6 Out of 10 Parents Worry About Their Children Being Groomed Online

6 out of 10 parents worry that their children will be exposed to grooming for sexual purposes online. At the same time, the number of reported cases of grooming has increased sharply. To raise awareness of the problem, ChildX and Tele2 are launching the Grooming Generator, a digital tool where the participant receives messages that resemble a real grooming conversation.

"The grooming generator gives us adults a direct insight into what it feels like to be groomed. The experience can be unpleasant, but it is crucial for us to understand how manipulative these processes are and how we can better protect children," says Ida Östensson, Secretary General of ChildX.

Grooming is something that worries many parents, according to a new Novus survey commissioned by ChildX. Six out of ten parents state that they worry that their children will be exposed to grooming for sexual purposes online. New statistics also show that one in three young people (32%) have been contacted online with questions about sending nude photos or videos to acquaintances or strangers.

"It takes an average of 45 minutes for a perpetrator to groom a child in an online gaming environment. That's like one half of a football match or an episode of a reality series. The perpetrators use new methods all the time - and the adult world must keep up in order to protect its children," says Ida Östensson.

Therefore, today the children's rights organization ChildX, in collaboration with Tele2, is launching the Grooming Generator – a digital tool where adults can experience how grooming is done for themselves. The tools are a simulated experience where the participant receives messages that resemble a real-life grooming conversation. The conversation starts innocently but quickly becomes more intrusive, just like it looks for children in real life.

"We know that technology can be used both to exploit and protect children. With the Grooming Generator, we want to give parents and adults the knowledge and tools they need to be able to act, Erik Wottrich, Head of Sustainability at Tele2.

The number of reported cases of grooming for sexual purposes has increased sharply in recent years. Between 2021 and 2023, the number of reported grooming cases increased by over 300% internationally according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Try the Grooming Generator here

ChildX's three tips for parents:

Learn about grooming. To protect your child from grooming, both you and your child need to understand what grooming is. Grooming can take different forms, but is about a process where a person exploits a child's trust in order to expose the child to sexual abuse.

Talk to your child. Initiate conversations with your child about what online relationships should and shouldn't look like. Good times to start talking to your child are, for example, when your child starts playing games online, wants to get social media or download a new app.

Remove guilt and shame. If your child is victimized, it is not your fault or the child's fault. Support by removing feelings of shame and saying "We'll solve this together" or "You haven't done anything wrong".

Read more tips on groominggeneratorn.se

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Facts about grooming for sexual purposes

Grooming for sexual purposes is a process in which a person, often an adult, manipulates or creates trust in a child in order to exploit the child sexually. Grooming can take place both online and offline. The process can be quick or take months.

Facts about the Grooming Generator

The Grooming Generator is a digital tool where adults can experience how grooming is done for themselves. The goal is to increase knowledge about how children are manipulated by perpetrators online and to give parents the tools they need to protect their children.

The grooming generator is a simulated experience where the participant receives messages that resemble a real-life grooming conversation. The conversation starts innocently but quickly becomes increasingly intrusive, just as it appears to children in real life. After the experience, the participant receives parenting tips and support materials on how to talk to their children about online safety without blaming.

The tool is part of ChildX and Tele2's broader work to combat grooming for sexual purposes and strengthen children's safety online. By experiencing grooming firsthand, adults can gain a deeper understanding of the problem – and better protect their children

Facts about statistics in the press release

Six out of ten parents are worried that their children will be subjected to grooming. Source: Survey conducted by Novus on behalf of ChildX during the period 3-13 December 2024. Target group: Parents with at least 1 child over the age of 7 living at home. Number of interviews conducted: 1085. The results are generalizable to the target population in question.

One in three young people (32%) has at some point received unwelcome questions about sending undressed or naked pictures of themselves. Source: The survey was conducted by Verian (formerly Sifo) on behalf of ChildX. Field period: 27 Feb - 17 March. Target group: Children and young people aged 15-19. Number of interviews: 1036.

The number of reported cases of grooming has increased by over 300% between 2021 and 2023. Source: CyberTipline Report 2023, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

It takes an average of 45 minutes to groom a child in online gaming environments. Source: We Protect Global Threat Assessment 2023.