

Sexting

Young children

Sexting refers to the sending of sexual messages, photos or videos using a mobile phone. It can also refer to posting this type of material online.

Young children are generally not involved in sexting. If they do have access to a mobile phone camera or web cam, it's important to establish general rules about how they use these tools to ensure they are responsible and safe. The following tips can help to manage your child's use of mobile phones, web cams and their own and others' images.

- Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if they find images that worry or frighten them.
- Teach your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anyone, a child or adult asks them to do something that seems wrong or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Talk to young children about the kinds of things it is okay to photograph of and share, and the things that should not be photographed or shared with others. The rules you make will depend on the age of your child and your family's personal standards and expectations.
- If your child is exposed to inappropriate content and appears distressed talk with them about it. If necessary seek professional support, including through the Cybersmart Online Helpline at www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx. The Cybersmart Online Helpline provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people. If of school age, your child's school may also be able to provide guidance or support.

More information

The Cybersmart program provides a range of cybersafety materials for parents and their children. For more information, resources, advice and tips, visit the Cybersmart website at www.cybersmart.gov.au. Encourage your children and teens to take a look around the website. If you have young children, you may like to explore it together to help them understand how to protect themselves against online risks and make the most of their experiences online.