teen, I would spend hours on the telephone chatting with friends. My parents would get annoyed and say, "You saw them all day at school! What do you still have to talk about?" Now I find myself doing the same thing with my own kids — just with texting.

4. Kids aren't the only ones obsessed with being online all the time. What are your worst digital habits? Be brutally honest.

Example: I am on my phone 100% of the time. For work, I'm always checking email and Slack. When I'm not on my phone, my Apple Watch is constantly pinging me. I'm in a lot of Facebook groups, too — some for parenting tips, some for cat memes. At night, my partner and I watch Netflix until it's time for bed. But then I can't turn the lights out without watching every Instagram Story — no matter how late it is.



For parents to ask your kids

5. What's one thing you wish I knew about your life as a kid growing up in the age of social media and smartphones?

Example: I wish you understood the pressure I felt to send nudes. Everyone is doing it and if I don't, I'll get dumped for the next person who will. I know your generation never did anything like this, but today it's pretty much expected.

6. What does privacy mean to you in a time when everything is public? How much do you think kids should have and how does that change depending on who's looking?

Example: Privacy means having the space to be myself without feeling like I need to filter everything I do — I want my online life to be mine. So I want a lot of privacy. But I also know there are plenty of times when, if I'm not filtering for one group, I'm filtering for another. I might not post something I wouldn't want you to see, but I might also post something I want my friends to see that I don't actually care about. It's really hard to find balance.

7. I'm sure you've seen me on my phone a lot throughout your life. What have you learned from my technology usage?

Example: You're always on your phone, so it's totally not fair that I can't be on mine as much. I see how important it is for you, and it's just as important to me.

8. Childhood 2.0 discussed some serious mental health issues. How are you feeling these days? What can I help you with right now?

Example: I'm starting to feel like I'm never going back to school — and I know I'm not the only one. All of my friends are really bummed right now. The situation seems pretty much hopeless and I'm feeling like what's supposed to be some of the best times of my life are just lost forever.

Suggested Solutions

This handbook is a great starting point for learning more about parenting in the digital age, but there's also a whole world of information, products, services, and blogs out there — several of which are featured in Childhood 2.0 — that can help your family even more as you work to help keep them safe online and in real life. Here are just a few of our suggested solutions that will provide you with peace of mind.

Technology

[Bark](#)

Bark monitors kids' texts, emails, and social media for digital dangers and alerts parents to potential issues like cyberbullying, depression, online predators, and more. Bark also provides screen time and filtering controls.

[Google FamilyLink](#)

For families with Android devices, Google FamilyLink is a free service that lets you set digital ground rules to help guide your kids as they learn, play, and explore online.

[Apple Screen Time](#)

Apple families can use this free service to set screen time limits on their children's devices, receive weekly reports, and more.

Online resources

[Protect Young Eyes](#)

Protect Young Eyes is a thought-leading website that keeps parents in the know about the latest devices, technology, and more with reviews, blog posts, and presentations.

[NetSmartz \(by NCMEC\)](#)

This online safety education program provides age-appropriate videos and activities for children to learn about online risks and how to avoid them.

[Common Sense Media](#)

Common Sense Media provides in-depth reviews of movies, TV shows, books, video games and more so families can determine the age-appropriateness of what their kids consume.



Community

Parenting in a Tech World

This Facebook group of more than 80,000 members provides a much-needed space for parents to support each other and get the scoop on cool apps, the latest trends, and all things tech-related.

Visit www.childhood2movie.com
for more resources and information.
