Teaching Healthy Content Choices to K-5th Grade Youth - Leader Guide

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Foundation

Kids' bodies and brains are impacted by their digital habits. In order to enjoy a happy and healthy life in today's digital culture they must understand the risks and pitfalls of harmful content. This guide features a compelling children's book and offers correlating activities to help families and communities work towards digital health.

iKeepSafe

Contents

iKeepsafe Mission + Vision

The iKeepSafe mission is to provide a safe digital landscape for children, schools, and families by supporting the protection of student privacy, while advancing learning in a digital culture. To support this mission, we provide data privacy certifications to technology companies, educational resources to schools, and information to the community.

About iKeepSafe

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition© (iKeepSafe) certifies digital products as compliant with state and federal requirements for handling protected personal information. We help organizations achieve and maintain compliance through product assessments, monthly monitoring, annual training, and assistance with remediation.

Governors, First Spouses, and State Attorneys General from throughout the United States joined with law enforcement agencies, and child safety advocates in the formation of the Internet Keep Safe Coalition© (iKeepSafe) a national effort promoting the safe and healthy use of technology. iKeepSafe was founded by Jacalyn S. Leavitt, former First Lady of Utah, in 2005. Over the past decade, iKeepSafe has evolved into a leading organization trusted internationally by families, educators, and industry. Visit our resources page for parent and educator content.

Introduction and Instructions for Youth Leaders

Teaching youth about choosing healthy content online--and avoiding unhealthy content--is a vital part of helping them succeed in our digital world. We want parents and leaders to have the resources they need to effectively guide youth to use technology in a way that enhances their relationships, improves their health and wellbeing, and makes them more productive.

Teaching Healthy Content to K-5th Graders is designed to address the technology challenges identified in iKeepSafe's research, and the research conducted by our partner experts, to help families and communities work towards digital health.

Parents: Review Healthy Content Choices Parent Tips for background information and practical tips on modeling good digital hygiene in your household. Plan to attend the group meeting with your child.

The materials in this Course are designed to be presented in two youth meetings; the first meeting will introduce and discuss healthy content choices. The second meeting will provide supporting youth activities. Leaders should plan to invite parents of K-5 youth to attend the meetings with their child.

Meeting Preparation for Youth Leaders:

- Watch the *Wise Tech Choices: Healthy Content Leader Videos 1-4* available at iKeepSafe's Youtube channel "*Wise Tech Choices: Healthy Content*"
- Download PDF book ***Faux Paw and a Time to ACT.*** Print or prepare to show book to youth via a digital device.
- Review all content in this packet that includes information, step-by-step instructions, and activity plans to incorporate healthy content choices into your group meeting.
- Share with and instruct parents to:
  - Read Parent Tips for background information and practical tips on modeling healthy content choices in the household.
  - Plan to attend the group meetings with youth.
- Print copies of:
  - This packet - *Teaching Healthy Content Choices to K-5th Grades - Youth Leader Guide* (one per leader)
  - *Faux Paw and a Time to ACT* (optional - one for leader)
  - *Internet Safety Pledge, K-5th Grades* (one per child)
  - *My Activities Handout* (one per child)
  - *Thinking Brain vs. Feeling Brain Handout* (one per child)
  - *ACT Handout* (one per child, one for leader display)

- Healthy Content Choices Parent Tips, K-5th Grades (one per parent)
- Public Health: Why Encourage Healthy Content Choices? (one per parent)

In group meetings, help youth complete the following:
1. Read, commit to, and sign the *Internet Safety Pledge K-5th Grades.*
2. Read the book *Faux Paw and a Time to ACT.*
3. Participate in the Guided Discussion (Guided Discussion Outline for Youth Leaders).
4. Participate in the Learning Activities to demonstrate what they have learned about making healthy content choices.
5. Discuss with their family and friends what they have learned.

Group Meeting Suggestion

It is suggested that the content in this training be delivered in two, one-hour youth meetings with book reading and guided discussion in the first meeting and learning activities in the second meeting. Parents and K-5 grade youth should attend these meetings together.

Meeting 1:
- Introduce purpose of the meetings and **Faux Paw and a Time to ACT** book
- Read the **Faux Paw and a Time to ACT** book
- Guide a discussion
- Review and close

Meeting 2:
- Review topics from the first meeting
- Lead learning activities
- Review and close

Healthy Content Choices Information for Youth Leaders

Youth leaders are in a unique position to:

1. Foster an environment where youth feel comfortable approaching you for help or advice. Demonstrate that you are a trusted source of non-judgemental support.
2. Help youth develop a personal plan to remove themselves from a feedback loop of unhealthy content online. Teach children to ACT:
    a. **Alert** yourself: This is porn. I know unhealthy content when I see it.
    b. **Close** the lid/turn off your device.
    c. **Tell** a parent or trusted adult. They can help you.
    d. Explain that trusted friends and adults will never ask them to look at unhealthy content, and will never ask them to share unhealthy content of themselves or others.

Background on Healthy Content

Healthy content choices are increasingly harder to make in our digital world, where a few clicks can lead you to just about anything. These choices are also vitally important, as so much of our social behavior is learned from media. From an early age, youth need the knowledge and skills to navigate the world of violent video games, internet pornography, sexting, and social media, as these types of content are heavily embedded into their social and sexual developmental trajectories. Simply telling kids to avoid certain types of unhealthy content is insufficient for providing them with life skills to navigate the inevitable online experiences they will have.

By teaching youth skills like the **ACT** acronym, we address the following challenges posed by unhealthy content:

*   Unhealthy content is primarily processed through the "feeling brain" (limbic system). Since young brains do not have fully developed "thinking brains" (prefrontal cortex) to filter this stimuli, it is easy for them to be "trapped" by unhealthy content.
*   Popular pornography portrays sex as aggressive towards women, without human connection, and often without consent.
*   If pornography is the original and most comprehensive sexual education youth receive, that does not prepare them for healthy and satisfying romantic relationships.

K-5 Graders

Young children are often first exposed to pornography or obscene violence on the internet by accident. Therefore, they need to know what kinds of content are healthy or unhealthy for them to understand when they have come across something they should not see.

Although always well intentioned, parents are not always fully aware of what their children are doing online. Children themselves must have the skills to reach out to adults when something disturbing happens online. Providing them with different ways to disclose uncomfortable experiences, online and offline, to adults will help build lifelong skills in this area.

Leader Guided Discussion Outline - Healthy Content Choices

Preparation: Download or link to the book _Faux Paw and a Time to ACT_.

Say: You are going to hear a story, _Faux Paw and a Time to AC_T. This is a fun book about a cat who loves technology. This book will help you "be prepared" when you use technology. Faux Paw is surprised by what comes up on his screen. You will hear a keyword that will help Faux Paw. See if you can remember what that special word is.

Read book: Digital book projected on a screen or monitor works best for larger groups. For a small group, a tablet can be shown.

Discussion Guide

Say: Making healthy choices about what you look at on your screen keeps your brain healthy and allows you to "Stay Strong!"

Ask:
- Was Faux Paw surprised by what happened when porn came up on the screen?
- How did Faux Paw describe how he felt when he saw the pictures? _(Confused, embarrassed, mixed up.)_
- Could you, a member of your family, or a friend be surprised by something that came up on the screen of a tablet or a computer?

Say: Because technology (a cell phone, tablet, or computer) can put you in touch with so much of the world, it is likely you will see things that are unhealthy and unsafe. But, you can "be prepared" and make wise choices.

How To Make Healthy Choices
Say: Cursor was a true friend.

Ask: What was the word Cursor told Faux Paw? ("ACT")

Say: Remembering what Cursor told Faux Paw about the word "ACT" gives you a proactive skill. You are empowered by knowing just what to do when you see unhealthy media.

Ask: What does each letter stand for? A, C , T ?
    Show ACT Visual. (Included in this packet.)
How can that word be helpful to you?
    Answer: _Reminds me to always choose healthy content. It's a keyword for what I should do._

Say: You and your parents make choices every day about what you see when using digital devices. Every day this word, "ACT," can help you.

Say: Let's talk about healthy brains. Cursor told Faux Paw: "... the media and content you see--influences your brain." Science has found that pornography and violent pictures cause your brain to lose the healthy balance it needs.

Say & do actions together:
- Put your hand on your forehead. What did Cursor call this part of your brain?
  Answer: *Thinking brain.*
- Put your hand at the back of your head. What did Cursor call this part of your brain?
  Answer: *Feeling brain.*

Both parts are important. But we can become trapped if we let our feeling brain take over our thinking brain.

Say: Cursor told Faux Paw: "The feeling part of your brain might be curious about porn or attracted to it. That is normal. But, the thinking part of your brain can help you..."
  Ask: So, what does your thinking brain do to help you make healthy choices? Answer: It can judge what is really safe and best. It can remind us about "ACT."

Say: Let's ask your parents 2 questions.
  Ask: Why would it be important to talk with your family about healthy media and content? How could this word, "ACT," be helpful to you?

Give out hard copy of Parent Tips. Point out the link at the bottom for more information.

Say: It isn't just once or twice, but every time unhealthy content comes up on your screen, remember to "ACT." If you always "ACT," you will "Stay Strong!"

Learning Activities Leader Guide

After watching and reading *Faux Paw and a Time to ACT*, and signing the Internet Safety Pledge K-5th Grades, use these recommended games to teach your group about making healthy content choices. We recommend presenting these games during a follow-up, second meeting that allows you to review the lessons discussed during the first meeting when the book was read/watched. The suggested activities help teach youth how to recognize and respond to harmful content online.

1. What is Unhealthy Content?
You won't need any materials for this activity.

Tell the group: Do you remember what Kitty Face sent Faux Paw? (inappropriate photos). That's an example of unhealthy content. What is an example of healthy content?

Lead a discussion that will help them learn examples of healthy and unhealthy content.

Ask: Can you think of any examples of healthy media? Say some examples, such as:
- Clip from your favorite TV show
- Story book

Ask: Can you think of any examples of unhealthy media? Say some examples, such as:
- Photo or video of person with no clothes
- Video of people fighting

2. Activating my Thinking and Feeling Brain
You will need:
- 1 copy of Thinking vs. Feeling Brain per child
- 1 copy of My Activities per child
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or tape

Tell the group: We are going to match up pictures of the activities we like to do with two different sections of our brain: the thinking brain, and the feeling brain.

Children cut out their activities: Give each child a copy of the *Thinking & Feeling Brain* and *My Activities* sheets. Have them cut out the different activities in squares.

Ask:
- What are some things you all like to do for fun, and how do I stay healthy while doing them?
- Do you see any of these on your activities papers?
- Which of these activities do you use your feeling brain to do?
- Do you remember what Faux Paw used her thinking and feeling brain to do when she wanted cotton candy?

Tell: Glue your activity squares onto the pictures of the *thinking brain*, or your *feeling brain*. Hint: use your *Faux Paw and a Time to Act* book to match up your icons with the sides of your brain.

3. Avoiding Traps
You won't need any materials for this activity.

Tell the group: Remember how unhealthy content can trap you by making your brain feel like it needs to see more and more of those pictures?

Ask: How did Kitty Face trap Faux Paw? (sticky gum)? Luckily, Faux Paw's friends, Cursor and The Governor, were looking out for Faux Paw.

Tell: We can help our friends avoid traps by looking out for them. There are a couple clues that show someone might be trapped by unhealthy content. I am going to say a couple sentences – raise your hand if you think the person in the sentence is trapped:
- He/she always stays home to play video games.
- He/she goes online when he isn't supposed to.
- He/she participates in fun activities.
- He/she doesn't mind leaving his/her digital devices (like phone, tablet, computer) at home.
- He/she lies about how long he has been online.
- He/she has to use the internet and technology to have fun.

Tell: If you think you are trapped or one of your friends is trapped, remember to TELL a trusted adult. You will never be in trouble! We can help you re-balance your thinking and feeling brain.

ACT Handout

"ACT"

A - ALERT your mind: This is porn! I know unhealthy content when I see it.

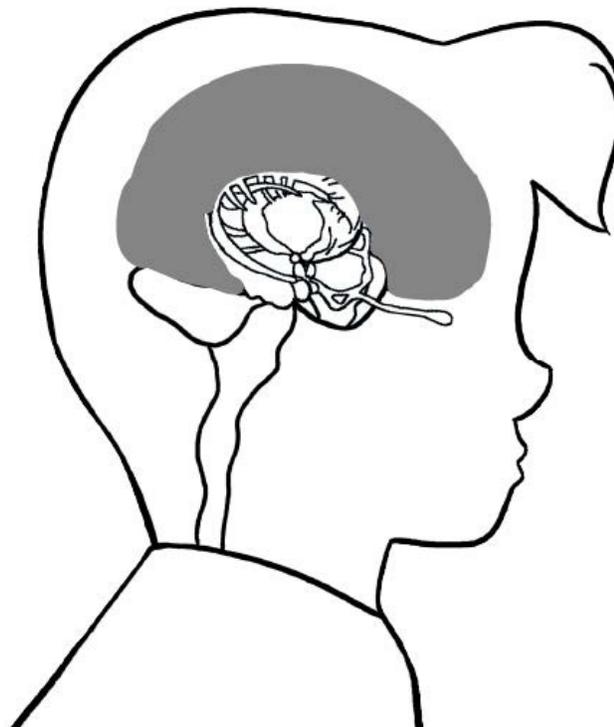## C - CLOSE the lid.

T - TELL a parent or trusted adult

Thinking & Feeling Brain Handout

Glue your activity squares onto these pictures of your thinking brain and your feeling brain.

THINKING BRAIN

FEELING BRAIN

My Activities Handout

DESSERTS ARE YUMMY!

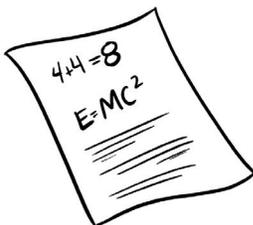**READING IS BRAIN FOOD.**

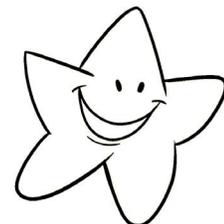**UNBELIEVABLE! THAT WAS INTERESTING.**

I FEEL HAPPY WITH HAPPY MUSIC.

EXERCISING KEEPS ME HEALTHY.

HEALTHY FOOD MAKES ME STRONG.

I'M SOLVING PROBLEMS!

I FEEL EXCITED.

Internet Safety Pledge for K-5th Grade Youth

I pledge to be an ethical, respectful, responsible, and resilient digital citizen.

BALANCE

- I spend time with my friends and family without technology, media, or screens.
- I keep a list of my favorite things to do without technology.
- I take regular breaks from screens to keep my body strong.

ETHICS

- I respect the creative property of others by using legal websites to watch TV and movies or listen to music.
- I cite my sources when using others' content or information in a school project.
- I respect myself and others by choosing and sharing healthy content.

PRIVACY

- I protect my privacy. I share my personal information (like my age, full name, address, phone number, name of school, passwords, or images) online only with my parents permission.
- I get permission before making a login for an online game or website.

REPUTATION

- I post things that create a positive reputation.
- I know that nothing online is private.

RELATIONSHIPS

- I am kind online, and offline.
- I take 10 deep breaths before posting something when I feel angry or upset.

ONLINE SECURITY

- I share my passwords only with my parent.
- I only open links that I recognize.

Teaching Healthy Content Choices to K-5th Grade Youth

Part of being an ethical, respectful, responsible, and resilient digital citizen is making healthy content choices.

This is what I do if I see porn or unhealthy content:
ALERT myself: This is porn. I know unhealthy content when I see it.
CLOSE the lid / turn off my device.
TELL a parent or trusted adult. They can help me.

- I ACT when I see something that makes me uncomfortable, embarrassed, or troubled.
- I ACT when I see unhealthy content.
- I ACT if a friend or adult shows me unhealthy content.

Here are some things that I know:
- Telling my parents or trusted adults will never get me in trouble.
- Feeling curious about porn is normal.
- True friends and trustworthy adults will never ask me to look at porn or violence.
- Devices that connect to the internet are used in family spaces like the living room.

Certain parts of my body are private, and private parts have special rules. My body safe boundaries mean that there are only a few people, like parents and doctors, who should see or touch private areas of my body.

I ACT if:
- Someone offers me a reward like money, toys, or treats for something that violates my body safe boundaries.
- Someone threatens to take something good away or do something bad if I won't keep a secret.
- Someone tries to tell me that my body safe boundaries are not important or not normal.

MY NAME: _____

MY SIGNATURE:_____

Healthy Content Choices Tips for K-5th Grade Parents
Written in collaboration with Dr. Megan Maas.

Create a healthy content environment in your home.
The most important tip for fostering healthy relationships with technology in the household is to **establish yourself as a trusted and supportive listener.** We are all able to help youth develop the resilience and skills to navigate the digital environment successfully, despite the social, psychological, and physiological challenges brought up by the violent and sexualized content freely accessible and highly visible to youth online.

Top 10 tips for encouraging healthy content choices

1. Be a trusted and supportive listener.
2. Implement and continuously reinforce the ACT acronym (Alert, Close, Tell) as a family rule.
3. When you learn a child is interacting with harmful content, take time to collect yourself and avoid reacting negatively or with heightened emotion.
4. Reaffirm your child's decision to tell you when they see unhealthy content: "Good job telling me. I know this takes courage and you have made a wise choice. Please tell me if something like this happens again."
5. Avoid punitive punishments that may discourage youth from coming to you for help or to report a traumatic experience.
6. Monitor young children's digital activity and slowly increase online autonomy with age.
7. Start early with education about the sexualized and violent digital content they will stumble upon.
8. Prepare youth for seeing sexualized content online by educating them about sexual health from an early age.
9. Teach youth that nothing online is private. Allow use of digital devices only in public, family spaces – not private bedrooms.
10. Ask your child about their friends' exposure to sexualized and violent content. Doing so will demonstrate that you can talk about these topics calmly, and will open the door for future discussions.

Discuss openly with your children that others may encourage secrecy or say not to tell a parent or adult about sharing or using unhealthy content. Talk to your child about how pornography can cause them to feel curious. They might also feel confused, embarrassed, or troubled. Here are some ways to start a conversation with your child:

● Porn can make you have many different feelings, good and bad, and you may want to keep looking for more. That is called attraction. People are meant to feel attraction to others— especially as they get older. But with porn, you feel attracted to pictures without any relationship or person. That makes you not pay attention to the people around you or not enjoy them as much.
● There is a better choice. When you see porn and if you feel like hiding it, remember: TELL. That will help protect you.

Please watch the *Healthy Content Choices Leader Video*, available at iKeepSafe's Youtube channel "*Wise Tech Choices: Healthy Content*", for detailed background and tips.

Why should parents encourage healthy content choices?
The media environment today is significantly different than it was 30, and even 10, years ago. At some point, anyone who uses technology will come across unhealthy content. A great deal of online content is violent and sexualized — and it is important to know that the pornography freely available today is not like what used to be in magazines. Internet users do not have to search long to find what can be shocking sexual violence.

The Three A's of Internet Porn:
Available
Affordable
Anonymous

Preparing youth for healthy social and sexual relationships, regardless of when or with whom those relationships begin for them, means developing the skills and habits with technology that will support their healthy development.

Solidifying your child's healthy content lessons
Parents, you can help reinforce lessons about making healthy content choices by reading Faux Paw and a Time to ACT together with your child. This is a great time to have a conversation about healthy content choices.

- Work together to come up with a list of rules for internet and media use. Where possible use your child's own words to frame the rules in positive and proactive ways. This list may provide a guide to support this activity:
- I use devices and go online only in family areas.
- I ACT when I see something online that makes me feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.
- I never post photos of myself online, and I tell a parent if anyone asks for photos of me.
- I know that I will never be punished for telling my parents about uncomfortable experiences with unhealthy content.

Why encourage Healthy Content Choices?
Public Health Research Summary

Kids' bodies, minds, and relationships are influenced by their digital content consumption.
Exposure to pornography and violent media is an aspect of technology that needs to be addressed for teens and kids. Whether exposure was accidental or intentional, it is a normative experience for young people; 93% of boys and 62% of girls see online pornography during adolescence.[1] Though individual reactions vary, most youth report feeling both discomfort (embarrassment, shame, surprise, disgust) and sexual excitement.[2] Overall, the available research on pornography consumption shows negative outcomes and correlates for young people across key social andphysiological developmental indicators.

Bodies
Viewing sexualized content conditions future sexual behavior; the body and brain learn patterns by responding cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally to sexual stimuli.[3] Porn users may need to engage in certain sex acts that are popular in porn in order to maintain arousal.[4]

Brain Development
Adolescents have heightened responses to incentives (i.e. chemical rewards for behavior), occurring in the limbic system or "feeling brain," while impulse control and frontal lobes are relatively immature.[5] Their brains are are also hungry for stimulation.[6] For kids and teens, repeated viewing of pornographic and violent content during this time of intense brain development can write (or rewrite) the pleasure and reward neural pathways in the brain to react to and desire this content.[7] This rewiring happens through neuroplasticity – the brain's ability to reorganize itself and form new neural connections in response to new situations and changes in the environment. There is overlap between brain regions involved in processing natural rewards and drugs of abuse, which may shed light on why behavioral and drug-related compulsions manifest in similar symptoms.[8,9]

Relationships
The depictions of sex, sexuality, and gender in popular media and pornography is a source of concern for many. Content analyses of popular pornography reveal close to universal verbal and physical violence against women, and common portrayals of women as objects whose purpose is to sexually gratify men.[10,11] Extreme and violent sex acts are the norm in the pornography industry, and even in "alternative" pornography that aims to challenge elements of popular pornography,[2] this norm persists.[12] This unmediated sexual information presents a risk to young people, who are very attracted to sexual media and whose sexual schemas are consciously and unconsciously formed by the content they consume.[13] This means sexualized content eventually shapes young people's judgments, attitudes, and behaviors.[14] Once sexual attitudes are accustomed to what is represented in porn, users can develop greater sexual arousal and craving for this type of experience – regardless of whether or not the user is experiencing a sexual relationship in reallife as well.[15]

Recommendations for Intervention

Many young people seek pornography intentionally, for sexual stimulation or simply for information.[16] In order for media literacy programs to mediate the social and physiological developmental risks that come from young people processing and mimicking the cues in pornographic and violent media, they must identify and address factors that reduce likelihood of youth adopting behavioral scripts from such content.[17,18]

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Healthy Content Choices & Cyberbalance Links Guide

Download all Leader Guides at https://ikeepsafe.org/scouting/

Teaching Healthy Content Choices to K-5th Grade Youth

- *iKeepSafe Youtube Playlist: Wise Tech Choices: Healthy Content* (Find leader and youth videos here) -
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcCI70ryDObauySEf2PrmaJx9CwMm3zFk

- *Faux Paw and a Time to Act PDF* -
https://ikeepsafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FP5-Faux-Paw-and-a-Time-to-ACT-2020-04-14-1.pdf

Teaching Healthy Content Choices to 6-12th Grade Youth

- *iKeepSafe Youtube Playlist: Wise Tech Choices: Healthy Content* (Find leader and youth videos here) -
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcCI70ryDObauySEf2PrmaJx9CwMm3zFk

- *The Science of Pornography Addiction* video -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ya67aLaaCc&feature=youtu.be

Teaching Cyberbalance to K-5th Grade Youth

- *iKeepSafe Youtube Playlist: Teaching Cyberbalance to Youth* (Find leader and youth videos here) -
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcCI70ryDObbUS12WQGishnLW8iiVLs53

- *Faux Paw Goes to the Games* PDF -
http://ikeepsafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Faux-Paw-Goes-to-the-Games-FP3.pdf

Teaching Cyberbalance to 6-12th Grade Youth

- *KeepSafe Youtube Playlist: Teaching Cyberbalance to Youth* (Find leader and youth videos here) -
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcCI70ryDObbUS12WQGishnLW8iiVLs53

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19