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Back to School: They'll Need More Than a Backpack & Books This Year

Back to School Used to Be Easier

Most of today's elementary, middle and high school students grew up with a different standard: the expectation of round-the-clock Internet access. "Back to school" has been an annual tradition for American families for as long as most can remember, but the relatively new paradigm of nonstop connectivity brings new opportunities and challenges to the educational and social aspects of grade school.

Of course, the importance of paying attention in class, knowing when to ask for help, peer pressure, and dealing with bullies are still relevant issues. But now parents must foster within their children an understanding of the power and risks inherent in Internet access and teach them about responsible use.

Parents often grapple with the lack of control over what their children might encounter when sending them off to school. Though the responsibility of keeping the campus environment safe lies with faculty and staff, parents know they must work to prepare their own to confront a number of challenges that nevertheless arise.



Know How Minors are Being Exposed to Gambling

It's not easy to fathom a seventh grade classroom lined with slot machines and card tables, or even toy versions. As a society, we have reserved gambling for adults and with good reason, as responsible play requires a mature level of restraint and a sound understanding of probability. Florida law restricts gambling to those at least 18 years of age accordingly.

Given age restrictions, how could schoolchildren be exposed to gambling activity? While safeguards have had ample time to develop around the traditional forms of gambling, proliferation of the web and mobile devices has unlocked new avenues for anytime wagers. As history has shown with other sensitive topics on the Internet, an entrepreneurial spirit that seeks to create - often without consideration of the consequences - tends to take precedence, while regulators play catch-up.

Gambling messages, advertisements, and even opportunities abound at the fingertips of curious youth, many of whom are equipped with smartphones. Casino-themed websites, poker apps, social networks, and easy-to-fool age verification systems all present challenges amplified by the presence of peers.

Problem Gambling Prevention is a Team Effort

Prevention of problem gambling among today's youth is rooted in an age-old truth: children attend school in order to learn. So how can parents, teachers and school administrators work together to keep student focus in check?

When it comes to problem gambling prevention, the lesson starts at home. Parents can impart powerful lessons about what it means to gamble, how to recognize gambling, the risks involved, and that it's only appropriate for adults. The importance of being mentally present for school can also be reinforced, so the curriculum can be more effective. At school, faculty can be attentive to what's distracting the students and implement policies and programs to retain attention.

The FCCG provides help, hope, and supportive resources to Floridians through the 24-7, Confidential, Multilingual Problem Gambling HelpLine, 888-ADMIT-IT. If you or someone you know may be struggling with problem gambling, or if you're interested in learning more about gambling addiction and prevention, do not hesitate to give us a call.



GET CONNECTED

Florida's Problem Gambling HelpLine

 888-ADMIT-IT

 321-978-0555

 gamblinghelp.org

