

WHAT IS GROOMING



Grooming rarely begins with obvious danger. It usually starts with attention, trust, and connection, then slowly shifts toward secrecy, pressure, and control.

WHAT TO KNOW

- Grooming is how exploitation often begins.
- It can happen quickly or over time.
- It often starts with compliments, gifts, emotional support, or “special” attention.
- The goal is to build trust, lower boundaries, and make unsafe behavior feel normal.

WATCH FOR:

- A new relationship that becomes intense quickly.
- Private or disappearing messages.
- Gifts, favors, or unusual attention.
- “Don’t tell your parents” language.
- Pressure to move conversations to another app.
- Emotional dependence on one person.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Talk often about safe and unsafe online relationships.
- Ask who your child is talking to and where those conversations happen.
- Watch for secrecy, intensity, or sudden attachment.
- Teach your child that safe adults do not ask for secrets.
- Keep devices visible and review apps regularly.
- Stay calm so your child keeps coming to you.

BOTTOM LINE

Grooming often looks normal before it looks dangerous.

GROOMING RISK ASSESSMENT

A quick parent check to help identify patterns that may point to grooming, manipulation, or unsafe online relationships

HOW TO USE THIS:

Answer each question honestly. One “yes” does not confirm grooming, but several “yes” answers may point to a pattern that deserves closer attention.

Mark each statement:

Yes / No / Not Sure

QUESTION	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. My child becomes secretive, defensive, or anxious when using a phone, tablet, gaming system, or computer.			
2. My child is spending significantly more time online, especially late at night or in private.			
3. My child has hidden apps, multiple accounts, or profiles I did not know about.			
4. My child has received gifts, money, game currency, or items I cannot clearly explain.			
5. My child has become withdrawn from family, longtime friends, or normal routines			
6. My child is using sexual language, jokes, or references beyond what seems age-appropriate.			
7. My child is communicating with someone I do not know, cannot verify, or cannot identify offline.			
8. My child has been asked to move a conversation from one app or platform to another.			
9. My child seems emotionally attached to one online friend, player, or follower in a way that feels intense or unusual.			
10. My child has been told to keep a conversation, friendship, gift, or message secret.			
11. My child seems pressured to reply quickly, stay online, or hide conversations from me.			

WHAT YOUR ANSWERS MAY MEAN

0–2 Yes answers

A few isolated concerns may not signal grooming, but they are still worth watching. Stay engaged, keep conversations open, and monitor for patterns.

3–5 Yes answers

There may be a growing pattern of concern. Slow down, ask more questions, increase visibility, and review apps, messages, and accounts more closely.

6 or more Yes answers

This may point to significant risk or active manipulation. Stay calm, document what you notice, increase supervision, and consider getting additional support right away.