

## CHILDREN IN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT: BETWEEN RISKS AND PROTECTION



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### ABSTRACT

The article discusses risks and protection of children in the virtual environment. It is a theoretical essay that includes: the full protection of children and adolescents, based on legal systems and the paradigm of dignity and sexual freedom; the rich of technology on the internet; the role of parents and/or guardians in the virtual environment. It is concluded that the risks of the internet for children are accentuated due to the lack of digital education of children, parents/family members and guardians; There are weaknesses in the implementation of state policies in the fight against cybercrime.

**Keywords:** Children and adolescents, Virtual Environment, Risks, Protection.

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## INTRODUCTION

About 95% of the population (25 million individuals), between 9 and 17 years old, uses the Internet in the country. Of this total, 88% maintain profiles on digital platforms, and between 15 and 17 years old, the percentage is 99%, registering an increase in children in early childhood with access to the Internet (Cetic, 2023). This growing connectivity has reconfigured the modes of interaction of this population with the world around them, bringing countless opportunities for learning, communication, entertainment, and a host of dangers.

The Internet has been a catalyst for social, economic, and cultural change, affecting the lives of people around the world. According to Pimentel (2017), the world we live in and the relationships established by individuals have incorporated the digital into their daily lives, impacting daily thoughts and actions. Technological development and the dissemination of smartphones and tablets, according to Chalezquer and Sala (2009, p. 31), have boosted and increased access to the Internet, making the world more available and interconnected: "In recent years we have witnessed a supremacy of electronic devices. Information and Communication Technologies have allowed the world to become much smaller, and have become art and part of globalization."

From this perspective, the precocity with which people have access to the Internet and become familiar with the digital world is evident. Children are increasingly immersed in the virtual world, since the availability of electronic devices provides a constant connection with this world and guarantees access to a lot of content. For Eisenstein (2013, p. 64), new technologies have produced a revolution, affecting learning and the manifestation of sexuality, especially on social networks: "In the isolation and anonymity of his computer in his room [...], the adolescent begins his sexual knowledge and his relationships with information freely obtained from other people of all types and ages, but whose real identity is unknown".

With regard to social networks, they have assumed a prominent role of communication and connection in the midst of feelings of alienation and isolation, expressing the rapid integration of children into the virtual world and leading to new concerns, as their condition of emotional and cognitive immaturity combined with their lack of experience makes them more susceptible to influences in this environment.

In this sense, this article, carried out with the support of the Amazonas State Research Support Foundation, is discussed. (FAPEAM), risks and protection of children in

the virtual environment, dialoguing with authors and protective legislation. The text includes three topics: protection of children and adolescents; risks of technology on the internet and the role of parents in the virtual environment.

## **PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT**

The principle of the dignity of the human person assumes centrality in the Brazilian legal system and reflects the value and individuality of each human being, constituting the basis of a democratic state of law according to article 1, item III, of the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988). Regarding this principle, Sarlet (2011, p. 70) points out that it is "an intrinsic and distinctive quality recognized in each human being, which makes him or her deserving of the same respect and consideration by the State and the community, implying, in this sense, a complex of fundamental rights and duties". The State, therefore, exercises primacy in the elaboration and execution of regulations aimed at safeguarding victims, preventing and repressing crimes in the virtual environment, and it is up to the family to assume the responsibility of instructing its members about dangers, risks and precautions in this environment to guarantee the sexual dignity of their children.

## **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL SYSTEM**

In fulfilling its responsibility to protect the dignity of the human person, the State acts through the elaboration and application of legislation. The Federal Constitution of 1988, in its paragraph 4 of article 227, establishes the state's obligation to curb and punish any form of aggression against children and adolescents, emphasizing the need to protect them against any type of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression.

The United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Statute of the Child and Adolescent in 1990 in Brazil constitute the normative frameworks that make explicit the condition of children and adolescents as subjects of rights and as persons in the process of development". That is, free citizens, but with conditioned/restricted sexual affective freedom due to the limits of their own condition. "Legal standardization will come to guarantee the fullness of the right to affectivity and sexuality, in a construction that is only apparently contradictory: the exercise of the right is limited to guarantee the fullness of the right." (Nogueira, 2012, p.29). Physical, mental,

moral, spiritual and social development, in conditions of freedom and dignity is associated with full protection, without these conditions children and adolescents are unprotected.

Freedom, respect and dignity are fundamental rights of every child and adolescent as human beings (art.15 of the ECA). However, the interpretation/definition of these rights are impacted by socio-historical contexts and express ethical-political disputes, especially when associated with sexuality. The sexual freedom of children and adolescents is regulated by whom? Themselves, family members and/or the State? Who has the duty to protect/regulate child and adolescent sexuality? First, we consider the dispute over the view of the domain of sexuality of children and adolescents, between autonomy and protection of this segment.

In childhood, sexuality is related to the healthy development of identity and understanding of one's own body. Children begin to discover the anatomical differences between boys and girls and to form notions of gender. They may express curiosity about body parts, ask questions about sexuality, and express interest in behaviors related to love and affection. According to Maia (2014), in childhood:

Sexuality is expressed through curiosities, questions, exploration of one's own body and that of the other, recognition of sexual differences. It is infantile eroticism marked by dialogue about sex, occurrences of individual masturbation and sexual games or games. What characterizes this phase is the exploration of one's body and of the other, not yet contaminated by social rules. The child does not always know the rules that govern the possibilities of this knowledge, that is, what he can do or not. (MAIA, 2014, p. 03)

It is important for adults to provide a safe and welcoming environment for children to explore their doubts and feelings. According to Sanderson (2005), parents play a crucial role in guiding children in distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate touch, setting limits in relation to sexual behavior. Thus, the provision of information by parents is essential to guide children about manipulation by sexual abusers, who often disseminate distorted messages about sexuality.

As the child enters adolescence, it triggers physical and hormonal transformations. Puberty, an important milestone of this period, brings with it the more accentuated awakening of sexuality, the development of the sexual organs and the beginning of processes such as menstruation and sperm production. These physical changes are accompanied by emotions and sensations, which can generate confusion in adolescents who are also discovering and building their identity and experiencing their sexuality in a marked way.

Human sexuality is learned, experienced by the human being in relation to his own body – desires, sexual activities, reproduction, but it is not limited to the biological dimension. It involves the mind (psyche), the social, the cultural. It can be defined by beliefs and values that affect the way we deal with the body. (Santos & Aguiar, 2018; Sanderson, 2005). "Sexuality presupposes dignity, freedom, diversity, respect and tolerance. And the free expression of this sexuality must be recognized and guaranteed as a fundamental right, unavailable, of all citizens" (Nogueira, 2012, p.19). Consequently, it extends to all children and adolescents, to the 'extent of their maturity'. They must be protected from apparent sexual consents that induce them to practice sexual activities with people who are generally older, mature, capable of deceiving them, seducing them to "spontaneous" manifestations of their sexuality.

For Piaget (1983), autonomy is a gradual conquest, influenced by the development of intellectual capacities. Children go through different stages of cognitive development, in which their understanding of the world and their own capacities evolve. Therefore, the granting of autonomy must be aligned with each individual's specific stage of cognitive development.

Therefore, when we apply these principles to the discussion on autonomy in childhood sexuality, it becomes clear that the granting of responsibilities and decisions related to sexuality must be progressive and adapted to the level of maturity of each individual. The application of this freedom in the sphere of childhood and adolescence requires a careful approach, balancing the protection of children's rights with respect for their autonomy. According to Nogueira Neto (2015), the affective-sexual freedom of children and adolescents should be considered a right, even if its exercise is conditioned by their level of development. In this way, legal norms must be emancipatory, aiming to guarantee the fullness of the right to sexuality, in a process that, despite limiting the exercise of the right in certain circumstances, actually aims to strengthen it.

The recognition of autonomy as a gradual process, combined with the principles of cognitive development, emerges as an indication for the granting of responsibilities related to sexuality. The intersection between law and sexuality highlights the need for laws that protect the rights of children and adolescents while promoting an understanding of sexuality as an integral part of human development.

The minimum age for a person to have sex is established by law. Article 217-A, created by Law 12.015/2009, prohibits the practice of carnal conjunction or other libidinous

act with a minor under 14 years of age, under penalty of imprisonment from 8 to 15 years. It is the typification of the crime of rape of a vulnerable person. However, children and adolescents aged 12 and 13 have the right to express their sexuality, but not to legitimately consent to a sexual relationship. Lowenkron (2016) criticizes age as a criterion for the orientation of sexual relations and suggests, in addition to age, gender and social class, because he considers that the State, by arbitrating on the "age of consent" - the age at which a person can have sexual relations with another - is considering the subject - children and adolescents under 14 years of age - as an 'object' and not as a subject.

In the midst of the dispute over the free expression of the sexuality of children and adolescents, Nogueira (2012) is correct about the combination between the fullness of the right and its limitation. The law restricts the age for having sexual relations in order to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of children and adolescents, against the abuses of the violator. Associated with the freedom that one has with the principle of human dignity. Dignity, according to Andrade (2003), is a universal value that contemplates the rights shared by all men, in the same proportion. However, the challenge for all is the materialization of this value in everyday human relationships.

## SPECIFIC LEGISLATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DIGITAL CRIME

The rise of the cyber age has led to a redefinition of rights, especially in the area of child sexuality, requiring a review of the pertinent legal protections, as well as the enactment of specific regulations to prevent/punish forms of digital violence, such as Law No. 11,829/2008, a relevant normative instrument to combat digital crime, especially in the protection of children's and adolescents' rights. The law contains provisions aimed at cybercrimes<sup>3</sup>, including those linked to the sexual exploitation of children, and was designed to improve the fight against the production, commercialization and distribution of pornographic material involving children/adolescents. In addition, it seeks to criminalize the acquisition and possession of this content, as well as the conducts associated with pedophilia in the Internet sphere (BRASIL, 2008).

In the scenario of proliferation of image and video manipulation technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a prominent role in the production of visual content, and the

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<sup>3</sup> Article 241-A. Offering, exchanging, making available, transmitting, distributing, publishing or disseminating by any means, including by means of a computer or telematic system, photography, video or other record that contains an explicit or pornographic sex scene involving a child or adolescent: Penalty - imprisonment, from 3 (three) to 6 (six) years, and a fine.



criminalization of the simulation of the participation of children/adolescents in scenes of a sexual nature represents an essential measure to protect their integrity and dignity. In this sense, Law No. 12,965/2014, known as the Civil Rights Framework for the Internet, in its article 1, establishes principles, guarantees, rights and duties for the use of the Internet in the country and determines guidelines for the action of the Union, the Federal District, the states and municipalities in this matter. Item I of article 7 on the rights guaranteed to the user provides for the inviolability of intimacy and private life, its protection and compensation for material or moral damage resulting from its violation (BRASIL, 2014).

In more detail, Law No. 13,709/2018 – General Data Protection Law (LGPD) brings "matters of protection and processing of personal data, directly contemplating the child and adolescent public, dedicating section III to the subject" (MACIEL; BARROS, 2022, p. 2250). The processing of personal data of children/adolescents must be carried out with special attention to their age and development, requiring the specific consent of parents/legal guardians for the processing of this data and always respecting their best interest (BRASIL, 2018a). The protection of personal data, especially of children and adolescents, has increased the challenges to ensure the safety of this public, giving rise to the idea of preserving their best interest with regard to the protection of their data, their development and the exercise of their fundamental rights. However, the lack of precision of the term "best interest" may cause ambiguities in its application in view of the different interpretations of the parties involved. In this absence, the risk of not guaranteeing the safeguarding of children's and adolescents' rights increases.

Law 13,718/2018, which amended the Penal Code to typify crimes of "sexual harassment" (art. 215-A) and "disclosure of rape scenes or rape scenes of a vulnerable person, sex scene or pornography" (art. 218-C), is an important instrument for the protection of children, establishing specific legal measures to prevent and punish those responsible for certain conducts (Brasil, 2018b). This law brought important changes in crimes against sexual dignity. In addition to the aforementioned content, paragraph 5<sup>4</sup> in article 217-A explains that consent and the sexual experience of the vulnerable person are insignificant for the typification of the crime;

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 5 - The penalties provided for in the caput and in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of this article apply regardless of the victim's consent or the fact that she had sexual relations prior to the crime. (Included by Law No. 13,718, of 2018)

Recently, Law 14.811/2024 (Brasil, 2024) was approved, which instituted measures to protect children/adolescents against violence in educational establishments or similar, containing a specific provision for systematic virtual intimidation, cyberbullying. If this occurs through computer networks, social media, applications, online games or other digital environment, with real-time transmission, the offender may be sentenced to imprisonment of two to four years, in addition to a fine (Silva, 2024). It is also important to highlight the amendment made to the Law of Heinous Crimes (Law 8072/1990) with the insertion of item X in article 1 "inducement, instigation or assistance to suicide or self-mutilation carried out through the computer network, social network or transmitted in real time (article 122, caput and § 4 of the CP)".

## **RISKS TO ENSURING HEALTHY SEXUALITY IN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT**

In the virtual environment, content proliferates, especially of sexual content. There is a reconfiguration in the patterns of communication and social interaction and a redefinition in the processes of learning and expression of sexuality (Eisenstein, 2013). Thus, children and adolescents are exposed on the Internet to inappropriate materials for their ages, which negatively influences the understanding and experience of sexuality, contributing to this the presence of malicious people in the virtual environment. Criminal acts of a sexual nature committed in cyberspace largely reflect the conducts outlined as sexual crimes in the Penal Code. On the Internet, however, vulnerability is compounded by ease of access and the ability of attackers to hide through anonymity.

In this sense, the reach of the digital environment mediated by electronic devices leads to a decrease in the idea of responsibility of users, resulting in an alleged freedom to practice all kinds of acts against children and adolescents. The Internet thus becomes a vehicle for the practice of crimes, with children and adolescents being susceptible to different online dangers and risks, such as exposure to inappropriate content; sexual abuse and exploitation; cyberbullying; Grooming; online grooming and virtual harassment; digitally generated child sexual abuse materials; sexting; sextortion and publication of private information (UNESCO; ITU, 2019; MMFDH, 2020).

The risks of technology on the internet can be associated with the content to which the child is exposed or exposed and the risks of contact that occurs in a personal relationship (Densa and Dantas, 2022). One of the main ones is exposure to sexually explicit content. There is easy access to pornographic sites and inappropriate materials



exposing children and adolescents to a distorted sexuality. In this sense, Sfoggia and Kowac (2014, p. 9) point out:

Ready access to material with sex appeal, such as photos, videos, texts, and messages, appears to be influencing how teens and young adults interact sexually. The sense of anonymity and distance promoted by the web increases permissiveness and corroborates the way of acting, often in an individualistic and risky way, of these age groups.

The sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents on the Internet usually involves the manipulation of this audience to obtain images or participate in sexual activities online. Abusers often take advantage of their vulnerability and naivety, using manipulation and seduction tactics to achieve their goals. This occurs on online platforms and includes the production, distribution and consumption of content of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including the publication of intimate information, constituting a violation of privacy and security. Therefore, it is imperative to protect your personal information (address, phone number, and school details) to prevent it from becoming targets for online predators.

Cyberbullying involves the use of digital technologies, such as social media and electronic messages, to intimidate, threaten, or humiliate young people. According to Campbell (2005), it is a form of bullying through technology. Grooming offers the same risk, a behavior in which aggressors, posing as trustworthy people (usually with false identities), use the Internet to establish a relationship of trust and friendship with children and adolescents with the aim of sexual abuse. "The concept of sexual grooming generally describes a set of processes and steps through which an aggressor manipulates a minor to lead him or her into a situation in which sexual abuse can be committed" (Mota; Manita, 2021, p. 3). Grooming refers to the adult's approach, through the internet, with a child or adolescent to gain their trust and then abuse or sexually exploit them. (Klunk and Azambuja, 2023)

The creation and dissemination of digitally generated sexual abuse materials of children is the new face of online sexual violence. Technological advances make it possible to generate realistic images and videos based on textual descriptions, including scenes of child sexual abuse. Before, the creation of digital content, including images and videos, required time, however, with the content generation capacity of artificial intelligence (AI) this reality has changed drastically. According to the 2023 Annual Report of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), there is evidence regarding the use of AI in the production of sexual

content involving children and adolescents. IWF (2023) revealed that, in a period of just one month, 20,254 images generated with AI resources were posted on a single dark web forum.

Sexting, the practice of sending sexually explicit messages, photos or videos via cell phone or the Internet has become common, with people using intimidation tactics, emotional blackmail or threats to persuade children and adolescents to send intimate photos or videos. Although this practice is often perceived as harmless, it generates serious consequences, especially when intimate images are shared without consent or used for revictimization.

Sextortion, a term originating from the combination of the words sex and extortion, is a form of sexual exploitation that uses the asymmetrical relationship of power as an instrument (Silva, 2022). It is a serious crime that involves the use of intimate images and/or videos of a person to extort money, sexual favors and other benefits, such as coercing them to participate in sexual activities or to produce pornographic content in exchange for secrecy about such images/videos. In general, it is practiced by abusive intimate partners or by strangers who, using abundant social ingenuity, approach and manipulate the victim over the Internet, convincing them to send intimate images/videos, with subsequent threats and new sexual extortions (Silva, 2022). Victims often give in to the demands of the criminals and, out of shame and fear of social prejudice, do not report the crime.

## **PARENTS IN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT**

Children's education is not restricted to the physical environment, it includes parental guidance and supervision in the use of technologies, which implies helping children develop skills to navigate safely and responsibly. In this sense, the CF/88, in its article 229, prescribes that "parents have the duty to assist, raise and educate their minor children" (Brasil, 1988). It is important to point out that, with the advancement of technology, physical distances decrease, but human connections become more distant, a phenomenon that is visible in parental relationships. It is common for parents to give cell phones to their children to entertain/calm them, making them negligent in parental care, and their children more vulnerable in the cyber environment (Radaelli; Batistela, 2019).

The lack of parental assistance/monitoring in children's online activities can be equated to the abandonment of an incapacitated person, as pointed out by Rodrigues and Santana (2022). The concept of digital abandonment is characterized by the omission of

legal guardians to monitor/guide the virtual interactions of their wards. According to Alves (2017), "digital abandonment" is parental negligence configured by omissions of parents who neglect the safety of their children in the Internet and social network environment, not avoiding their harmful effects in the face of numerous situations of risk and vulnerability.

For Vatanabe (2017, p. 52), the lack of information of those responsible is one of the possible reasons for digital abandonment, which consists of the absence "of monitoring by parents and guardians towards children, whether due to negligence, negligence or lack of information". In the same direction, the 2019 Report on the Online Safety of Children and Adolescents (UNESCO; ITU, 2019) highlights the generational digital gap as one of the challenges faced in ensuring children's safety, as younger people often outpace parents in terms of digital skills. Thus, to protect children/adolescents, parents need to acquire basic digital skills.

Gonçalves (2016) points out that the virtual world is an extension of the real world. In this sense, with the growing influence of technology in life, parents and guardians have the responsibility to ensure the psychological, ethical and moral integrity of their children in the physical and virtual worlds, and it is essential, for this, to know risks and mechanisms available to help them in this process. In this scenario, the State needs to create conditions for parents to acquire knowledge about the risks of the Internet in order to educate their children about safe behaviors in the virtual world. According to Vatanabe (2017), the State should offer parents information and counseling programs through lectures and workshops, enabling them to take care of their children in the virtual environment. However, the need for digital inclusion must be considered. According to Santos and Rosa (2023, p.2 ), "the digital divide is situated in a difficulty that is related to social inequality, in which people do not hold social and economic positions that enable digital and social access".

In the debate on the responsibility of parents regarding the safe use of the Internet, the inclusion of item II of article 101 of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent – ECA (BRASIL, 1990) is assertive in establishing the duty of the State to promote guidance programs for parents, children and adolescents with a view to preventing dangers. Parents, therefore, cannot neglect their responsibility in the virtual world, where the risks can be equally harmful. Thus, parental control emerges as an important tool to assist in the supervision and guidance of children's access to the Internet.

Regarding parental control, article 29 of the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet (Brasil, 2014) recognizes the importance of mechanisms that enable parents and

legal guardians to restrict the access of children and adolescents to inappropriate content, respecting the principles of the ECA. Maciel and Barros (2022) clarify that this article marks the moment of introduction of the concept of "parental control" and points out the need for the participation of parents or legal guardians in the protection of content accessed by children. The sole paragraph of the article highlights the cooperation between civil society, Internet providers and public authorities in the promotion of digital inclusion, education and the implementation of good practices for the digital inclusion of children and adolescents, and the role of the public authorities is to promote awareness about the risks and challenges faced in the digital environment and to provide guidance on the proper use of parental control tools.

Madeira et al. (2023) point out that parental control systems offer several features designed to monitor and regulate young people's online activity; range from web content filters to activity logging, download and application blocking, screen time control, and access restrictions to certain content; and feature some advanced solutions such as GPS locator, alert/SOS button, and detailed usage reports. The purpose is to provide parents and guardians with the means to supervise and protect their children from the numerous dangers in the digital environment.

In this context, parental mediation emerges as a distinct and complementary approach to deal with the presence of children in the digital environment. If parental controls focus on tools and settings designed to limit access to inappropriate content and supervise online activities, parental mediation takes a more educational and guiding approach, in which "parents or guardians take on the role of guiding their children to make safer decisions, on their own, in the digital environment, teaching them to differentiate appropriate from inappropriate content" (Brasil, 2023, p. 4). It addresses the interaction between parents/guardians and children in managing children's access to and participation in digital activities, with a variety of strategies ranging from active supervision to guidance and discussion on the use of ICT (Mendonça, 2016).

Family communication about the use of ICT is an important tool in parental mediation, as it facilitates the negotiation of rules and limits and promotes the development of self-regulation skills by the children themselves. According to the MMFDH (2020), communication in parental mediation is crucial to ensure children's safety on the Internet, with parents having the responsibility to be an example for their children in terms of online behavior, using the Internet in a safe and moderate way.

Family dialogue should focus on the dynamics of building a relationship of trust and responsibility. This dynamic empowers young people to face the challenges of the digital context with discernment and, at the same time, gives them the necessary confidence to seek help and guidance if they face any difficulties.

A free and fluid conversation between parents and children contributes to them feeling confident enough to turn to an adult if necessary. Therefore, the good old constant dialogue between parents and children continues to be essential to help children and adolescents recognize risk situations and try to avoid them, as well as talk to parents or guardians in the face of any doubt or occurrence they are exposed to (MMFDH, 2020, p. 21)

Effective communication between parents and children is only one of the dimensions of security in the digital sphere, and awareness of the dangers inherent in the online environment is essential a prerequisite for establishing this communication (MMFDH, 2020). Exposure and understanding of the various risks, from cyberbullying to the exploitation of virtual predators, are essential for children and adolescents, according to their maturity, to be able to discern and avoid dangerous situations. "Many parents are not aware of the act of violence they are practicing against their children, by leaving them exposed to the contents of the web, without proper accompaniment, left to their own fate and their electronic equipment". (Klunk and Azambuja, 2023, p.5)

Generally, countries' policies ensure that parents and caregivers voluntarily take measures to protect children. Parents have responsibility and an important role in the education of their children and when the intervention of the State is minimal, this responsibility increases. Risks can be mitigated through parental guidance and the institution of family rules on the use of the internet. (Densa and Dantas, 2022). "The function of parental authority is to contribute to the construction of the child's personality based on the values chosen by the parents as most appropriate, until the child is able to evaluate them and choose his ideal of a good life for himself". (Teixeira and Multedo, 2022, p.30)

## **CONCLUSION**

Sexuality permeates human development from the earliest stages of life, so it is essential to protect child sexuality in the virtual environment. To this end, adults, especially parents and guardians, must prepare themselves to dialogue openly and respectfully with their children (whether children or adolescents) about their bodies so that they understand

their own sexuality and ways to protect it, including on the Internet. Thus, providing information about risk situations is an important contribution to the autonomy of this public. However, nothing can be done in isolation.

The protection of children and adolescents in the virtual environment requires articulated work between the State, family and civil society. However, the analysis of strategies for the prevention and repression of online sexual violence in order to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents is a priority of the State, especially with regard to the elaboration and implementation of policies to contain digital crime. In this sense, legislation plays an essential role in ensuring the protection of victims and the accountability of transgressors. Parental control and mediation need to be known and used by parents and guardians in order to ensure a healthy sexuality for their children (children and adolescents) in the digital environment.

In this context, education and digital inclusion are essential for child and adolescent protection in the virtual environment and indispensable to raise awareness among children, adolescents, parents and guardians about the risks and dangers of the Internet, empowering them with knowledge about ways to face/combat this problem, as excessive and inappropriate exposure has generated irreversible and immeasurable consequences for the development of children. and affects family members and society. In addition, sexual predators must be punished so as not to continue in the "anonymity" of their cybercrimes.



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