

**NEARLY 9 OUT OF 10 PARENTS WANT SCHOOLS TO DO MUCH MORE TO EDUCATE KIDS ABOUT INTERNET SAFETY RISKS**

*The new study reveals parents’ concerns about children’s internet use and identify topics they want schools to address with children and teens*

**New York, NY — (OCTOBER, 2022) *—*** A new nationwide study conducted by the **The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPCC)**, the nation’s oldest child protection agency, reveals there is a high level of support for schools to play a more significant role in educating children about the risks associated with use of the internet. According to parents with children under age 18, internet safety is not being addressed by schools—only 19% of parents surveyed indicate their children’s schools provided teaching on internet safety and risks during the prior school year (2021-22), while 41% don’t know if schools have addressed this topic with students and 23% say it has not been taught. Overall, 86% of parents favor having schools conduct annual sessions with children and teens about internet safety and risks.

“Our schools have an inherent responsibility to teach children about internet safety and it’s clear that parents want schools to play a bigger role in helping keep students safe,” said Mary Pulido, PhD., Executive director of The NYSPCC. “The NYSPCC’s mission is to help prevent child abuse through our work with parents, teachers, children, and foster care agencies and we hope this research will emphasize the importance of teaching children how to stay safe online.”

Parents hold strong concerns about potential harms to their children related to internet use, including 53% indicating they are “extremely” or “very” concerned about their children interacting with strangers online through popular websites and apps, 45% who are deeply concerned about their children developing “screen-time” addictions, and 40% also concerned about the impact of “screen-time” on development of their children’s social skills.

* 64% of parents are aware that many popular apps used by children and teens allow people and companies to track the location of their children
* 50% are also aware of an internet crime called “sextortion” where young people are being extorted for money after sharing explicit images

Parents who favor having schools provide annual sessions on internet safety to students also identify numerous topics they believe are important to address with students.

* + Eight-in-10 parents would like schools to teach students about “the risks of sharing personal information” online (81%), “cyber bullying,” (80%) and “recognizing predators” (80%)
	+ More than seven-in-10 parents want schools to educate students about the risks of “sextortion” (76%) and “sexting” (72%), while 69% also want students educated about the risks of providing or viewing sexual content and videos (including pornography).
	+ Two-thirds (66%) think knowing “how to block others from knowing your location” and “email and texting scams” are important topics to be addressed by schools with students.
	+ A majority of parents also would like schools to include discussions about “internet and screen time addiction” (58%) and “how to block messages from others” (51%) in an annual session on internet safety.

**Survey Methodology**

The survey results summarized in this report are based on completed interviews with a national probability sample of 511 parents in the U.S. with children younger than age 18.The research was designed for the NYSPCC by Michaels Opinion Research, Inc. and utilized the AmeriSpeak panel. Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The mixed-mode panel (online and telephone) provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population.

Data have been weighted to national U.S. Census benchmarks and are balanced by gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, and region. The tabulated results have a margin of error of ±6.0 percentage-points.

The survey was fielded July 14-17, 2022.

**About The NYSPCC**

The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ([The NYSPCC](http://www.nyspcc.org/)) is one of the most highly respected child protective agencies in the world. Founded in 1875, The NYSPCC helps the most vulnerable children of our community recover from trauma. And, more importantly, it helps prevent child abuse through its work with parents, teachers, children and foster care agencies. The NYSPCC’s amazing work is used as a model for child welfare agencies across the nation. The NYSPCC has investigated more than 650,000 cases on behalf of over two million children and has educated over 53,000 professionals working with children on child abuse and neglect issues. Read more about The NYSPCC at <http://www.nyspcc.org/>