

Parent Guide

CyberSmart Kids — Lesson 3: Tell a Grown-up

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What this lesson covers

The most important lesson in the Kids track. It tells the child explicitly that they will never get in trouble for telling a grown-up about something that happened online — even if they broke a rule or saw something they don't understand. It names four trigger situations: things that feel weird, requests for personal info, unwanted pictures, and being asked to keep secrets.

Conversation starters

- If something weird happened online, who would you tell first?
- What if it was something you thought you'd get in trouble for — would you still tell?
- Has anything online ever made you feel weird?

What to watch for

Watch for unexplained behavior changes — withdrawing, anxiety around devices, sudden changes in the apps or accounts used. These can be signs that something happened your child hasn't told you about. Give them quiet time without devices and an open invitation to talk.

Follow-up activity

Make a “telling promise” out loud: “If something happens online and you tell me, the first thing I will do is hug you. Then we'll figure it out together. You will not get in trouble for telling.” Repeat this promise periodically — children internalize it through repetition.

If something serious comes up

If your child discloses something involving sexual content, threats, or any form of online exploitation, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline accepts reports 24/7 at cybertipline.org or 1-800-843-5678. You do not have to handle it alone.

You will never get in trouble for telling. That is the rule, always. — The Safe Click Project