

1 AUGUST 2021

## Parents urged to prioritise digital parenting as harm reports surge

**As Netsafety Week concludes, Netsafe reminds parents about the influential role they have to keep kids safe on the internet.**

Over the last three years, Netsafe has seen a 38 percent increase in incident reports from people aged 21 and under experiencing a problem on the internet. Hundreds of young people have come to Netsafe about topics including bullying and abuse.

New Zealand's dedicated online safety agency expect the reporting trend to continue to reflect its research showing one in five young people have been the target of online bullying.

This is timely as a Netsafe study has found that parents of younger children are more likely to help their kids manage risk and access digital opportunities than those raising older tamariki.

The research revealed as children get older, parents were less likely to talk to them about what they do online (66 percent of 9-11-year-olds' parents said they often/very often did this compared to 56 percent and 39 percent for those aged 12-14 and 15-17, respectively).

The study, *Global Kids Online: Digital Parenting Strategies and Behaviours of New Zealand Parents*, is being released as part of Netsafety Week, which runs until 30 July.

The most common parenting behaviour respondents identified as doing was talking to their children about their online activities. The least was sharing activities with children, with 91 percent and 64 percent respectively doing these activities at least sometimes

"This is good news as we know that regular proactive conversations at home does minimise the damage if things do go wrong on the internet," says Martin Cocker, Netsafe CEO. "As children get older it's important that these conversations continue as they face evolving challenges and still require your support.

There's a misconception that parents need to be tech experts to properly support their tamariki, but sharing life experiences, engaging in the activities their child is undertaking and using the tools available are an invaluable part of helping your child."

Over three-quarters of parents, caregivers and whānau reported trying out the digital parenting activities measured by Netsafe's study, which included:

- *Suggesting* ways to use the internet safely
- *Talking* to children about what they do on the internet
- *Doing* shared activities together on the internet
- *Discussing* what to do if something online bothers or upsets them
- *Explaining* why some websites are appropriate or inappropriate
- *Helping* children when something bothers them on the internet

Parents of younger children were more likely to say these utilised strategies, particularly those with children aged 9 to 11.

The study also found some differences in parenting approaches depending on the gender and ethnicity of the child. Those raising girls were more likely to talk to their child about what to do if something bothers or upsets them online. Parents of Asian children frequently shared activities with their child on the internet (30 percent), while New Zealand European/Pakeha children were least likely to do this (21 percent).

As part of Netsafety Week, Netsafe released several resources to support parents and help them participate in their child's activities including the *Online Gaming Whānau Toolkit* a seven-step framework to guide parents trying to understand the gaming world.

"We understand parents are busy juggling all sorts of things in their days, but we hear time and time again from them that they want advice on how to teach online safety at home," Cocker says.

"While it is true kids are learning in schools, some of the most important foundations are taught at home and showing an interest in what your child is doing goes a long way in supporting them."

Netsafe has also partnered with TikTok to release a Family Safety Toolkit. TikTok is a leading destination for short-form mobile video, with a mission to inspire creativity and bring joy. With a growing community of Gen Zs through to Boomers on TikTok in New Zealand, the platform is a diverse place for all.

The new Toolkit contains practical online safety tips for parents to support their teens' digital life, as well as information on safe online behaviour on TikTok.

"At TikTok, we work around the clock to ensure our platform is a positive place for everyone - teens in particular. Our collaboration with Netsafe on the Family Safety Toolkit is an important resource for Kiwi families to learn about online safety and digital citizenship. Partnerships with organisations like Netsafe are an important part our strategies for helping to keep our community safe," said Brent Thomas, Global Public Policy Director, TikTok Australia and New Zealand.

"Helping kids access online opportunities safely is important and it can be challenging for parents to strike this balance", says Cocker. "Regardless of how your child is, it is worth having ongoing conversations with them about how they're using devices, what platforms they're on and who they're connecting to as it goes a long way in keeping them safe."

More useful digital parenting advice can be found at [netsafe.org.nz](https://netsafe.org.nz).

**-ENDS-**

#### **Media contact**

Angela Boundy, Marketing and Communications Manager  
+64 27 228 3930 | [angelab@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:angelab@netsafe.org.nz)

#### **About Netsafety Week**

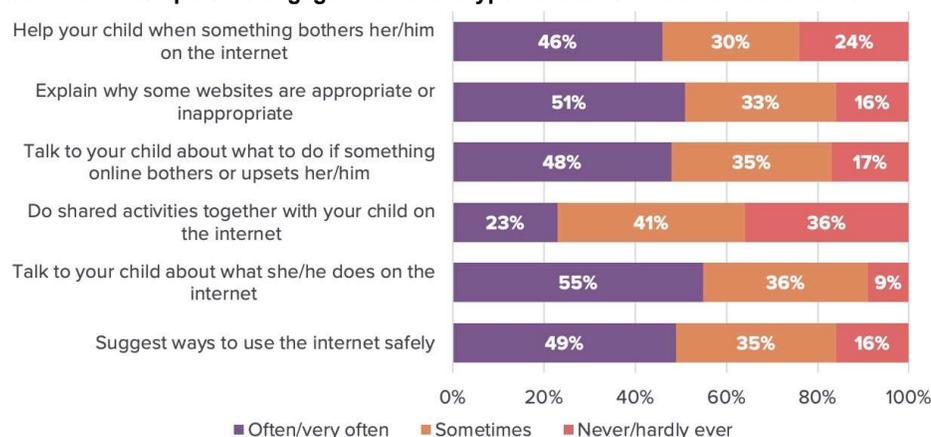
Netsafety Week took place between 26-30 July. This is the first time New Zealand has held a dedicated online safety week, which was designed to *Make Aotearoa Safer Online*. Hundreds of schools, organisations and charities joined together to inspire positive change and share advice to help the community stay safe online.

#### **About Digital Parenting Strategies and Behaviours of New Zealand Parents study**

Netsafe has adopted the Global Kids Online project's research toolkit, which provides researchers with guidance to carry out reliable and standardised national research on the

opportunities, risks and challenges in the digital age. This study's findings are national research on the opportunities, risks and challenges in the digital age. The data was gathered in 2018 and had a sample size of 2061 parents and children broadly representative by age, gender, and ethnicity.

**Question: How often parents engage in different types of active mediation behaviours**



Question	Total	Mothers	Fathers
<b>I have good knowledge of risks young people face online</b>			
Strongly disagree	2	2	2
Disagree	10	11	9
Neither agree nor disagree	19	19	18
Agree	53	50	55
Strongly agree	17	18	16
<b>I am confident I know specific things my child do online and what services they use</b>			
Strongly disagree	2	2	2
Disagree	14	15	13
Neither agree nor disagree	21	24	19
Agree	47	44	50
Strongly agree	16	16	16
<b>I have explored my child's online world with them</b>			
Strongly disagree	1	2	1
Disagree	14	18	11
Neither agree nor disagree	27	27	28
Agree	42	41	44
Strongly agree	15	13	17
<b>My child and I have a clear agreement about where they can go online and what they can do</b>			
Strongly disagree	1	2	0
Disagree	9	12	6
Neither agree nor disagree	25	25	26
Agree	45	48	42
Strongly agree	21	14	26
<b>I feel like my child has good baseline knowledge about managing their safety online</b>			
Strongly disagree	6	6	7
Disagree	16	18	15
Neither agree nor disagree	25	25	26
Agree	43	39	46
Strongly agree	10	12	7
<b>I'd be happy if my child behaved like I do online</b>			
Strongly disagree	2	2	3
Disagree	9	11	7
Neither agree nor disagree	21	27	17

Agree	47	43	50
Strongly agree	21	17	24
As a family, we know what to do if something goes wrong online			
Strongly disagree	2	2	2
Disagree	14	14	14
Neither agree nor disagree	24	27	21
Agree	50	48	51
Strongly agree	11	10	12