Personal Safety & Healthy Child Development

kids in the know®

For parents with children 10–11 YEARS

The purpose of this sheet is to provide parents and educators with background information on child development and personal safety that will help with making important decisions in the best interest of children's personal safety.

The Growing Personality

Children 10 to 11 years of age...

» May start puberty.

» Begin to develop a sense of who they are based on what they think vs. what others think.

» Gain motivation internally, rather than just from friends or family.

» Are aware of social judgment.

» Their identity is still joined with their parents and they can be easily embarrassed by their parents, but at the same time they may seek a closer relationship with a parent of the same sex. This is typically only for a short time, until adolescence, when they tend to want to separate their identity from their parents.

» Have an increased interest in role models.

» Have increased body awareness, and negative feelings about their bodies are common.

» Often act very independent and self-assured.

» Have greater concern for right and wrong, and for people being treated fairly or unfairly.

» Are more capable of following rules without outside guidance, but are also more capable of rationalizing breaking rules as they have more mature reasoning power.

» Have greater capacity for empathy.

» Seek increased privacy as they have an increased need to start creating their own life.

» Acquire pride and enjoyment from doing something well (e.g. academics, sports, music, art, friendships, etc.).

» Continue to test parental limits through negative behaviour, which consequently helps them learn appropriate behaviour.

» Want to be considered grown-up and often pressure parents to let them take on responsibilities they're not yet ready for.

What do 10- to 11-year-old children want to do?

» Chat, message and/or text using different apps.

» Research topics using search engines.

» Use the internet for school work.

» Play online games.

» Take pictures and/or make videos using their devices.

» Share images and videos as part of chats/messaging conversations.

» Take part in extra-curricular activities.

» Use social networking apps; creating profiles, sharing content and/or chatting.

» Watch, share and create videos online using websites like YouTube®.

» Seek increased independence (i.e. bike riding, going to parks, walking to and from school and friends' houses, shopping at the mall, skateboarding, etc.).

» Stay home alone for short periods.

» Go out for Halloween with friends.

» Go to sleepovers.

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Things to Consider

» Reinforce that the internet is a public place just like the store, the neighbourhood, the playground or going to someone's house, and set the expectation that you will monitor them online to increase their safety.

» Reinforce household guidelines for internet use and set limits on the amount of time spent online.

» Use parental controls on your computer and other devices.

» Explain where it is appropriate for them to have privacy — confiding in close friends face-to-face, writing in a journal, private space in their bedroom, etc. There is no privacy on the internet.

» Teach them to be careful with whom they share their private thoughts, and to consider how it could be misused.

» Pay attention to who your child is chatting with online, and encourage your child to only accept friend requests from people they know in real life.

» Teach them to also respect their friends' personal information including pictures. These should not be shared without their friends' permission. Talk about the importance of valuing their own and other's personal information.

» Provide adult supervision for social networking apps, chat/text/messaging apps, and online games (including their chat components). Know and check regularly all of your children's phone contacts, "friends", and following/follower lists on all of their apps.

» Explain to children that there is no need or urgency to respond to messages that someone sends them.

» Teach children not to respond to messages that make them feel uncomfortable, scared or unsure, and if they do come across such types of messages to tell a safe adult. Also teach them to take a leadership role and not forward inappropriate messages about others.

» Know your children's passwords and usernames.

» If exposed to inappropriate material online (i.e. sexually explicit material, violent material, etc.), teach them to tell a *safe adult*.

» Review the difference between a *KEEP Secret* and a *SPEAK Secret*. A *KEEP Secret* is harmless and will eventually come out, like a birthday present; a *SPEAK Secret* is one that children are told never to tell, like being threatened by someone or a secret about touching or picture-taking. They need to tell a *safe adult* about a *SPEAK Secret*.

» Ensure they always get your permission before sharing personal information or accepting anything. Teach them what is meant by personal information and where on the internet they may be asked for it.

» Online profiles should be set up with adult supervision. Ensure usernames and nicknames are nondescript and do not reveal true interests, age, gender or contain pictures.

» Video chat (like FaceTime® or Skype®) should only be used with direct parental supervision and pictures should only be accepted and sent with parental permission.

» Explain that once a picture is sent online they lose control of what is done with it. The picture may never be completely removed from the internet. Explain that information can be misused by some people so it needs to be protected.

» Spend time with your children and know what they are doing online and offline.

» Discuss the concept of anonymity on the internet — people can pretend to be anyone.

» Talk about friendship: what it is and isn't. Explain that new friendships started online need to be adult supervised and that children should never meet someone in person they met online without an accompanying parent.

» Teach them to incorporate personal safety strategies into their daily lives to reduce risks both online and offline.

» Teach them assertiveness skills.

» Communicate openly, listening and acknowledging feelings.

» Ensure that they have at least one *safe adult* they can talk to (e.g. a parent, aunt, grandparent, teacher, etc.).

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