



Wee Learn



Wee Learners(4 - 5 years): Internet Safety

Many young children are already active computer users. According to a recent report, one-third of children ages 3-4 access the Internet using a computer and roughly the same number have used mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. While children at this age have a limited attention span for online activities, Internet images and sounds can stimulate their imaginations and add to their experiences. Four and five-year old's may be very capable at using computers, i.e. following commands, using the mouse, and playing online games and apps. They are, however, highly dependent on adults or older children to help them find games, videos and websites, interpret online information or communicate with others.

It's important to realize that children at this age:

- will accept media content at face value
- don't have the critical thinking skills to be online alone
- may be frightened by both real and fictional media images
- may be frightened by realistic portrayals of violence, threats or dangers
- may be troubled by behaviours they encounter while playing in virtual worlds
- risk moving from appropriate to inappropriate sites and content through hyperlinks

Safety tips:

General Supervision

- Always sit with children at this age when they are online
- Use Internet-filtering tools as a complement, not a replacement for parental supervision.
- Protect your children from offensive "pop-ups" by setting your browser to block popups, disabling Java on your computer and/or using blocking software.
- Keep online activities – whether on laptops, tablets or family computers – in common family areas where you can easily monitor what your kids are doing
- Use bookmarks to help them find their favorite pages that you approve of

Building Safety Skills

- Start conversations about respecting privacy online. Tell your kids not to share information about themselves or their family without asking permission from you first
- Have children use an online nickname if a site encourages them to submit their names to "personalize" the Web content
- Although children ages 5-7 are not likely to be using social networking platforms, they are likely to be playing in virtual worlds that permit socializing between players. This is a good time to start talking to your children about the importance of treating others online with kindness and respect.
- Encourage your kids to come to you if they encounter anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened

Source: <https://bit.ly/1IG83wS>

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