RESPECTFUL SHARENTING

What is 'Sharenting'?

Sharenting is when parents share information or photos about their children online e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Blogging etc. Parents have always enjoyed sharing photos and stories about their children, but the online audience can be huge and include people who aren't really 'friends'. Information can also stay online for a very long time.

INEQE found that the average 38 year-old Facebook user has 338 'friends' and could have 114,000 people looking at their stuff if their settings are 'friends of friends'! Do you know who can see your children's photos?

Why do people 'sharent' and what's good about it?

To connect with others such as friends & family to share children's achievements, celebrations or milestones. Parents also sharent to get support when feeling isolated or needing help at any time of the day or night! It's convenient, instant and free* and connects lots of people all at the same time and can be a great way to keep memories digitally. There are also loads of different communities online that can help parents immediately, without leaving your house! Technology can be fantastic!

The average parent posts over 200 photos of their children every year but the majority don't check privacy settings regularly.

Nominet UK

What are the risks?

Social Media is only free* in money terms. We 'pay' with our information which creates digital 'footprints'. This information is used by companies or data brokers and one day might affect your child in ways not yet known or understood.

Some photos or stories are not respectful of children's privacy or dignity, especially when parents are frustrated and share content that could shame, embarrass or upset a child. People may also take your photos for other reasons without your knowledge or consent. Some children could be bullied because of what their parents share.

Do check your privacy settings and ensure you carefully choose who sees your precious memories. Think about what and how you share and sometimes exercise restraint about what you share.

Do think about the future. Do you want your child, their future employer, partner or school mates to see that photo or read that post?

Do consider whether you would like that information, photo or video to be shared about you. If the roles were reversed, would that be ok?

Do encourage a culture of mutual respect or 'Netiquette' about online behaviour and sharing. This teaches your children good lessons about respect and kindness!

Do take particular care when sharing about children who are ill, in hospital or disabled. They are children first, not just 'patients' or 'disabled'. They have the right to privacy and to choose who knows about their health or medical condition. If you are trying to raise funds or awareness, consider using Avatars or sharing anonymously.

Do remember children learn from you about what's okay to share online. If they see that anything goes, that won't help with their own boundaries about sharing as they grow up.

Do discuss and agree online family privacy rules the same way you talk about other privacy rules such as bathroom or bedroom privacy or helping with getting dressed. It's important to talk about what is or is not acceptable to share online. NSPCC have Family Online Agreements you can use.

Do take care with what you post online and remember that your child may one day see what you have written or shared about them. This is kind of like virtual 'eavesdropping' and if you are expressing frustration about being a parent (and yes it can be tough!) just think about how that might be interpreted by your child or other people.

Do encourage a culture of consent. If you expect people to ask for your permission to be in their photos, do the same with your own children. Give your children the right to say no, the same way you can distance or 'untag' yourself from other people's photos. Even very small children should be taught about consent and that they have choices about what happens to them.

▶▶▶ **www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/**

'Equally important to the right of the child to one day narrate her own story, is the child's right to choose never to share the information at all'

Steinberg, 2017:877

Don't share anything that could place your child at risk such as their location, school uniform, date of birth, etc. Although these risks are probably low, information can be easily 'stolen' by strangers or predators online. Even innocent and cute photos have been found on paedophile sharing sites.

Don't share anything embarrassing or private such as sitting on the potty or toilet or being naked/semi-naked regardless of age!

Don't share photos or videos of your children in any state of distress e.g. tantrums, being upset or afraid or anything that could breach trust between you and your child e.g. private information that only parents would know.

Don't use social media as a way to discipline or shame your child when you have run out of ideas or are frustrated. Taking 'selfies' of their messy bedroom or encouraging your friends to support you by commenting or liking your posts may cause more problems than it solves and may affect trust.

Parenting NI have support online **parentingni.org** or **080 8801 0722**

Help and Advice

02/NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5002 'Techy' info and online safety advice

parentzone.org.uk Making the Internet Work for Families!

Parenting for a Digital Future • Research & Blogs on Sharenting
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/tag/sharenting/

INEQE Video- Sharenting
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTK-mQxHf-Y&feature=youtu.be

Cerebra Guide for Parents with children who have Autism or
Learning Disabilities:
http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/
learning-disabilities-autism-and-internet-safety-a-parents-guide/

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

www.net-aware.org.uk

www.internetmatters.org

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.childnet.com

https://h2bsafetycentre.com/

For immediate help or in an emergency call **999** or local police on **101**

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The **Western E-Safety Steering Group** is made up of voluntary and statutory agencies in the Western Trust area of Northern Ireland. We are committed to delivering evidence-informed training and resources to make the Internet a safer place for all. We support the 5Rights Framework which believes children and young people should be supported to access digital technologies creatively, knowledgeably and fearlessly.

For more information log on to

http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net /livewell/StayingSafeOnline.htm

Leaflet based on: Greaves, D. (2017) What are the Rights' Implications of 'Sharenting' for Children and Parents? A Systematic Review of the Literature. Belfast: Queen's University

Your feedback is welcomed:

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