

# Coronavirus and Children Online: What the Experts Say

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COVID-19 has led to children communicating, learning & playing online more than ever. While this offers many benefits, there are concerns about their exposure to risks, mental health, quality of online schooling & the digital divide. Leading Minds Online explores the opportunities & risks that have emerged from this seismic shift in how millions of children live their lives.

## Bridging the Digital Divide

Access to & use of ICT is uneven among children & teachers, with their digital divide resulting from the same inequities prevalent in the offline world: poverty, lack of access to adequate infrastructure, discriminatory gender norms, & marginalization of the most vulnerable.

## Listen to the "COVID Generation"

Children & young people have known for years what many adults are only now realising: the internet is a great space for learning & social interaction in a new & vibrant way. Yet their voices are largely absent from the digital debate. Our experts agree that this must change.

## Gaming to Learning

Children's activities online can be conducive to learning, even things they do 'for fun'. They are mainly motivated by the online world's blend of learning, socializing & play, which have lots of applicability to education & skills development.

[WATCH THE RECORDING:  
YOUTUBE.COM/UNICEFINNOCENTI](https://www.youtube.com/UNICEFINNOCENTI)



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1.5 billion children are in lock-down, 60% of whom are online.

While children are currently less affected by the virus itself, they are greatly affected by its secondary effects, like recession, limited or no schooling, & rising violence.

As children live more of their lives online, we must consider ways to protect them, their data, & their privacy, while taking advantage of opportunities for play, friendship, & learning.

Lockdowns reinforce the essentiality of equitable access to the Internet.

Young people are inheriting a world with many challenges, & are demanding to be part of the solution, including in the online debate. They want a healthy internet that respects their privacy, keeps them safe, & allows them to be included & respected.

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