



CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®

*Helping families. Protecting children.*

# The **DOOR** that's not **Locked.**®

## Safety and the Internet:

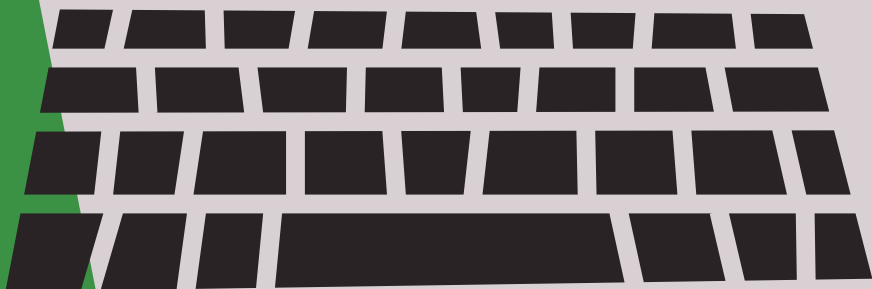
A Guide for Parents  
of Children 10 to 12  
Years of Age



[thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)

The Internet can offer incredible possibilities for kids — as long as children and parents are aware of the risks. In growing a better understanding of the online world, you can in turn empower your child with skills to help her/him engage with technology in a safe and responsible way.

At this age, kids have an increased interest in spending time online for entertainment purposes, socializing and exploring new interests. This brochure includes information about: the common online interests of kids 10 to 12 years of age; considerations around safety; and strategies to build their knowledge and competency online.



The online world is far-reaching and largely uncensored, so you need to know what your kids are facing as they explore it. Below are some strategies you can employ that will help you to keep your child safer while online.

- ✎ **Talk to your child about what s/he likes to do online.** It's important to keep the lines of communication open and stay involved in her/his online activity. Be aware of your child's online interests so you can provide ongoing guidance as s/he becomes interested in new areas.
- ✎ **Learn how to adjust/increase privacy settings.** Most apps and social networking sites have privacy settings that determine who can and can't view a user's profile and information. Learn how to use and increase privacy settings.
- ✎ **Monitor your child's instant messaging (IM) logs (e.g. Skype®, Facebook® Messenger, Google® Talk, KIK® Messenger, WhatsApp® Messenger, textPlus®).** Some chat and social networking apps log the conversations but allow them to be easily deleted with the swipe of a finger. Other apps may log conversations by default or offer settings to save message logs, however, may be difficult to navigate. Others may allow text/video/voice chat without any record of the messages sent between users.

For more information about how to save chat logs please visit [www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca/im\\_history](http://www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca/im_history).

- ✎ **Check your child's files in "My Pictures"** to see what images are being sent, received, and saved by your child.
- ✎ **Stay engaged with how your child is using her/his smartphone.** Discuss with your child what s/he must first consider before sending text messages, updating social networking profiles, sending photos/videos, accessing apps or downloading online content.

# Keeping Children 10 to 12 Years of Age Healthy & Safe

As your child gets older, you will notice changes in her/his behaviour and interests. While it's exciting to see your child seek more independence, there are new personal and online safety concerns that you should be aware of. The following section outlines common characteristics of kids 10 to 12 years of age.

## The Growing Personality

Children 10 to 12 years of age:

- ✂ Begin to develop a sense of who they are by comparing themselves with others
- ✂ Become more sensitive to social judgment
- ✂ Develop an increased interest in role models
- ✂ Have an increased awareness of their bodies (negative feelings about their bodies are common)
- ✂ Develop an increased concern over what is right and wrong, as well as the treatment of others
- ✂ Their capacity for empathy increases
- ✂ Their reasoning power matures — they are more capable of following rules without guidance from others, but are also more capable of rationalizing the breaking of certain rules
- ✂ Want more privacy as they seek independence in their lives
- ✂ Acquire pride and enjoyment from doing something well (e.g. academics, sports, music, art, etc.)
- ✂ Their thinking becomes less 'all or nothing' and more 'shades of grey'
- ✂ Are easily flattered
- ✂ Are less inhibited when communicating electronically
- ✂ Have a reliance on and familiarity with technology
- ✂ Experience a certain degree of stress to be "connected" online all the time
- ✂ Are sensitive to and aware of what their parents/siblings and friends are doing online

## Online Activities

Children 10 to 12 years of age:

- ✗ Use instant messaging programs and apps (e.g. Skype®, Facebook® Messenger, Google® Talk, KIK® Messenger, WhatsApp® Messenger, textPlus®) and email
- ✗ Chat with others online and collect emoticons
- ✗ Are comfortable with Wi-Fi capable devices
- ✗ Are often aware of how to override safety settings, firewalls and pre-requisites for websites (e.g. Facebook® requires a minimum age of 13 to sign up)
- ✗ Research topics and interests using search engines
- ✗ Use online games, download music, send pictures/videos (using digital cameras, smartphones or webcams) and create personal websites
- ✗ Post messages and pictures on social networking sites and blogs (e.g. Facebook®, Twitter®, Blogger® etc.)
- ✗ Play video games
- ✗ Watch and create videos for online video sites (e.g. YouTube®)
- ✗ Use smartphones for activities such as accessing apps, web surfing and sending text and photo/video messages
- ✗ Have multiple accounts on websites

## What Can You Do As a Parent?

- ✗ Balance the amount of time your child spends online with offline activities.
- ✗ Teach your child how to use technology safely.
- ✗ Be aware that instant messaging programs, as well as chat and social networking sites are widely available on smartphones, and there are numerous apps available on phones that children can download for free (for more information, visit [cybertip.ca/pdfs/C3P\\_SafetySheet\\_Smartphones\\_en.pdf](http://cybertip.ca/pdfs/C3P_SafetySheet_Smartphones_en.pdf)).
- ✗ Be aware that some smartphones have settings available for parents to restrict the downloading of apps on their child's phone (e.g. password enabled).
- ✗ Use filtering software (for more information, visit [thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)).
- ✗ Monitor your child's online activities.
- ✗ Explore the online games your child plays to determine if they are age-appropriate. Is the game moderated? Is there a chat component? Are avatars used? Does it contain sexual or violent material?
- ✗ Know your child's login information and email addresses. What usernames or character names has your child given her/himself? They should not contain identifying characteristics about her/him or her/his hobbies (e.g. shygirl, bookworm, etc.).
- ✗ Assist your child with the creation of online profiles when s/he joins social networking or gaming sites. Teach them to fill in only what is necessary, leaving out identifying or revealing information.
- ✗ Monitor your child's webcam use and any posting or exchanging of pictures/videos online/using their smartphone.
- ✗ Don't allow your child to communicate in chat rooms that aren't moderated. Closely supervise chat that occurs in moderated chat rooms.
- ✗ Communicate openly with your child, encouraging her/him to share her/his feelings.
- ✗ Review the social networking sites and apps your child is using to ensure s/he is using appropriate privacy settings

## What Should You Talk to Your Child About?

- ✂ Let your child know that you will monitor her/his online activities, as the Internet is a public place.
- ✂ Create and post Internet guidelines that are discussed on a regular basis.
- ✂ Explain that once pictures/videos are sent, it can be easy to lose control over what happens to them. It is important to encourage your child to check with you before sending or posting any pictures/videos online or sending them using a smartphone.
- ✂ Explain to your child that the Internet is uncensored and s/he may come across sexually inappropriate material while online. This can be very uncomfortable and upsetting for him/her. Ensure that your child understands that s/he can talk to you about anything s/he encounters while on the Internet without fear of losing Internet privileges or getting in trouble. Reinforce your child's use of child-safe search engines (for more information, visit [thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)).
- ✂ Reinforce the idea that not everyone is who they say they are online. People can pretend to be older or younger than they actually are or they can misuse information you share with them.
- ✂ Explain to your child that s/he should trust her/his instincts and block anyone who asks questions online that seem 'weird' (e.g. questions about puberty, sex, etc.). Explain to your child why it is important to tell an adult if this happens as it is likely this individual is behaving inappropriately with other kids too.
- ✂ Talk with your child about friendship — what it is and what it isn't. Explain to your child that s/he needs to be careful with who and how s/he shares personal information. Explain the risks of personal information being misused if shared online.
- ✂ Explain to your child that it's illegal to threaten someone, and that s/he should tell a safe adult if s/he is threatened online.
- ✂ Ensure your child knows s/he has safe adults in her/his life who s/he can talk to.
- ✂ Talk to your child about only adding people s/he knows offline as her/his friends/contacts on social networking sites and apps.



# Quick Facts – Your Child’s Online Interests

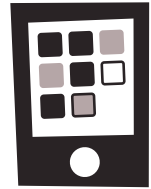


## Wi-Fi Capable Devices

Wi-Fi is a popular technology that allows an electronic device to exchange data wirelessly over a computer network. A device that can use Wi-Fi (such as a personal computer, video game console, smartphone, or tablet) cannot only connect to the Internet but may also connect to other resources on a network such as a webcam, printer or monitor.

## Applications (better known as apps) for Mobile Devices

Apps are software that can be downloaded to a mobile device to extend the functions of the mobile device. These may include games, chat or instant messaging tools, photo or video sharing tools, social networking tools as well as a variety of other features and tools to enhance the device’s capabilities (e.g. Facebook® Messenger, Facetime®, KIK® Messenger, Skout, Text+ (TextPlus®), Viber™, WhatsApp® Messenger).



## Instant Messaging (e.g. Facebook® Messenger, Google® Talk, Gmail®, Skype®)



Instant messaging (also known as IM) allows users to send real-time messages to other users, also known as contacts, friends, or buddies. Short text messages are sent back and forth, and some IM programs also include file transfer (e.g. photo and videos), webcam viewing, voice chat and other applications.

## File Sharing Programs (e.g. uTorrent™, BitTorrent®, Shareaza™, Dropbox®)



These are programs or apps that allow users to easily share files (e.g. videos, images, music, games, etc.) with each other, either through a direct connection to each other or through a centralized server. Peer-to-peer software (also known as P2P) establishes a direct connection to other users’ computers through the peer-to-peer network, allowing users to have direct access to shared files on each other’s computers. The network allows the exchange of files without utilizing a centralized server. Other file sharing web services or apps (e.g. Dropbox®) use a central server where users can upload files to the server and allow other users to download that file from the server.



### Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook®, Twitter®, etc.)

Social networking sites focus on facilitating the building of social networks or relationships among people who may share similar interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. A social networking site features profiles created by each user, information on the user’s social contacts in the network, and provides a means for users to interact with other users over the Internet, such as email and instant messaging. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and interests within the network, thereby encouraging individuals to post personal information (pictures, videos, thoughts, etc.) and chat with others in real time.

#### FACEBOOK® TERMS

- ✗ **Tag** — Allows you to ‘tag’ individuals in photos posted to the social networking site so they are easily identifiable in the image. An individual’s name is associated to the photo once s/he has been tagged in it.
- ✗ **Like** — Users may ‘like’ a post made to the social networking site by another user. Individuals use this to show a positive interest in a photo, video, comment, etc. that has been posted.
- ✗ **Poke** — Allows you to ‘poke’ other users to get their attention. The user will receive a notification that s/he has been poked by another user.
- ✗ **Follow** — Allows users to ‘follow’ other users. Followers can view public posts and are not added as ‘friends’.

#### TWITTER® TERMS

- ✗ **Tweet** — “Tweets” are texted-based messages of up to 140 characters.
- ✗ **Retweet** — A retweet is when a user re-posts someone else’s tweet to her/his followers. Sometimes users type “RT” at the beginning of the tweet to indicate that they are re-posting someone else’s content.
- ✗ **Hashtag** — People use the hashtag symbol “#” before a relevant keyword or phrase (with no spaces) in their tweet to categorize the tweet and help it show more easily in Twitter® searches.





## Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG)

A MMORPG is a type of online game where a large number of players interact with one another in a virtual/fantasy world (e.g. RuneScape®, World of Warcraft®).

## Video Game Consoles (e.g. Nintendo® Wii™, Xbox 360®)

A video game console is an interactive computer or electronic device that uses a TV or monitor to display the video game. Many video game consoles can connect to the Internet so multiple players can interact online. While players can talk to each other through these games, the conversation history cannot be easily saved with these devices.



## Webcam



A webcam is a video camera that is, in many cases, built-in to a computer or wireless device. A webcam may also be a separate device connected to a computer through a wired connection or over Wi-Fi. Video captured by a webcam can be displayed over the Internet in real time and is often used in conjunction with instant messaging or chat applications. A webcam may also be used to capture still images.

## Texting/Messaging Services on smartphones (e.g. SMS/MMS, BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM®), iMessage)

Most cell phones offer the ability to send text, photo and video messages. These messages can be easily deleted, leaving no trace of the message sent, or saved and distributed by malicious users. Many smartphones offer a free texting service with the same capabilities (e.g. BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM®) and iMessage).



## Avatar

An avatar is a pictorial representation of an individual. It may take the form of an animal, creature or person, and is often used in chat forums, games, and personal profiles.

# Common language Used by Children Online

Do you know what your child is saying?

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
asl	age/sex/location
bf/gf	boyfriend/girlfriend
brb	be right back
cam/kam	webcam
g2g/gtg	got to go
h/o	hang on
jk/jks	just kidding/jokes
kk	ok cool
lol	laugh out loud
noob	new individual
nvm	never mind
omg	oh my gosh
pic	picture
plz	please
ppl	people
sxy/sexi	sexy
ttyl	talk to you later
ty	thank you
ud	you would
ur	you are

**TIP:** Sounding out the string of letters may help you understand the word or words. Also try adding letters to a string of text to figure out the word.



# Risks to Children 10 to 12 Years of Age on the Internet

It's important to teach your child strategies that will make her/his online experiences safer.

## Content

### Exposure to Sexually Explicit Material

Kids have never before had such access to sexually graphic and harmful material. The information often misrepresents what a healthy sexual relationship is. Teach your child about healthy sexual development and explain that information online is often inaccurate (refer to the *Kids Being Exposed to Sexually Explicit Material* safety sheet at [thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)).

## Contact

### Building Relationships Online

A large portion of a child's social world has now moved online. The Internet is often used as a tool for positioning oneself within peer groups. Boundaries are often tested in this environment, and lines are more readily crossed. Communication should be closely supervised, as children can quickly find themselves in situations they are not ready to handle. Make sure your child knows you are monitoring her/his online activities. This will help her/him maintain appropriate behaviour.

### Threats and Coercion

Individuals seeking to exploit children online may use threats that could result in a child sending an inappropriate picture/video of her/himself. Talk to your child about the use of threats. Explain that s/he should never comply with threats, and to always go and seek a safe adult for help if threatened.

## Conduct

### The Public Nature of the Internet

Kids underestimate the public nature of the Internet. They engage in private conversations and share private information, unaware of how information shared in confidence may be misused to embarrass them. Teach your child to be mindful of what s/he shares online. Once information is sent, control over it is lost.

### Lack of Boundaries

Boundaries can be quickly crossed online. Individuals looking to victimize children online can quickly turn conversations sexual, asking personal questions about puberty and development. Make sure your child knows to stop any conversation that makes them feel uncomfortable and to talk to a safe adult if they are worried about it.



CANADIAN CENTRE for CHILD PROTECTION®

*Helping families. Protecting children.*

**The Canadian Centre for Child Protection** is a registered charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce child victimization by providing programs and services to Canadians. We do this through Kids in the Know, our personal safety education program ([kidsintheknow.ca](http://kidsintheknow.ca)); Cybertip.ca, our national tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children ([cybertip.ca](http://cybertip.ca)); MissingKids.ca, our national missing children resource centre ([missingkids.ca](http://missingkids.ca)); and Commit to Kids, our program to help organizations prevent child sexual abuse ([commit2kids.ca](http://commit2kids.ca)).

## The Door That's Not Locked — All web. No net.

The web is a wonderful place for kids, if you understand the dangers. The Canadian Centre is committed to helping parents, teachers, and anyone else who would like to better understand the good, the bad, and the ugly about the web. We're here to help keep kids safe while exploring and enjoying the online world. To learn more, visit us at [thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca).

To make a report about the online sexual exploitation of a child, go to [cybertip.ca](http://cybertip.ca).

### Founding Partners:



**Honeywell**

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### Supported by:



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More information on child safety is available at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection's website ([protectchildren.ca](http://protectchildren.ca)) or by contacting us at:

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