

Common Sense on Search

What's The Issue?

Everyone knows there's a huge amount of information on the Internet. But when your children really need to do research for school – or dive deeper into any topic – it helps to know some strategies for improving their results. Although most children know how to type a keyword into Google, they may not understand that there are many ways to conduct a search, and that some are better than others.

Why It Matters

Smart searching online can make a huge difference in the quality and relevance of the content your children find on the Internet. But it takes a bit of know-how to improve the chances of getting back the information they're looking for. For example, kids should know that different search engines – like Google, Bing, or Yahoo! – work differently, and may yield different information. Another key part of online searching is knowing how to evaluate search results. For example, regular keyword searches might yield anything from an advertisement to a sponsored link (basically a different kind of ad). Children can spend a lot of time in front of ads if they are not sure how to select the best search results.

Common Sense Says

Search together with young kids.

Younger children have a more difficult time searching and making sense of their search results. Your guidance will help them get the results they're looking for.

Consider using safe search settings.

Even typing innocuous keywords into a search engine may yield search results you don't want your children to see. If you decide not to turn on filters, then you may want to keep an eye on your kids during their search process.

Choose search terms carefully.

The most precise and descriptive words will yield the best results. For example, there's a big difference between *Apple* and *Red Delicious Apples History United States*.

Use quotation marks to search for exact phrases.

If kids are looking for a quotation, full name, or the lyrics to a song, have them place quotation marks around words that go together.

Point out sponsored links.

These links often appear at the top of a search result list to encourage users to click on them first, and they're usually labeled as sponsored. Remember that *sponsored* equals *advertising*.