

DEFEND YOURSELF CAMPAIGN

Self-Defense and Online Security
Support



DEFEND YOURSELF CAMPAIGN



The **Defend Yourself Campaign (Campanha Defenda-se)** has been running since 2014, using animated videos for children and adolescents aged 4 to 12 years, with a focus on preventing sexual violence. The goal is to speak directly to the children and adolescents, **to facilitate the identification of risky situations, and to strengthen their self-defense skills.** The 15 videos offered present situations with a potential risk of sexual violence and preventive attitudes.

And you can share another story!

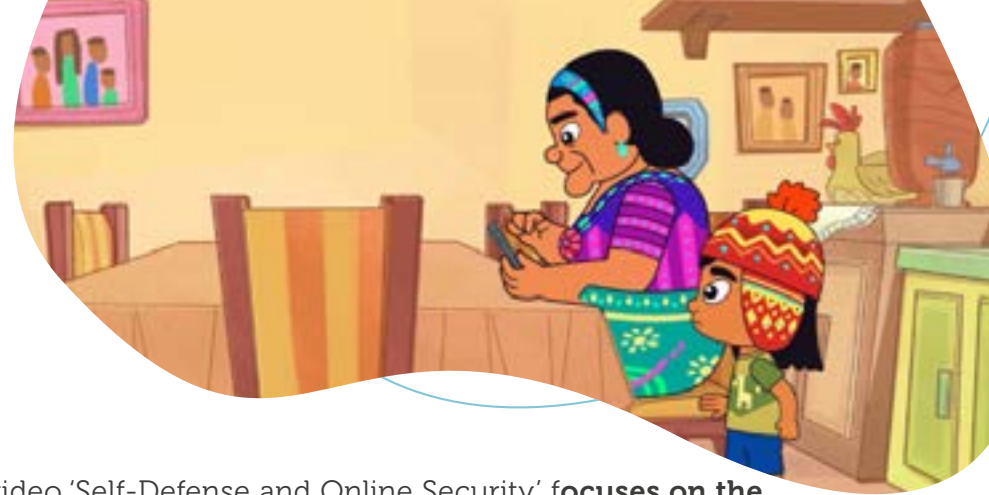


"SELF-DEFENSE AND ON-LINE SECURITY" VIDEO

With the aim of promoting the full and safe exercise of children's and adolescents' rights in the virtual space, including their right to comprehensive protection, the working group on Protection Policies of the **"Corazón Solidario" Marist Network in the Americas** presents the video 'Self-Defense and Online Security' from the "Defend Yourself" series, developed by the **Centro Marista de Defesa da Infância** of the Marist Province Centro Sul.

The [United Nations General Comment No. 25](#) on the Rights of the Child in relation to the digital environment recognizes this space as an increasingly significant and relevant part of children's lives and the way they interact. The document states that all children's rights agreed upon so far also apply to the digital environment. Among other things, it highlights the need to address the progressive development of children's and adolescents' **digital skills and highlights the responsibility of parents, caregivers, educators, society, and the state in providing education for the appropriate use of digital devices.**

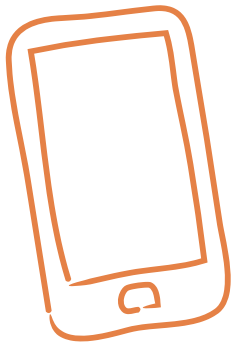
The document is based on research regarding the effects of technology on young people and provides guidance on the collective responsibility for educating them on its critical use.



The video 'Self-Defense and Online Security' **focuses on the safe use of the internet**, acknowledging the positive potential of technology while also highlighting the risks of overexposure to social media and online games. In addition to the daily risks children and adolescents face when using the internet, since 2020—due to the pandemic, social isolation, and remote learning—there has been a dramatic rise in screen time and digital exposure. In this context, families have struggled with balancing everyday caregiving responsibilities while lacking tools to effectively guide children and adolescents in the safe and appropriate use of technology. As a result, online security has become an even more urgent issue in preventing children's exposure to sexual violence in cyberspace.

This video aims to serve as a resource for preventing violence against children in the digital space, providing them with tools for safe online navigation and the ability to report any situation that jeopardizes their safety in this environment.

Did you know?



It is estimated that, as of April 2020,

59% of the global population has access to the internet, and there are 4.57 billion active users, of which 4.2 billion use a mobile device and 3.81 billion have social media accounts (AFCOM, 2021).



According to UNICEF (2017), young people aged 15 to 24 represent the most connected age group

(71%), compared to 48% of the total population.

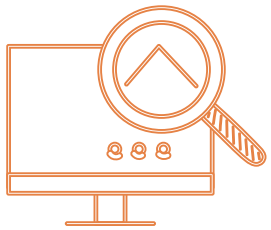
In this race against inequality, by 2016, **40%** of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean lived in poverty, with a significant portion in extreme poverty (CEPAL citado en OEA/IIN, 2018).



Based on a global study conducted by UNICEF (2016 cited in OEA/IIN, 2018), Latin American adolescents, along with those from Sub-Saharan Africa, are perceived as being at the greatest risk of sexual abuse compared to their peers in other parts of the world.



Did you know?



On the other hand, some studies on children and adolescents in several countries of the Americas, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, which have access to the internet, report that **4 out of 10 use the internet without the presence of an adult** (UNICEF/CEPAL, 2014 cited in OEA/IIN, 2018).

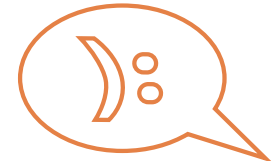


Experts have pointed out that in 2019, there was a 3,000% increase across the entire region, putting children at risk with crimes such as grooming (Sorbo, 2021) and human trafficking, with a trend that primarily affects girls and women (65%) and 48% of the child population.

Regarding online crimes, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021), human trafficking crimes involving minors through social media represent

31% and 24%

occur through classified ads websites.



The ICTs used by traffickers are employed to:

- 1) identify and capture victims,
- 2) advertise exploitation services to potential clients, and
- 3) broadcast online abuse and exchange pornographic material (IDB, 2021 cited in Villanueva, 2021).

KEY MESSAGE

Suggestions for using the video

Since **the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents is a task for society as a whole**, not just their families and authorities, we invite you to join the effort to prevent violence against children in all the social spheres in which they develop, including the virtual space.

To make the most of this material, we present the key messages you will find throughout the video scenes, along **with supporting text to delve deeper into each of these ideas:**



1. Early access to technology and parental monitoring

Smartphones are the primary technology through which children and adolescents access the internet, which poses a challenge for family and caregiver monitoring. This is because smartphones are small, portable, and private devices, unlike a television in the living room, where other people might be present while watching.

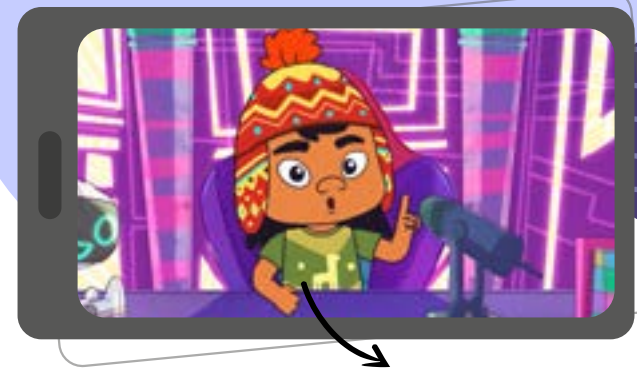
For this reason, apps and social media platforms identify age-appropriate content, helping prevent children from being exposed to risks.

The 2019 manual from the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics states that children should not use the internet without parental or caregiver monitoring and advises children and adolescents to use screens in common areas of the house.

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



In the first scene of the video, Santiago wants to use his grandmother's phone since he doesn't have a device of his own. During the same scene, the grandmother reminds him of the agreements they had made about screen time. As they discuss recording the video, she emphasizes that children should not have their own 'channel.

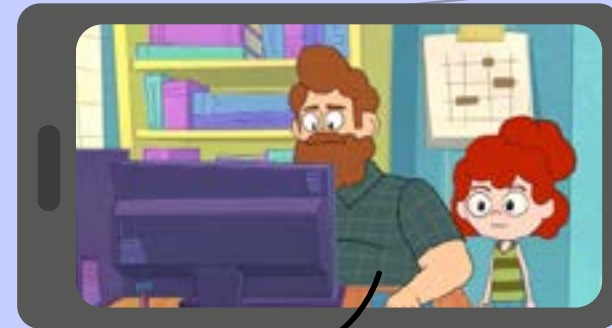


Santiago gives tips on an imaginary channel because he is not yet old enough to have a real channel, as his grandmother warns at the beginning of the video.

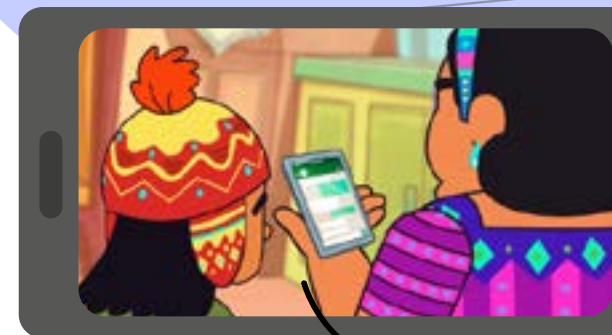
1. Early access to technology and parental monitoring

To prevent digital abandonment and ensure **the comprehensive protection of children in the virtual environment**, it is important for families and caregivers to establish clear agreements with children and adolescents regarding screen time, device usage, apps, and the content they can access. Additionally, adults should be familiar with security mechanisms and monitor these technologies.

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



Marcelo and Clara appear in a scene where they navigate privacy settings, which their father has activated to use certain tools.



At the end of the video, the grandmother steps in to file a report with the SaferNet channel.

2. Grooming

Sexual violence always relies on an imbalance of power, meaning the unequal exertion of power over the victim. In cases of sexual violence against children, this is often not carried out through physical force, but rather through seduction, coercion, or blackmail. These same factors prevail online, where there are individuals or even networks that may manipulate children and adolescents **into engaging in behaviors such as accessing age-inappropriate content or sharing personal images.**

Thus, contact that begins in the virtual space - through messages in online games or social media - can escalate to an in-person meeting. One of the initial strategies of seduction or approach used for this purpose is known as 'grooming.'

Grooming is the practice in which adults build a trusting relationship with children or adolescents, often pretending to be peers, in order to manipulate, blackmail, and/or threaten them to obtain sexual favors. This is one of the most common forms of online sexual violence.

In addition to *grooming*, *sexting* – sexual content, such as intimate photos or videos, created and shared by a child or adolescent (though, as observed, more often by teenagers) - also requires attention in the prevention of online sexual violence.

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



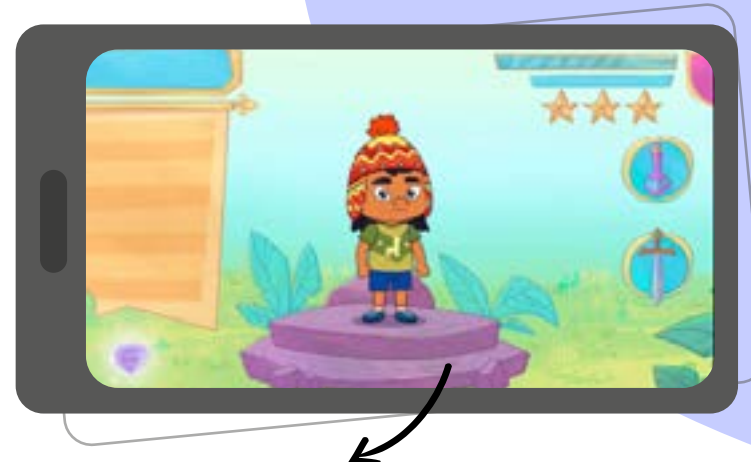
The online player Guerreiro09 appears in the scene to 'help' Santiago and his friends overcome a challenge, but they soon realize that his intention is to gain their trust in order to manipulate them.

2. Grooming

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



Santiago, knowing how to defend himself and his friends, reports the player in the game, leading to the player's elimination.



Santiago advises children and adolescents not to accept or share any personal information and to communicate any concerns to a trusted adult who can help them make a report.

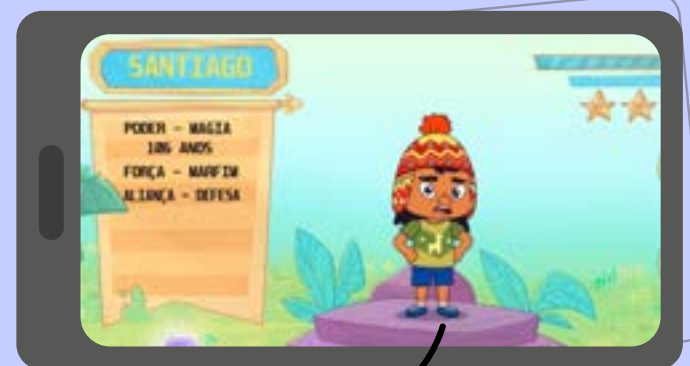
3. Beware of Personal Information and Images

The information (whether personal data or photographs) shared in the virtual environment has a broad and uncontrollable reach, including the duration it remains available on social networks. As a result, it can facilitate the approach of groups or individuals who may put children at risk.

Those who commit virtual violence often conceal their identity but typically request personal information from their victims as part of their approach strategy. They can obtain information or photographs, which gives them tools for blackmail, coercion, and the creation or distribution of child pornography.

This underscores the importance of ensuring that children, adolescents, and their families are knowledgeable about and capable of using security mechanisms when navigating the internet.

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



At the end of the scene, when Santiago and his friends are playing online, he appears as an avatar and shares advice about not sharing personal information on the internet, including in online games.



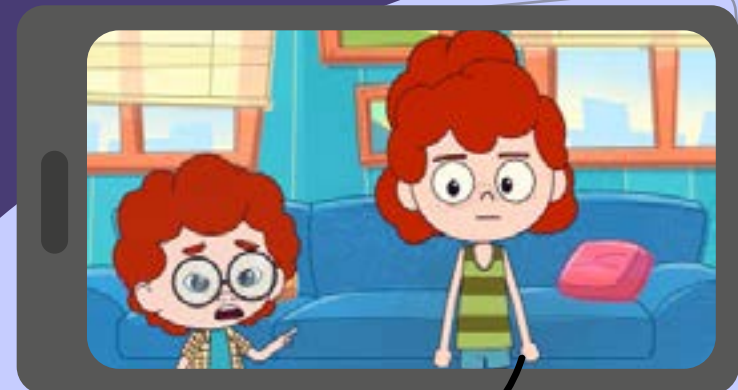
For this same reason, he also advises using a nickname when playing online.

4. Respect the Age Restrictions for Social Media and Apps

Movies, TV shows, animations, online games, apps, and social media platforms are classified according to age groups, **taking into account maturity, the ability to understand the content**, and exposure to themes involving violence, sexual acts, and substance use.

Additionally, many online games, social media platforms, websites, and apps offer the option to **apply filters for inappropriate content and offensive language**, as well as control usage time and interaction levels.

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



In the scene between Marcelo and Clara, Clara performs a little dance for a social media platform, but the dialogue clearly states that she is not yet allowed to have a profile on this platform.

5. The Importance of the Right to Play Outside the Virtual Environment

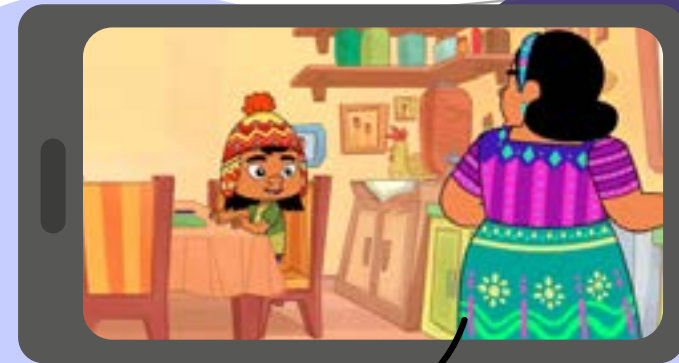
Children and adolescents are increasingly gaining access to smartphones and other technological devices at younger ages. In addition to using them for school tasks and research, families often rely on these devices to keep their children, regardless of age, “quiet.” The Brazilian Society of Pediatrics has referred to this practice as “passive distraction.”

However, for children, the right to play means:

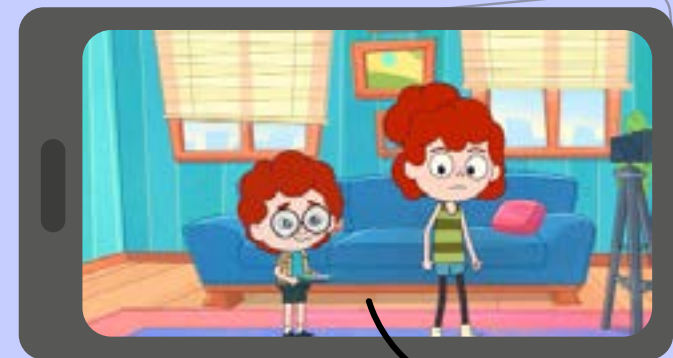
“... their right to transform themselves, to explore, to develop their abilities as human beings... their motor and intellectual skills, that is, everything that will shape them as social beings belonging to a humanizing culture, concrete and not abstract” (Centro de Defesa da Infancia, 2014).

Play allows children to express themselves freely, process their experiences in a playful manner, experience cultural values passed down from generation to generation, process emotions, and engage in various forms of socialization. As a right, it is outlined in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

SCENES FROM THE VIDEO



In the first scene, the grandmother, when handing the phone to Santiago, makes it clear that there are agreements in place regarding the phone's usage time.



Marcelo calls Clara to play and mentions that he has been using his phone for a long time. At the end of the scene, the siblings will play with the game that Marcelo is holding.

After reviewing this material, we hope it encourages you to reflect on our **video number 14** and helps families and communities in their efforts to educate and defend the rights of children and adolescents, integrating these messages into your educational projects.



By the way, if you'd like to learn more about this topic, we also have additional resources available.



File - 'Self-Defense and Online Safety' – Argumentation Guide



Ahh... que genial que el los videos están disponibles en Inglés, Español, Libras y descripción de audio!



Ellos están en www.defenda-se.com



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