

# A Parent Guide to Online Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking During COVID-19



This guide is meant to inform and empower parents with tools to ensure that our children are staying safe online. It is an abridged version of a guide that is available on ECPAT-USA's website. For the complete guide, which includes more information about the terms used below and specific instructions on how to adjust the privacy settings for the major social media platforms, visit [ecpatusa.org/onlinesafetytips](https://ecpatusa.org/onlinesafetytips).

## What is Online Sexual Exploitation?

Online sexual exploitation includes recruiting, live-streaming, consuming [child sexual abuse material](#) (formerly known as “child pornography”), and coercing and blackmailing children for sexual purposes. Terms to know include: **Grooming\***, **Catfishing**, **Sexting**, **Sextortion**, **Revenge Porn**, **Child Sex Trafficking**.

## Signs of Online Sexual Exploitation or Trafficking

This period of social distancing offers an opportunity to monitor for common indicators of trafficking and online exploitation. Below are some behaviors to consider if your child:

1. frequently exits and enters the home despite travel prohibitions;
2. works excessively for a new virtual or outside home “job”;
3. displays signs of depression, anxiety, loss of self-confidence;
4. exhibits signs of abuse;
5. fears authority figures;
6. receives sums of money from an unknown source;
7. change in typical sleep patterns;
8. spends an increased amount of time online or on the phone, checking in with an unidentified “friend;”
9. change in appearance;
10. unexpected package deliveries.

It is important to note that there is no one red flag to spot trafficking, and professionals in the anti-trafficking field typically look for multiple indicators when working with victims.

## It's Your Responsibility To Understand E-Technology

If you are the parent of a teen or tween, chances are that your child has a much more comfortable relationship with internet technology than you do. That's normal, but to help protect them, it's essential to be aware of some important information: **Privacy Settings\***; Limit Identifying Information; Set Rules about Where and How Your Child Uses Social Media; Set Rules about Where and How Your Child Uses Online Gaming Sites; Beware of New “Friend” Requests; Block and Monitor Certain Sites.

## Speak With Your Kids

Knowledge is Power. Take an Interest in Their Friends. Create a Safe Space.

\*For complete definitions of these terms and specific instructions on how to adjust the privacy settings for the major social media platforms, visit [ecpatusa.org/onlinesafetytips](https://ecpatusa.org/onlinesafetytips).

ECPAT-USA is the leading anti-child trafficking organization in the United States seeking to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children through awareness, advocacy, policy, and legislation. [www.ecpatusa.org](https://www.ecpatusa.org)