



CPF 00039-2022-CID461-9H

7 November 2022

Combatting Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

Online sexual exploitation of minors, anyone under the age of 18, is a global problem. A vastly underreported crime, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received slightly more than 29 million tips of suspected child sexual exploitation during 2021, 7.5 million more than NCMEC received during 2020. The number of data files, i.e., images, videos, and other file types, NCMEC received containing child sexual abuse material exceeded 84 million files, with 44 million of those files being videos.

Minors, having access to internet-connected devices at early ages, are easily accessible through social media, email, texting, video game platforms, online forums, chat rooms, message boards, and dating applications; the child sexual predators are aware of this.

The Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is committed to preventing child exploitation and crimes against children, educating the greater Army family about child exploitation, and investigating child exploitation and other crimes impacting children. The information below briefly describes categories of online sexual exploitation, indicators to look for, ways to protect children, and how to report and get help.

Online sexual exploitation of minors includes a wide range of abuse and behaviors, but some of the common forms include:

Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)

CSAM includes any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor.

Online Enticement of a Child

Online Enticement includes communication online with a suspected minor with the intent to abduct or sexually exploit the minor, establish a meet-up with the minor for a sexual encounter, solicitate sexually explicit photos from the minor, or engage in child grooming, building trust, with the minor to later manipulate, exploit, or abuse them.

Sextortion

Sextortion, frequently beginning as a form of online enticement, is a type of sexual exploitation that typically comes in the form of blackmail or a threat of sharing the victim's sexually explicit images to the public, friends, and/or family. It can also include trying to obtain money or additional sexually explicit images from the victim.

Sexting

Sexting includes sharing and/or receiving sexually explicit messages, images, or videos through text messaging.

Child Sex Trafficking

Child Sex Trafficking is the exploitation of a minor through a sexual activity. The minor may be exchanged for a sexual activity by payment of money, drugs, or anything of value.

**Report a crime to the
Department of the Army
Criminal Investigation Division**

**Cyber Directorate
27130 Telegraph Road
Quantico, Virginia 22134**

Email

Cyber Directorate Web Page

CID LOOK OUT
ON POINT FOR THE ARMY

DISTRIBUTION:

**This document is authorized for the
widest release without restriction.**

Online Sexual Exploitation Indicators

The following list includes some common indicators minor children victims of online sexual exploitation may exhibit.

- Spending an increasing amount of time online, especially at night.
- Not being able to talk about what they are viewing online.
- Becoming possessive, secretive, and attempting to hide the screen of their electronic device.
- Showing signs of anger and irritation when asked about online content being viewed.
- Unexplained personality changes or mood swings when discussing the use of electronic devices or online activity.
- Self-harm or mentioning self-harm or suicide.
- Not sharing names of online friends.
- Sharing inappropriate images with others.

Ways to Protect Children Online

A perfect platform or application for preventing online sexual exploitation of minors does not exist. However, adults can take action to reduce the risk of a minor becoming a victim.

- Talk to minors about appropriate online activities and behavior. [NetSmartz Resources](#) has excellent age-appropriate resources for parents, educators, and communities.
- Become familiar with the technology platforms minors use.
- Keep game consoles and other devices minors use in an easy to supervise location.
- Be aware of internet connected devices accessible to minors.
- Use privacy controls when setting up accounts.
- Have minors choose appropriate screen names or online monikers. Avoid using a minor's real name, do not use meaningful numbers, avoid including location information, keep the moniker non sexual and without vulgar, to avoid attracting sexual predators, and do not use the same moniker across multiple platforms.
- Set rules for minors about what can be shared online.
- Discuss with minors to never give out information online to include passwords, home address, location, phone number, or email address.
- Educate minors about the risks of communicating with and responding to online strangers online.
- Discuss with minors the need to be cautious about meeting someone in person that was met online.

Getting Help

Minors of online sexual exploitation may feel hopeless and, in some cases, commit suicide. If a minor is showing signs of suicidal ideations or emotional distress, reach out to the National Suicide Hotline by phone at 988 or [online](#).

If you suspect a minor has been victimized, contact your local CID office or law enforcement agency and report the incident to the [NCMEC CyberTipline](#). If you have access to the devices used to exploit the minor, do not delete any communication or content shared between the minor and the suspected exploiter.

Additional Resources:

[NCMEC - Netsmartz](#)

[Internet Crimes Against Children \(ICAC\) – Internet Safety](#)

[FBI – Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers: Protecting Your Kids](#)

[Federal Trade Commission – Protecting Kids Online](#)

[Homeland Security Investigations - iGuardians](#)

[Department of Justice – Citizen’s Guide to U.S. Federal Law on Child Pornography](#)

To receive future Cyber Directorate Cybercrime Prevention Flyers, send an email to: [Subscribe CPF](#)

Disclaimer: The appearance of hyperlinks in this Cybercrime Prevention Flyer, along with the views and opinions of authors, products or services contained therein do not constitute endorsement by CID. These sites are used solely for authorized activities and information that support the organization's mission. CID does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these link locations.