

What Should I Say?

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT ONLINE ANTISEMITISM

1

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD SEES ANTISEMITIC CONTENT ONLINE?

Stay calm and ask open-ended questions. **“What did you see?”** or **“How did it make you feel?”** Don’t dismiss it or react with panic—this can discourage future sharing. Validate their feelings, remind them it’s not their fault, and let them know they did the right thing by telling you. Report the content together using the platform’s tools and, if needed, FOA’s reporting form.

2

WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM TO A YOUNG CHILD?

Antisemitism is when someone is unkind or unfair to Jewish people just because they’re Jewish. It’s like bullying someone for who they are - not because of anything they did. That’s not okay, and if you ever see or hear anything like that, you can always come to me.

3

MY TEEN THINKS ANTISEMITIC MEMES ARE “JUST JOKES.”

Humor online can be confusing. Guide them to think critically: **“Why do you think someone would use that joke? Who might be hurt by it?”** Explain that antisemitic humor often masks real hate—and has historically been used to dehumanize Jews. Encourage empathy: **“Imagine someone made a joke like that about something important to you—how would that feel?”**

4

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD I LOOK FOR IF MY CHILD IS BEING TARGETED ONLINE?

Look for changes in mood, sleep, or screen habits—like being unusually withdrawn or anxious when online. They might also suddenly stop using certain apps. Encourage open dialogue by making check-ins a regular part of your routine. **“Anything weird or upsetting come up online today?”** helps normalize these conversations.

5

SHOULD I MONITOR MY CHILD’S ONLINE ACTIVITY?

Yes, but with trust and transparency. Let them know you’re not spying—you’re protecting. Set boundaries together (e.g., screen time limits, app use rules). Teach them how to recognize red flags and report hate. Aim to empower rather than control, so they come to you first when something’s wrong.

6

IF MY CHILD FACES HATE ONLINE, HOW DO I HELP THEM FEEL PROUD?

Counter hate with pride. Celebrate Jewish history, culture, and values. Help them connect with community—synagogue, youth groups, online spaces where they feel seen and safe. Show them examples of resilience and contribution. **“They said something hateful, but here’s what we know is true about who we are.”**

7

WHAT IF THE ANTISEMITIC CONTENT COMES FROM A CLASSMATE OR FRIEND?

Encourage your child to speak to a trusted adult—teacher, counselor, or you. Don’t force them to confront the peer directly. Let school authorities handle discipline. Focus on your child’s emotional safety and let them know you’re proud of them for speaking up. Explain that silence can feel like agreement.

8

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT ANTISEMITISM IN SCHOOL?

Document everything. Contact the school with a calm, clear message: **“This happened. It’s serious. How will you ensure it doesn’t happen again?”** Ask about policies on hate speech and bullying. If needed, escalate to school boards or local advocacy organizations. Remind them that antisemitism is a form of racism— and needs to be addressed as such.

9

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD DEAL WITH ANTISEMITIC LIES ONLINE?

Validate their fear, then ground them in facts. **“That post is false, and it spreads hate. Unfortunately, some people believe these lies because they’ve been around for centuries.”** Show them how to check reliable sources. Use it as a teaching moment about critical thinking, bias, and the importance of asking questions.

10

SHOULD I TEACH MY CHILD TO “FIGHT BACK” WHEN THEY SEE ANTISEMITISM ONLINE?

You can fight smart, not with hate. You can report trolls, respond with facts, or refuse to remain silent to fight back. You don’t have to be weak to not engage with trolls—you’re smart. Remind them: **every time we speak out, we reduce hate’s power.** Show them there are entire communities—including FOA— working to push back.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR EVERYDAY

Even the most capable child may feel unsure in the moment. These simple steps can help them respond with calm and confidence:

1. Treat others with respect - even if you’ve been treated unfairly. Your dignity is yours to protect. Responding with self-respect speaks louder than hate.
2. Use positive language to express your feelings. Try saying: “I’d prefer if you said that differently” or “That made me uncomfortable.”
3. Ask questions instead of assuming. This opens a door to understanding — or helps the other person reflect on their words.