

Dept. of Justice: AG Kaul, Wisconsin ICAC Task Force recognize safer internet day, share information about threats kids face online

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MADISON, Wis. – On Safer Internet Day 2026, Attorney General Josh Kaul and the Wisconsin Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force is raising awareness of some of the dangers kids currently face online and resources available for children, teens and parents.

“The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force monitors emerging and evolving online threats and works to raise awareness about online safety,” said AG Kaul. “By learning about online threats, parents can prepare to help their kids stay safe online.”

Two threats that teens currently face online include sadistic online exploitation and sextortion.

[Sadistic online exploitation \(SOE\)](#) occurs when offenders target children and persuade, induce, entice, or coerce them into recording themselves engaging in various types of degrading, humiliating, and violent acts. Examples of the acts can include carving the offender’s name (or alias) on their body with a knife; producing sexually explicit material of themselves; harming themselves, pets, family members, and others; and dying by suicide. Offenders may use threats—of violence, or of disclosing sensitive material showing the victim—to coerce a victim’s compliance. SOE offenders often work together, and share information and material obtained from their victims in an effort to gain or enhance their status in the

network. SOE is [expanding](#), according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Sextortion is a form of sexual exploitation where the offender threatens to release compromising material of the victim unless the victim sends money, gift cards, and/or additional sexual content, or engages in sexual activity. Children are particularly vulnerable to this type of crime. Sextortion has led to tragic consequences for victims, including mental health crisis and suicide. Sextortion is a rising problem around the country. The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force has seen a steady increase in CyberTips related to sextortion over the past several years. Wisconsin DOJ released a [public service announcement](#) about sextortion in December 2025.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, the National Suicide Hotline is 988. You can call or text to reach a mental health professional.

Tips For Teens Who May Be Victims of Sextortion

Remember, it's not your fault!

It's never too late to get help. Tell a parent or trusted adult right away.

Do not pay money or comply with the blackmailer's requests.

Report the account through the platform's safety feature.

Block the suspect, but DO NOT DELETE the messages or your profile to preserve potential evidence for law enforcement.

Report the crime to law enforcement or at [CyberTipLine.com](https://www.cybertipline.com).

Online Safety Tips for Parents

The best way parents can protect children online is through creating and maintaining

open lines of communication. Prepare your children for the online world by talking to them about dangers and risks online, as well as their online activity, including the websites they are visiting, the people they are communicating with, the information they are posting about themselves, and any situations that make them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force offers a monthly newsletter for the public on internet related safety information. You can register at [Wisconsin Department of Justice - Wisconsin ICAC Task Force Community/Parent Newsletter](#). Additional resources can be found on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's website <https://www.missingkids.org/home>.

Report Online Concerns

If you or someone you know has information on potential child exploitation, you can report it to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children online at [CyberTipLine.com](https://www.cybertipline.com) or by calling 1-800-843-5678.

Building awareness of current online risks that children face, while encouraging youth to connect with trusted adults when faced with stressors, results in real time assistance during potentially quickly escalating situations. In addition to the resources above, youth can contact Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO) 24 hours a day to get support and guidance for themselves or a peer.

SUSO Reports can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Online at speakup.widoj.gov

1-800-MY-SUSO-1 (1-800-697-8761)

Mobile app (iOS/Android)

Text SUSO to 738477

Learn more at <https://speakup.wisdoj.gov/>.

View this press release on the DOJ website [here](#).