

Online Safety Teaching Ideas for Early Years (Ages 3–5)

1. Teach the “Ask a Grown-Up First” Rule

Children learn that they should always check with a trusted adult before using devices or apps.

Activity: Show children a tablet, laptop and phone and ask what they should do before using them. Encourage the response 'Ask a grown-up first!'

2. Trusted Adult Circle

Help children identify trusted adults they can speak to if something online worries them.

Activity: Draw a circle with the child in the middle and place pictures of trusted adults around it such as parents, teachers, key people and grandparents.

3. Role-Play With Puppets

Use puppets to act out simple online scenarios.

Example: A puppet sees something confusing on a tablet. Ask children what the puppet should do. Encourage the answer: tell a grown-up.

4. Screen vs Real World Sorting Game

Provide picture cards of items such as tablets, phones, toys, books and outdoor equipment.

Children sort them into two groups: 'Screens' and 'Not Screens'.

5. Feelings and Online Safety

Use emotion cards such as happy, confused and worried.

Discuss how children might feel if they see something unexpected online and remind them to tell a trusted adult.

6. Story Time Discussions

Pause during stories or videos and ask children what they would do if something online worried them. This helps children practise thinking about safe choices.

7. Create a “Safe Technology Rules” Poster

Children help design classroom rules such as asking before using devices, telling an adult if something worries them and being kind online.

8. Link With Parents

Share simple reminders with parents such as talking regularly about online activities, keeping devices in shared spaces and encouraging children to tell an adult if something online worries them.