



Let's talk about it

Information and advice for adults on how to talk
to children about online and offline risks
– and what to do if something has happened.

As an adult, you are crucial to children's safety and security

As a parent, or if you are an adult in some other key role, being involved in children's lives, both online and offline, is crucial for their safety and security. But it is not always easy to know how to act and talk to a child without encroaching on the child's privacy and opportunities for exploration. We have therefore produced this folder to provide you with information, tips and advice on how you, as an adult, can best talk to children about risks on and outside the internet, and what to do if something has happened.

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Advice and support for adults

ECPAT Vuxenstöd (ECPAT Adult Support) is a helpline for all adults close to children. Here you can find information about children's sexual vulnerability – on and outside the internet – and advice on how to talk about this topic and how to act if something has happened. You can receive advice and guidance free of charge via email, phone and chat.

- What should I do if I find out that my child is sending nude photos?
- Should I forbid the use of certain apps?
- I'm worried that my child has been subjected to sexual exploitation or abuse – what should I do?



Vuxenstöd

Chat with us – you can remain anonymous.
ecpat.se/vuxenstod

Children's life online

These days, a large part of children's and young people's lives takes place online. The internet is a positive place where they can develop, be inspired and meet others, and there is no clear boundary between life online and offline. This means that flirting, falling in love and sex are now also a natural part of life online. It is important that children's daily life online is as safe as it is outside the internet, and that adults talk to children about both the risks and the opportunities that exist there.

Here at ECPAT we often receive questions from adults regarding who the typical child sex offender might be, and which apps should be avoided. The answer is that it could be anyone – both adults and other children – and that sex offenders will operate wherever children are to be found. It is therefore important that adults involve themselves just as much in children's lives online as outside the internet, and that they are able to provide children with knowledge of the laws and rules that apply online.



Have the talk – with ECPAT's conversation guides

As an adult, it is not always easy to know how to “have the talk” with children. The most important thing is to initiate a conversation and show that you are interested in the child's life online. Keep an open mind to what the child is telling you – or not telling you – and remember to talk with the child often, not just once. At ECPAT Vuxenstöd (ECPAT Adult Support) you will find conversation guides that provide you with tips on how to talk to both older and younger children about the human body, boundaries, consent, sex and relationships. Always make it clear that you are there for the child and are ready to listen – on the child's terms, and without attaching blame.



QR code!

Why do children send nude photos?

Flirting, falling in love and sex are a natural part of children's lives – even in their daily lives online. Sending and receiving nude photos is often part of children's journey of exploration and does not need to represent risky sexual behaviour as long as the relationship is mutual and respectful.

However, while many young people express the view that nude photos are something positive, we also see that many children lack knowledge about what is okay and what is not. This means that they are not always aware that they are being subjected to a crime or that they are at risk of committing a crime themselves.

Receiving unwanted nude photos is common, and the practice of people exposing themselves online has now been normalised and has become part of children's everyday life. Even if this causes children to experience a strong feeling of discomfort, many do not think that it is serious enough to report the matter. In many cases they are also unaware that they have been subjected to some form of criminal



Tips for talking with children about nude photos

- Talk to the child at an early stage about the subject of consent online
- Make sure that the child is aware of what is legal – and what is not – when it comes to nude photos
- Make it clear that the child can always come to you if something has happened, and never attach blame to the child for having sent nude photos
- Never threaten to ban the child's use of mobile devices or apps – this could just lead to the child not daring to tell you when something has happened
- File a police report if your child has been the victim of a crime – criminal activity is no less serious because it has occurred online

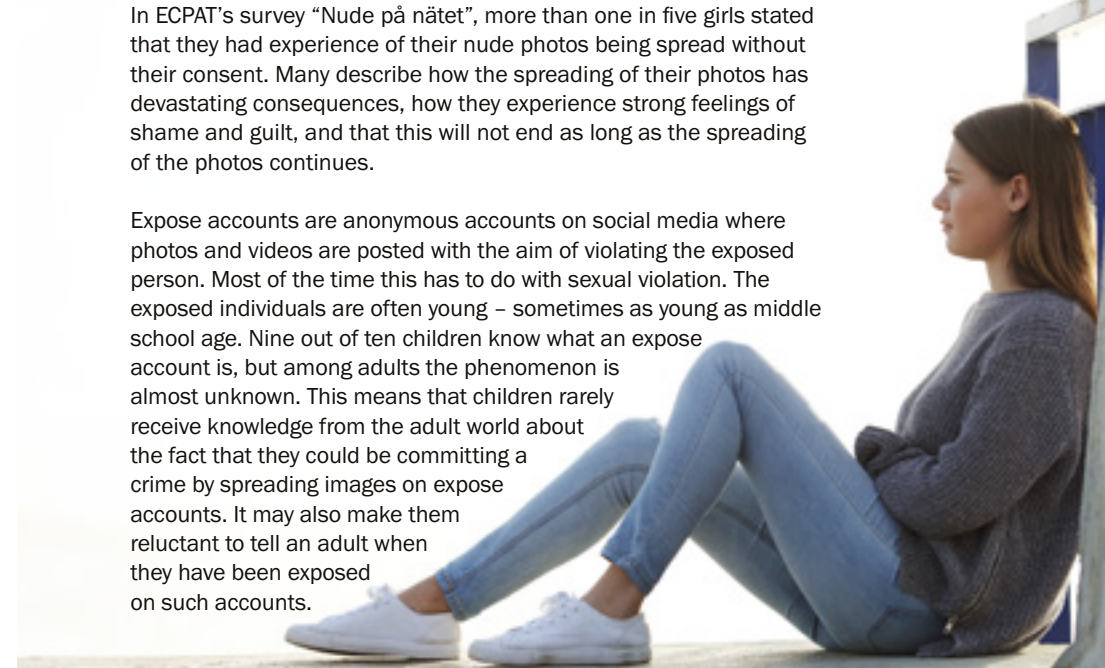
Almost three out of four children have received an unwanted nude image.

ECPAT's survey "Nude på nätet" 2023.

When nude photos are spread

In ECPAT's survey "Nude på nätet", more than one in five girls stated that they had experience of their nude photos being spread without their consent. Many describe how the spreading of their photos has devastating consequences, how they experience strong feelings of shame and guilt, and that this will not end as long as the spreading of the photos continues.

Expose accounts are anonymous accounts on social media where photos and videos are posted with the aim of violating the exposed person. Most of the time this has to do with sexual violation. The exposed individuals are often young – sometimes as young as middle school age. Nine out of ten children know what an expose account is, but among adults the phenomenon is almost unknown. This means that children rarely receive knowledge from the adult world about the fact that they could be committing a crime by spreading images on expose accounts. It may also make them reluctant to tell an adult when they have been exposed on such accounts.



Advice for you as an adult

- Explain to your child that it could be a crime to spread photos or videos via an expose account, or to share nude photos of other people without their consent
- If your child finds an expose account, help the child report the account to the platform
- If your child has been exposed on an expose account, take screenshots and write down what you know about the account
- Help report the incident to the police if your child has been victimised – it is important that the incident is investigated, as more children have probably been exposed and may be in need of support





First aid

if a child has been victimised – or if you suspect that something has happened

Signs of victimisation

Be alert to changes, such as sleeping difficulties or mood swings/depression. Such changes could be a sign that the child is being victimised and does not feel good. Children may be afraid of not being believed or of how the adult will react. They may therefore “test the water” to see how you react by telling you about something a friend has done or something they have heard about. Be attentive, and never be judgemental or get angry.

Dare to ask – and remain calm and listen

Even if you don't get an answer the first time you ask, by asking you are at least showing the child that you are interested and that it is okay for them to tell you if something has happened. Wait a while and then try asking again in a different context. Many young people are hesitant to tell a parent or other adult what has happened for fear that you will be disappointed or angry. Let the child finish talking before you start asking questions, and respect the child when he or she no longer wishes to continue or wants to tell you more.



Relieve the child of shame and guilt

Children often experience shame and guilt when they have been the victim of something. Relieve the child of such feelings by reassuring them that what has happened is not their fault.

File a police report if you suspect a crime

File a police report if you suspect that a child has been the victim of a crime. You don't have to be certain that something actually constitutes a criminal activity – it is the police's job to investigate whether a crime has been committed. Save potential evidence, such as chats or pictures. Remember that it is just as serious to be victimised online as anywhere else.

File a report of concern if you are concerned for a child

You should always file a report of concern with the social services if you suspect that a child is being caused physical or psychological harm. It is the task of the social services to investigate whether or not support measures are required.

Make sure that the child receives support

Children who have been victimised have the right to receive support, and sometimes it is easier for them to talk to an adult outside their circle of family and friends. Talk to a school welfare officer or a youth guidance centre. The child can also chat anonymously via ECPAT's helpline (dittecpat.se).

What does the law say in Sweden?

As an adult, knowing what the law says is crucial in terms of your ability to teach your child what is okay – and what is not – when it comes to sex, nude photos and consent, both online and outside the internet.



Age limits

Anyone under the age of 18 is a child and has the right to protection from sexual abuse. The older the child, the greater the child's right to self-determination, and children can consent to sex from the age of 15. The general rule is that sex with a child under the age of 15 is a crime, regardless of whether or not the child has consented. The exception is situations where there is only a small difference in age between those who have sex and it is clearly not a case of abuse. From the age of 15, children have reached the age of criminal responsibility and can be convicted of a crime.

Sexual abuse can also take place online

Swedish law does not distinguish between sex that takes place physically and sex that takes place online. If someone gets a child under the age of 15 to commit a sexual act on himself/herself during a video chat or when he/she is filming himself/herself, it is a sexual offence in the same way as if they were in the same location.

Swedish law says that:

- Giving a child compensation for sexual acts is always a crime. The compensation does not have to concern money; it can also involve things such as alcohol, cigarettes or designer clothing.
- It is not a crime for a child to have a nude picture of himself/herself. It is, however, a crime to have a nude picture of another child who has not yet gone through puberty. In certain cases, it can also be a crime when it comes to children who have completed their pubertal development.
- As a general rule, sending nude pictures to someone under the age of 15 is a crime. It can also be a crime to ask a child under the age of 15 for a nude picture.
- Sending an unwanted nude picture to someone over the age of 15 is a crime, and it is also a crime to ask for a nude picture from someone over the age of 15 in a manner that is sexually offensive.
- Spreading a nude picture of someone else is a crime.

Never hesitate to report an incident!

If your child has been victimised sexually, it is equally serious regardless of whether the incident has occurred online or somewhere else. It is important that the incident is investigated. Call the police at 114 14 to file a police report. You can also go to a police station. If the crime is ongoing, you should always call 112.

Our mission:

Stop child sexual abuse

ECPAT is a child rights organisation working to stop and prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

Children share their stories with us daily via our helpline and in our surveys, and we have a unique opportunity to learn from those who know their reality best – the children themselves. This means that we can constantly develop the way in which we interact with young people who need support, as well as the way in which we can provide advice and help to parents and other adults who interact with children in their everyday lives.



Ditt ECPAT (Your ECPAT)

Ditt ECPAT is a website and helpline for everyone under the age of 18. Via Ditt ECPAT, children and young people receive advice, help and information about sexual victimisation and can chat with us anonymously. We can also help take down nude images that have been spread online.



dittecpat.se/

ECPAT Vuxenstöd (ECPAT Adult Support)

Many adults are concerned about children's sexual vulnerability, both online and outside the internet. It is not always easy to know how to talk about and prevent risks without encroaching on the child's privacy and opportunities for exploration. ECPAT Vuxenstöd provides knowledge and support, and you can call us, contact us via email or chat with us for individual advice and guidance.



Vuxenstöd



ecpat.se/vuxenstod

ECPAT Hotline

ECPAT Hotline is a website where tips can be submitted regarding all forms of suspected child sexual exploitation or abuse. We review the tips we receive and forward them to the Swedish Police and partners in other countries. A single tip can be decisive in removing a child from an ongoing sexual abuse situation, ensuring that the perpetrator is convicted and making sure that the child receives support and help.



Hotline



ecpat.se/hotline