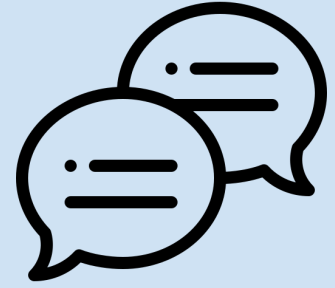# What is the #1 thing to help keep your family cyber safe?

There are internet filters, settings on apps, age restrictions, websites to avoid and social media to be wary of...but above all of these, the key to keeping your children safe online is COMMUNICATION.

We asked cyber safety educator, psychologist and mother of three, Carley McGauran to share her insights into how communication can help keep your family safe online:

I often get asked by parents what they can do to keep their children safe online. Above all else I continually highlight the importance of communication. Here are 4 tips that evidence suggests will best keep your children safe:

Share their tech interest
Discuss and ask questions about their online activities, just as you would embrace their interest in sport, music or any other extracurricular activity.

Help kids access other support
For lots of reasons children won't always want to talk to parents. Let them know it's okay to talk with other trusted adults, for example teachers, aunts/uncles or Kids Helpline.

Don't overreact
Be "curious not furious" (Lisa Smith from The Peaceful Parent has lots of other great ideas). If children think you'll overreact, this will be a big barrier to them sharing anything with you.

Validate their feelings
Kids need to feel heard (well we all do actually) so comments like "don't be such a drama queen" or "it's not a big deal, don't be ridiculous" will discourage them from talking to you as they feel like you have "dismissed" their feelings. You need to give your children a safe space to explore their feelings. Say things like "Tell me more about what happened" & "How did that make you feel?"

Effective communication also means having the 'tricky' conversations with you children, including cyberbullying, pornography, sending nudes & sexting and unwanted contact (grooming). As challenging as these conversations can feel, you as a parent NEED to open up the dialogue in order to best keep your children safe. To get some expert help with "**when to say what**" and more, visit:

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