



BEAU BIDEN FOUNDATION®

FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Summer Child Safety Packet



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**Online
Predators:**
What You
Need To
Know To
Protect Your
Child Today.



BEAU BIDEN FOUNDATION[®]
FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

The Internet and social media platforms have kicked the doors wide open for child predators to hunt, lure, and groom victims online.

Every day there are at least 500,000 predators online. 1 in 5 children report they've been solicited or contacted by a predator in the last year.

Chances are a child you know has had this experience. It's frightening to think about and terrifying for a child caught in a predator's trap.

How do predators find children online?

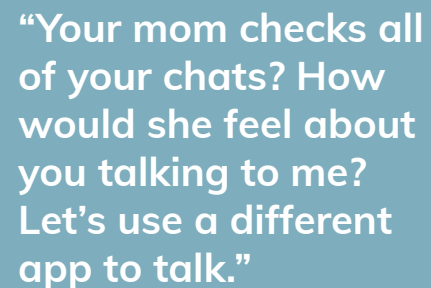
Oftentimes children inadvertently fall into the traps set by predators. 46% of children give information away about themselves online – perfect tools for predators to use to identify victims, build trust and establish relationships around shared interests.

How it starts:

A predator targets a child in a public chat, on a social media platform or in an online game. The predator may comment on a social media post or send a direct message. To gain trust, predators will typically lie about their age – they may adopt a persona that's just a bit older than the potential victim.

Conversations start innocently enough, and a predator may offer small tokens of appreciation, praise, or a willingness to listen at any hour. As the connection develops over time, the predator will offer the child small gifts – in the case of online gaming, the resources or currency used in the game. Perhaps it's a gift card or something seemingly innocent the child may not be able to purchase themselves.

Predators then take the conversation further by asking more private questions, often in a different, more secretive app to test the child's boundaries. Questions turn more personal, as they ask about other relationships the child has – with parents, friends, teachers, other adults. Predators use this information to build walls between a child and peers in their lives to further isolate them.



“Your mom checks all of your chats? How would she feel about you talking to me? Let's use a different app to talk.”



How it progresses:

The goal of the predator is to establish a secret or special relationship with the child – a relationship the child protects.

Once boundaries are tested, the bond is strengthened and the child protects the predator instead of themselves - the predator then begins to slowly sexualize the interactions with the child. As discussions turn sexual, the predators plays to a child's natural curiosity about sexuality: the predators may share nude or partially nude images of themselves or of other children. Discussion around sexual activity primes the child for ongoing sexual conversations.



The predator will likely begin to ask for sexually explicit images and/or videos of the child.

Unfortunately, children will often share explicit images or videos of themselves – from partially clothed to fully nude.

*** Once a child shares images and videos, the predator now has another form of control over a child: the predator threatens to share the images with parents or friends in order to force the child to provide more images and videos. This is known as **sexortion - and it's illegal.****

The key here is power and control – online predators seek to exert control over their victims. From monopolizing the child's time to shaming the child into providing explicit images, the predator moves the relationship from emotionally dependent to emotionally controlling and abusive.

How to help prevent it:

The Internet has granted predators unparalleled and open access to children and sexual content about children. The “Wild West” of the Internet is not a thing of the past – it is rampant with criminal activity and it is up to us to combat online predators. You probably wouldn’t be comfortable with your child playing Frisbee with a 35-year-old stranger - but they’re playing with adults they don’t know online every day.

Please review the tips and questions below to help get the online safety conversation started with your children. We also encourage you to maintain an open and honest dialogue around Internet usage with your children as they get older – the conversation with your 6-year-old is not the same conversation with your 16-year-old.

» Things you can do:

- Pay attention to items your child may have that you did not provide, such as a mobile phone, gift cards, or clothing.
- Ask yourself if your child is being secretive about online activity.
- Talk to your child about online predators in the same way your parents talked to you about “stranger danger” – but be specific.
- Talk to your child about what they’re sharing online. Help them understand how personal information can be used by predators to begin a conversation or establish trust.
- Talk to your child about how to shut down a conversation with someone they suspect is a predator. For example, if your child is asked for their home address, suggest they respond with the address of a local police station.
- Monitor your child’s device. Know what apps they’re using, and the chat functions those apps have built in to them.
- Read their chats.



Things predators may say and that you should be warning your children about.

- Why don’t we talk privately, in a different app?
- Do your parents check your phone or read your conversations?
- Are you a model? You could be, and I can help you with that.
- What’s on your mind? You seem upset – anything you want to talk about?
- Can we meet? Where? (Public places are not safe to meet someone they don’t know.)
- Do you like movies? What kind of music do you like? I love that!



»» Questions you can ask:

You will probably be angry – with your child and yourself. Remember that your child is scared and needs your guidance. Things may have escalated quickly – or slowly. Your child lost control of the conversation. Take a deep breath, remember they are a child and calmly ask:

- Do you remember when this started?
- Do you think you may have told anyone else about your conversations? Did you save any of them?
- Do you remember if you've shared any information like our address, your school, your hobbies or activities?
- Have you sent any pictures?

Your child may not know or remember the answers to these questions – and that's ok.

»» What to do if your child is a victim?

1. Call the police.
2. Take screenshots of the chats, save the communication your child has had with the predator.
3. Block the predator.
4. Report the predator to the app or platform.
5. If your child shared any nude or partially-nude images, contact the CyberTipline at 1-800-THE-LOST or www.CyberTipline.org



Conclusion

I hope the ideas and tips in this eBook help you better understand how predators use social media platforms and the Internet to find, lure and groom children.

The Internet is a very dangerous place for children. As parents and caregivers, it's our responsibility to protect children from dangerous situations and empower them to stand up for themselves.

You might be wondering what you should do next. I have a suggestion: Take a look at the list below of 16+ Apps Parents and Families Need to Know, and then talk to your child about the apps they have on their device. Then, if you haven't already, download our free [Electronic Device Agreement](#). Review it with your child and have them sign it. In my experience (as a parent and as a former prosecutor), having rules and expectations written down really helps.

You can also find more free resources at www.BeauBidenFoundation.org/Resources, and our eBook "[Seven Things You Don't Know About Your Child's Digital Life](#)".

Our team is always here to answer any questions you may have. Feel free to email me at PDL@beaubidenfoundation.org.

Thank you!

Patricia Dailey Lewis, Esq. Executive Director
Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children

➤➤ **16+ Apps Parents and Families Need to Know** Potential harm can come from anywhere —some social media apps can open doors to predators and cyberbullies. Please review these apps with your family and have open conversations with your children and teens about how they spend their time on their smartphones and tablets. *(These apps are based on recommendations from law enforcement agencies across the country, as well as trusted parenting blog. Please note that this list is by no means exhaustive and changes frequently. Published April 2021)*



Among Us is a 4-10 multiplayer deduction game in which players try to "sus" out the imposter. Players have the ability to message one another and are teamed at random - leaving children open to cyberbullying and explicit content.



ASKfm encourages users to allow anonymous people to ask them questions. The app is known for cyberbullying.



BIGO is a live streaming app. It is rated for teens 17+. Users can vlog about their lives, live stream video game play, and host their own shows. This app has been known to facilitate cyberbullying and often contains explicit content.



Calculator+ is only one of several secret "vault" apps. Posing as a fully functioning calculator app, Calculator+ is cleverly disguised to hide and hold private files like photos, messages, and browser history.



Holla is a self-proclaimed "addicting" video chat app that allows users to meet people all over the world in just seconds. Reviewers say they have been confronted with racial slurs, explicit content, and more.



Houseparty allows users to communicate with each other via texts and video chats in a room. Videos are live and unscreened - potentially exposing children to inappropriate content. Users also have the ability to take screenshots and send links through chat.



IMVU (Instant Messaging Virtual Universe) is a virtual world game like SIMS. Users interact as virtual avatars. The Chat Now feature randomly pairs users together and can lead to inappropriate pairings and interactions.



Kik is a texting app with a "face-to-face feel" than regular texting (users' profile pictures appear in a little bubble next to their text, and they can quickly text photos, sketches, or even pre-designed greeting cards to individuals or groups).



Snapchat is a 12+ app that allows users to send photos and videos that disappear after they're received. Users have been known to send explicit photos. While the images "disappear," users can take a screenshot before it vanishes.



Telegram offers self-destructing messaging making the app unsuitable for kids and teens - anyone can send adult and inappropriate content. Usernames are public and can be searched by anyone.



Tellonym is an anonymous messenger app. It calls itself "the most honest place on the internet." This app is extremely popular in middle schools and high schools and it allows kids to ask and answer questions anonymously.



TikTok is a popular app with kids used for creating and sharing short videos. With very limited privacy controls, users are vulnerable to cyberbullying and explicit content.



Tumblr is a 17+ photo-sharing app. It can also be used for sharing videos and chatting. Users can easily access pornographic, violent, and inappropriate content.



Whisper is an anonymous social network that promotes sharing secrets with strangers. It also reveals a user's location so people can meet up. A 12-year-old girl was reportedly raped by a 21-year-old man who met on the app.



YOLO (You Only Live Once) allows users to communicate over Snapchat anonymously. This app provides an opportunity for luring, grooming, and cyberbullying.



Dating Apps like **Tinder**, **Bumble**, **Grindr**, and **Badoo** (to name a few) use GPS tracking to show nearby users interested in flirting, dating, and/or sex. These apps have been known to have users with fake accounts with false information (age, gender, etc.) and as a gateway to obtain personal information, lure, and groom children.

Electronic Device Agreement



This agreement is made between _____ (Parent/s) and _____ (Child) on _____ (Date). By signing this agreement, I agree to follow the rules set by my parent(s) and understand that they have the right to take away my privileges of using a device if I violate any of these pledges and rules. This agreement may apply to the use of a phone, tablet, gaming device, or computer/laptop. I understand that these rules are for the safety and well-being of my family, my friends, and myself.

PARENT(S)

1. Parent(s) will provide the device and be the only owner of the device.
2. Calls/texts from parent(s) will be responded to promptly.
3. Parent(s) will advise child of plan limits including minutes of talk, texts, and data available. Parent(s) may set a separate limit on talk/text.
4. The device will not be used during family time, such as meals, or when prohibited under school, employment, or other rules.
5. When in the home, the device is to be given to parent(s) each night no later than _____ pm. Parent(s) agrees to return the device each morning by _____ am, assuming all rules are followed.
6. Parent(s) are to be immediately notified of suspicious, inappropriate, sexual or threatening messages or images.
No penalty will occur as a result of advising parent(s) of this circumstance.

CHILD

7. Child will keep settings at "private" and not share password to anyone besides parent(s), including friends.
8. "Send" is forever. "Post" is forever. Remember that once something is sent or posted online, it cannot be undone, even if deleted or hidden. The device will not be used in an improper or illegal manner, including:
 - a. Sending or forwarding messages, emails or any form of communication that is mean, uses offensive language or may hurt or embarrass any other person.
 - b. Taking or sharing pictures that are nude/semi-nude or that depict myself or others behaving in an inappropriate or illegal manner.
 - c. Using a device to engage in any improper behavior or behavior that violates family rules.
9. Devices may not be used before _____ am or after _____ pm, unless the child is out of the home and contacting parent(s) or for an emergency situation (911).
10. For safety, the child will not reveal the specific place they are at when they are there. For example, they will not post a picture saying, "At the park with my friend and now we're heading home."
11. Child agrees not to use any device until homework is completed, unless the device is being used for homework purposes.

CONSEQUENCES

12. Failure to follow these rules may result in the following penalties:
 - a. Removal of device privileges, length of which is to be determined by the parent(s).
 - b. Amendment of agreement to provide stricter rules.
 - c. Loss of other privileges, such as spending time with friends.

Child Signature

Date

Parent(s) Signature

Date

SUMMER CAMP SAFETY TIP SHEET

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The Beau Biden Foundation strives to ensure that children are protected year-round. Since screening of camps and programs are critical to child safety, the Beau Biden Foundation suggests parents or caregivers ask the following questions to assess a camp's child protection policies.

WHAT ARE THE SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM'S POLICIES AROUND CHILD PROTECTION?

- Does the summer camp/program have a stand-alone **Child Protection Policy**?
- Does the policy require all staff and volunteers to have a: finger print background check; sex offender, child protection, and adult abuse registry checks; and motor vehicle record check?
- Does the camp or program provide education for children around predator awareness, Internet Safety and bullying/cyberbullying?
- Does the camp or program require training for all staff and volunteers regarding their mandated reporter responsibility, recognizing abuse and neglect, and responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse and neglect?

What safety measures are in place regarding interactions between adults and children?

- Are all interactions with children always interruptible and observable, whether in-person or virtual?
- Are online connections between staff/volunteers and children outside of camp programming prohibited (i.e. "friending" or "following" and online gaming)?
- What are the guidelines around appropriate vs. inappropriate touch?
- Who is the point of contact if there is an issue with child safety?



Are interactions among children adequately supervised?

- Are older children responsible for supervising younger children?
- Are the hidden/secluded areas on-site assessed for safety?
- Is there a code of conduct for campers which prohibits bullying behaviors?



What are the parameters for supervision and accountability?

- Are parents required to sign children in and out each day? Is this monitored by staff?
- Are children only released to pre-authorized individuals for pick-up?
- Does the camp's staff-to-child ratio account for the age and development of the children being served?
- What safeguards are in place for high risk situations and settings (such as: bath and changing rooms, application of sunscreen, naptime and field trips or overnight stays)?

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Reporting abuse and neglect can protect a child and get help for a family. Anyone can report suspected child abuse and neglect. In many states, **every adult is a mandated reporter.**

Other states require certain adults to report suspected child abuse and neglect; generally mandated reporters include adults who provide care for children, including camp counselors and volunteers.

All reports of child abuse and neglect should be made **immediately** to the state where abuse is believed to occur.

[Click here](#) to find the child abuse hotline number for your community.

SUPERVISION RATIOS

0–5 years: 1 staff for each 5 overnight campers and 1 staff for each 6 day campers

6–8 years: 1:6 for overnight and 1:8 for day

9–14 years: 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day

15–18 years: 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day

How are emergency situations handled?

- Are staff and volunteers provided a policy and prepared for an emergency? (i.e. missing child, medical emergency, disclosure of abuse, lockdown, or evacuation)
- Is there an established policy for communicating to parents or caregivers during an emergency?

Guidelines for staff interaction with children should include:

- All interactions between adults and children should be observable and interruptible.
- Children should never receive gifts of any kind from staff or volunteers.
- Summer camp counselors or volunteers should not “friend” or “follow” children on any personal social media accounts. They should never have one-on-one electronic communication, such as texting or direct messaging, with staff or volunteers.
- All photos or videos require prior written authorization by a parent or caregiver and should not be posted on an adult’s personal social media accounts unless the image was made “sharable” on the camp’s social media platforms.
- Guidelines must be established to address appropriate versus inappropriate touch and positive discipline strategies to further protect children when away from home.
- Children should be treated equally with respect to gender, race, religion, culture, or ability. This policy should be upheld for peers, as well as staff members and volunteers.
- Children should never be transported alone or in a staff member’s personal vehicle.
- Employee or volunteer interactions with campers outside of camp must be addressed in policy.



WHAT PARENTS/CAREGIVERS CAN DO TO HELP ENSURE THEIR CHILD IS SAFE

- **Read camp policies before enrolling your child to ensure child protection is a priority!**
- **Encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable or worried about something.**
- **Alternate pick-up/drop-off times when possible and observe your child interacting with staff/volunteers.**
- **Talk to your child at pick-up about their day by using open-ended questions.**



MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For more information and resources, please visit BeauBidenFoundation.org.