

Most of us never got this talk ourselves.

If you grew up on MSN, MySpace, or the early years of Facebook, you learned the internet by stumbling through it. Some of it was useful. A lot of it was not. The stakes are higher now, but most of us are still parenting from the same playbook our parents used: don't talk to strangers, be home for dinner.

This deck assumes you're catching up at the same time your kids are growing up. That's fine. You don't need to be a tech expert. You need to be the person they come to when something feels off, and that has nothing to do with how much you know about Roblox.

Why "the want" actually matters

When a kid asks for an app, they're rarely asking for the app. They're asking for what the app does. Snapchat is filters and friends. Roblox is hanging out with mates. TikTok is feeling like part of the conversation at school. If you can name the real want, you can often meet it somewhere safer. If you can't, you end up saying no to a moving target.

Why scams are everyone's problem now

You're not paranoid. The game changed. Scammers used to need broken English and a sob story. Now they have AI that can write in fluent Australian, clone a voice from a 30-second clip, and put your face on a video call. The defence isn't being smarter than them. The defence is a simple habit: if anything feels urgent, financial, or off, verify on a different channel. Text feels weird? Ring them. Email from the boss? Walk over. That's the whole trick.

Why your kid's friend group matters more than the apps

The platforms change. The dynamics don't. The kid who'd peer-pressure your kid on Instagram would have done the same on MSN in 2003. The stranger who'd groom a teenager in a Discord server was running the same playbook in a Pokémon chat room twenty years ago. Tools where they help. Conversations where they matter.

THE ONE THING

If you take nothing else from this deck, take this: the kid who comes to you when something goes wrong is safer than the kid who hides it. Most kids who get caught up in something online weren't reckless. They were embarrassed. Make sure your kid knows the door is always open, no matter what they clicked.



WANT MORE THAN THE CARDS?

Scan for the printable deck and more starters.

The four-rules guide, age tips, and fresh questions as they drop.

theonlinesafetydeck.au



The Online Safety Conversation Deck

A deck of 24 conversation cards in 4 colour-coded categories. Designed to help families talk about apps, identity, and trust online.

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A few guidelines.

- 1 One card a week is plenty.
- 2 You ask. Then YOU answer first.
- 3 No wrong answers. Aim for the chat.
- 4 If a card opens something, follow it.

THE FOUR CONVERSATION TYPES

- Decode the Want
- Spot the Weird
- Trust & Verify
- The Long View



01 / 24

DECODE THE WANT

If you could only have one app, which would it be, and what does it actually do for you?

The app isn't the want. The thing it does is.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



02 / 24

DECODE THE WANT

What's a game you love because of who you play it with, not what the game is?

Most kids want the people. The game is the excuse.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



03 / 24

DECODE THE WANT

If everyone at school had a different phone, would you still want yours?

What's a real want, and what's a copy-the-others want.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



04 / 24

DECODE THE WANT

Name something fun on a phone that doesn't involve other people seeing it.

Filters, drawing, music, photography. All the fun, none of the strangers.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



05 / 24

DECODE THE WANT

What's something you wanted ages ago that you're glad you didn't get?

Helps everyone hear that 'not yet' isn't 'not ever.'

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



06 / 24

DECODE THE WANT

What's the youngest age you reckon a kid should have a phone? Why?

Their answer tells you what they think the rules are for.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



07 / 24

SPOT THE WEIRD

A friend you haven't spoken to in months messages 'can you help me?' What do you do?

Hacked accounts use real friend lists. Verify on a different channel.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



08 / 24

SPOT THE WEIRD

You 'won' something you never entered. What's actually going on?

The classic. Free stuff costs your data, your password, or both.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



09 / 24

SPOT THE WEIRD

Someone says 'do this right now, don't tell anyone.' Friend, stranger, anyone. What does that mean?

Urgency plus secrecy is the scammer's signature move.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



10 / 24

SPOT THE WEIRD

If a friend started typing in a way that didn't sound like them, would you notice?

Voice is a fingerprint. The way someone writes is part of who they are.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



11 / 24

SPOT THE WEIRD

When does a video ask you to log in again, and why?

Fake login pages are everywhere. Real ones don't show up mid-video.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



12 / 24

SPOT THE WEIRD

If you saw a video of me asking for money, would you believe it?

Deepfakes need a phone and an afternoon now. Hang up. Ring back on the number you already have.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



13 / 24

TRUST & VERIFY

If something feels off in a message, what's the next move?

Different channel. Phone for text. Text for email. Walk over if you can.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



14 / 24

TRUST & VERIFY

Name three people you'd ring at 10pm if something online went sideways.

Make the list before you need it. Practice ringing them.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



15 / 24

TRUST & VERIFY

What's something you'd come to me about even if you thought I'd be cross?

The most important card in the deck. The faster they tell you, the more options you have.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



16 / 24

TRUST & VERIFY

If your password got out, what's the first thing you'd do?

Change it from a different device. Tell someone. Don't pay anyone.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



17 / 24

TRUST & VERIFY

What does 'don't follow links in messages' actually mean?

Type the website in fresh, or use a bookmark. Don't trust the link in the message.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



18 / 24

TRUST & VERIFY

What's a healthy reaction to feeling embarrassed about something online?

Embarrassment keeps kids quiet. Quiet makes it worse. Talking makes it smaller.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



19 / 24

THE LONG VIEW

If a photo of you today turned up in 10 years, would you mind?

The internet has a memory. Today is forever.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



20 / 24

THE LONG VIEW

What's the difference between a username and your real name online?

One protects you, one identifies you. Pick the right one for the place.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



21 / 24

THE LONG VIEW

What would a future boss see if they searched your name today?

Frame it positively. What do you WANT them to find?

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



22 / 24

THE LONG VIEW

What's the best thing about being online?

Don't make the deck all doom. They love it because it's brilliant.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What's something you saw online this week that turned out to be wrong?

Practising the muscle that says 'check before share.'

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What rules about the internet should change as you get older?

Rules grow with the kid. Let them have a say in their own.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



YOUR OWN QUESTION



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