How can parents support children’s internet safety?

# Details

## Issued

2012

## Language

English

## Authors

Duerager A.;Livingstone S.

## Type

Short report

## Topics

* Social mediation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Risks and harms

## Sample

An analysis of parental mediation in the EU Kids Online survey of 25,142 9-16 year olds in 25 countries

## Implications For Parents About

* Parental practices / parental mediation
* Parental digital literacy
* Parenting guidance / support

# Abstract

Given the Safer Internet Day 2012 theme of Connecting Generations, we ask whether, instead of imposing restrictions, parents can support their child’s internet safety by sharing a positive experience of internet use with them.

An analysis of parental mediation in the EU Kids Online survey of 25,142 9-16 year olds in 25 countries shows that restrictive mediation reduces online risks, but it also reduces their online opportunities and skills.

The new analysis in this report shows that when parents actively mediate their child’s internet use, this too is associated with lower risk and, most important, lower harm. However, parental active mediation of use is linked to more (not fewer) online activities and skills.

By active mediation of use, we mean: parents talk to their child about the internet, stay nearby or sit with them while they go online, encourage them to explore the internet, and share online activities with them. These activities, our findings show, tend to reduce children’s exposure to online risks without reducing online opportunities, and they also reduce young children’s (9-12 years) reports of being upset when they encounter online risks.

As for other mediation strategies, the evidence suggests that parents’ active mediation of safety (e.g. giving safety or online behaviour advice), and their monitoring of the child’s internet use, are generally used after a child has experienced something upsetting online, to prevent further problems.

Interestingly, parental technical mediation such as using a filter is not shown to reduce online risk encounters among children.

# Outcome

-Mediation reduces as children get older
-"Unexpectedly, parents’ active mediation of safety and monitoring is linked to more not less risk" (Duerager Livingstone, 2012, p. 3)
-A third of children say they sometimes ignore what their parents say about using the internet
-"Problematically, the approach of parental restrictions carries a significant cost in terms of children’s online opportunities and skills" (Duerager Livingstone, 2012, p. 4)