



THE AGE OF DIGITAL PARENTING



Addressing some questions together.

①

What are the potential online risks affecting our children physically and/or emotionally?



②

How do we know if our children need help?



③

What can we do to support them?



① POTENTIAL ONLINE RISKS AFFECTING OUR CHILDREN

While we may already have a good understanding of our children's online activities, we may also be aware that sometimes our children may not recognise the need to share their online activities with us.

Hence, it is important for us to be aware of the potential online risks that our children may be facing.

BELOW ARE TOP 3 POTENTIAL ONLINE RISKS WHICH MAY AFFECT OUR CHILDREN PHYSICALLY AND/OR EMOTIONALLY.

Our children may feel overwhelmed and be at a lost if they were to receive hateful and hurtful online comments.

They may not think of sharing this with us and may try to deal with this in their own way.



RECEIVING HATEFUL AND HURTFUL ONLINE COMMENTS

CHATTING AND MEETING WITH ONLINE STRANGERS

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE CONTENT

With many online platforms (e.g. online games) that provide chat and interaction features, our children may be potentially chatting and even meeting up with predators whom they may have interacted with while on such platforms.



Inappropriate online content refers to information found on the Internet that may not be suitable for our children at their age or at their level of maturity. Such content can be upsetting to our children or can lead them to engage in unlawful or dangerous behaviours.

When our children stumble across such online content, they may not be matured enough, at this point in time, to process some of the online content that they may be exposed to when using their devices.





② ASSESSING IF OUR CHILDREN NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM US

Aside from being aware of the potential online risks that our children may be facing, we might be wondering what else we can do to better support our children.

As children may not necessarily share with us what they do online, part of digital parenting involves recognising the signs that our children may be physically and/or emotionally affected by their online activities. They could be showing signs of being affected by something that happened online and may need our support.

Below are some questions to aid in our assessment to see if our children require emotional support from us when they are engaged in device.

IS YOUR CHILD AFFECTED BY SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED ONLINE?

Question*	^Have you noticed that... ..
1	your child gets defensive and secretive when you ask about his/her online activities?
2	your child is expressing feelings of sadness or anxiety and is behaving differently compared to his/her usual self?
3	your child's relationships with the following group of people have been affected due to device usage?
	(i) Family members
	(ii) Friends/Peers
	(iii) Teachers

*These questions help us to assess the type of support we can provide for our children. Please note that this is not an assessment tool to determine if our children have cyber issues when using their devices.

^Our children may engage in online activities for different reasons. It is important we identify the cause(s), so as to better support them. If we notice any one of these behaviours, we may want to have conversations with our children to find out more.



③ PARENTAL SUPPORT FOR OUR CHILDREN'S ONLINE ACTIVITIES



Whether our children require our support to manage their device usage or require our help to cope with the emotional aspects when it comes to device usage, having and maintaining quality relationships with our children is key.

In the age of digital parenting, being deliberate in staying connected with our children through having safe and open conversations is important. When strong parent-child relationships have been established, engaging in meaningful and effective communication with our children can be less challenging.

Navigating the online space can be both exciting and dangerous for our children. While recognising that being parents in this digital age can pose great challenges, engaging in regular conversations with our children and connecting with them on a deeper level, can make the whole journey a little easier for everyone.



Even though our children may not be as open about their need for help at times, we can still show our love and support for them.



Here are some tips on how we can engage our children in meaningful conversations by being non-confrontational and non-judgemental.



TAP ON FAMILY MEALTIMES

When having a meal with our children, engage them in a conversation about how their day went, including what they experienced online. This will not only help us be aware of our children's online activities, but also enable us to spot potential online risks early.



TAP ON FAMILY SCREEN TIME

Screen time need not always be alone time. Make it a family affair! Asking our children to suggest online activities the family can do together can be a way forward.

During a family bonding session over a family online game or over our children's favourite online game, the conversation about their online activities may take place seamlessly.



TAP ON TRAVELLING TIME

Using commute time to engage in conversations with our children may lead to meaningful outcomes. In such normal day-to-day interactions, our children may be more at ease and hence may be more open and comfortable to share about their online activities and/or any feelings that are bothering them.

The next time we are on the way to/from school with our children, or even on the way to a family outing, engage in a casual chat with them.



Tapping on such occasions can be opportunities for us to share about the possible risks that our children may face in the online environment.