

FOR PARENTS OF KIDS AGES 7 TO 12

Conversation Guide for Parents

A short, low-pressure guide for talking with a younger child about strangers online, oversharing, and asking before clicking. Drawn from FamilyShield Online's predators & grooming and Kids Corner guides.

Questions to ask, by name, not just "how was your day"

- Who have you been talking to online lately? What's their name?
- Has anyone you don't know in real life ever asked you to keep something secret from me?
- Has anyone online ever asked to move your chat to a different app?
- Has anyone sent you a gift, in-game currency, or money without a clear reason?
- Is there anything online that's confused you or made you feel weird lately?

Signs worth a gentle check-in

None of these mean something is wrong on their own. They're worth noticing together, and worth a calm conversation rather than taking the device away first.

- Switching screens or hiding chats when you walk in
- New gifts, in-game currency, or money with no clear explanation
- Talking about an online "friend" who is noticeably older
- Pulling back from family, friends, or activities they used to enjoy
- Getting upset or anxious around device time
- Resistance to putting the phone down, even briefly

How to keep the conversation working

- Build a no-blame culture. A child who fears getting in trouble hides problems longer
- Keep gaming and chat friends limited to people your child actually knows in real life
- Keep devices in shared spaces, especially overnight, for this age group
- If something has already happened, don't delete anything, screenshots and chat logs help
- Combine any monitoring tools with real conversation. Software can flag risk, it doesn't replace trust

Full guide, including the 6-stage grooming pattern and what to do if you're concerned:
familyshieldonline.com/threats/predators-and-grooming.html