

# YOUTH NCDII: WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS THE AFFECTED YOUTH

If your child has been involved in an incident of non-consensual distribution of intimate images (NCDII), you are likely feeling a wide range of emotions, including embarrassment, shame, anger, and a certain degree of vulnerability and uncertainty about what may happen next. You may be deeply concerned for your child and your family. Rest assured it is completely normal to be feeling all of these things and more. In some instances, you may be projecting anger towards the youth involved, which can include your child, as well as the disappointment or shock in learning that they are involved in an incident of youth NCDII.

There are some practical steps that you can take to address your child's involvement in an incident of NCDII in the short term and months to follow. Trying to anticipate the range of issues your child may encounter will be important. If your child is provided with an honest account of what may happen in the months following, you will increase the likelihood they are prepared to manage it. This is especially important for the affected youth in the event the images or videos resurface in the future. Here is what you can do:

## 1. Reassure your child

Reassure your child they are not alone and that together you will get through this.

If you are the first to learn about your child's involvement in an incident of youth NCDII, we encourage you to immediately notify and involve your child's school. They can be an important ally in helping you address the issue.

**Supporting your child:** You will have to judge how to best support your child through this difficult time. It may be challenging for you to avoid focusing on your own feelings of anger, doubt, mistrust, and worry; however, it is precisely at this time that your child needs you to be at your best as a parent. Creating a safe environment for your child to talk about what happened will be critical in helping them navigate whatever challenges they may face.

It will be important to weave in some reassuring messages. Consider the following themes:

- Listen to your child without judgment. Your first instinct may be to ask why they took the images or videos in the first place. While this is an important question to determine intent, try not to lead with it.
- Reinforce they are not alone – as their parent, you are there to listen. Use words such as, “Tell me more about that,” followed by remaining quiet and listening carefully to their concerns.
- Separate the incident from defining who your child is.
- The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) can help reduce the availability of sexual/intimate pictures and videos online. For more information contact: [support@protectchildren.ca](mailto:support@protectchildren.ca).
- Advise your child that you are there to help them deal with the situation.
- Be hopeful and reinforce that your child will get through this experience.



## 2. Engage in fact finding

Ask your child to describe what they sent and to whom, how it was sent, when it was sent, if the material is artificial intelligence-generated (AI-generated), and where it was posted/located. This information will assist in guiding your next steps.

**Viewing content:** It is important that parents do not actively view the content unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Your child may feel embarrassment and shame knowing that you have viewed a sexual image or video of them. For this reason, limiting the number of individuals who see the content is in their best interest.

## 3. Explore the steps your child's school can take

Assuming the police are **not** involved and the school is willing to work with you, explore the concrete and immediate steps the school can take to communicate with the families of the children involved. As soon as possible, have the content deleted from personal devices and any online accounts/platforms to help contain further distribution of the material.

If the acting-out youth or other involved youth do not attend your child's school (e.g., ex-partner [acting-out youth] lives in another jurisdiction), the school will have a limited role other than ensuring your child is properly supported and accommodated within the school environment while working through what has transpired.

Should police be involved, speak to them about the steps they will be taking. It is important to determine who will be doing what to help remove the online content in your efforts to minimize any ongoing harm to your child.



## 4. Address the content

**Contact the website:** If the concerning content continues to be publicly available online (e.g., social media), you can also contact the website/platform directly utilizing the “report abuse” function to request the material be removed (particularly in circumstances that do not involve law enforcement). This feature is available on most of the user-generated content websites and platforms. It is important that when you do this, you let the site know that you are the parent, that the person in the image or video is under 18 years of age, and that the content was made available without your child’s consent. Visit [NeedHelpNow.ca](https://www.needhelpnow.ca) for additional details.

**Send a message:** If you do not know whether the concerning content is online or otherwise being shared, but are worried that it might happen, or even if you know it is being shared, you may wish to send a message to the parent(s) of the acting-out youth and/or the parent(s) of other involved youth who may have the image or video. You may wish to include the following types of statements:

- **Explain the issue:** “I have reason to believe [*your child, or insert name of acting-out youth or other involved youth*] is in possession of a sexual image/video of my child. This is a serious and potentially criminal matter. I am reaching out to you with the hope that you will be able to assist in addressing this concern.”
  - You may also wish to include some details such as a brief description of the picture or video and the circumstances under which it was taken.
- **State that possession of the image is non-consensual:** “According to my child, the images/video was taken in circumstances considered to be private and personal, and my child does not consent to [*your child, or insert name of acting-out youth or other involved youth*] being in possession of the image/video.”
  - If the image or video was initially provided voluntarily, you may wish to adapt this language by adding, for example, the words “any longer.”
- **Address past/future distribution:** “My child does not consent to [*your child, or insert name of acting-out youth or other involved youth*] forwarding it to any other person or posting it in any online location.”
  - If distribution has already occurred, you may wish to state that your child did not consent to that distribution, and does not consent to future distribution.
- **Request deletion:** “I request that you speak to [*your child, or insert name of acting-out youth or other involved youth*] and ensure that they delete the image/video and all copies they may have of it immediately. In addition, if [*your child, or insert name of acting-out youth or other involved youth*] has posted the image/video online or in other location, I ask that you ensure that they remove the images/video immediately.”
  - **Exception:** In cases involving a police investigation, follow the direction of law enforcement regarding the handling of digital evidence.
- **Reference possibility of police involvement:** “This request is being made now in order to avoid the need to involve police. In Canada, there are criminal offences concerning the distribution of sexual images.”
- **Seek confirmation:** “Please respond to this message and confirm that the sexual image has been deleted/removed as requested. If I do not receive confirmation from you within [*set the number of days – anywhere from two to seven should be enough*], I may have no choice but to contact police.”

## 5. Involve your child

Make sure your child is apprised of and understands what will happen next. The goal is to ensure that they are kept in the loop, feel empowered, and are part of the solution to regain a sense of control over the situation.

## 6. Outline a home safety plan

While still being supportive, be clear that there will be some safety guidelines put in place. Make it clear that these actions are for their safety and not discipline for doing something wrong. These guidelines should be logical and fit with the behaviour and should differ from a punitive approach. Examples may include:

- Instructing your child to temporarily suspend use of their social media accounts to limit harm in viewing peers' comments regarding the incident.
- Temporarily suspending or limiting your child's cell phone and/or internet use to limit their exposure to any online bullying that may ensue.
- Increasing supervision.
- Working together to limit additional harms. Instruct your child not to retaliate against those involved in spreading the content. Reassure your child that you are working closely with the school to ensure the incident is managed with great care and sensitivity.
  - Following an incident of youth NCDII, it is important that you monitor interactions between your child and their peers. As a result of the incident, they may be targeted by peers and subjected to verbal and, in some cases, physical bullying, harassment, alienation, and/or cyberbullying. This can leave your child feeling isolated, ashamed, and helpless. Feelings of self-blame, guilt, and humiliation may also be intensified.

**Take any threat of suicide seriously and immediately seek professional help.**

- Reinforcing the importance of friends. Help increase the strength and resiliency of your child by reinforcing the importance of your child's friends in helping them manage through this time. They can serve as a protective factor and reduce the likelihood of bullying that may result from an incident of youth NCDII.



## 7. Create a safety plan with the school

Find out what the school knows about the incident; try your best not to react emotionally. It will be important for both parties to work together to solve the issues. Make it clear that you are an ally and you trust the school will act in the same manner as well.

Work with the school to create a safety plan – you want to ensure that your child is properly supported and feeling secure. This should include your child knowing who to go to for help to address any further problems. The plan should also include what the adults in your child’s life are going to do to help keep them safe.

If the images or videos of your child resurface at any point in the future and/or if your child is mistreated by peers, consult with the school. Depending upon the circumstances, a school response may need to be escalated to some form of law enforcement intervention.



## 8. Seek professional help (if appropriate)

Seek professional counselling for your child as necessary. Your school may be able to help direct you to the appropriate service, or you may contact C3P at [support@protectchildren.ca](mailto:support@protectchildren.ca), which can help direct families to support services such as counselling/therapy or victim services that may be available in their region.