**Zeeko: The Importance of Explaining Digital Footprint to your Child**

As World Mental Health Day was marked earlier this week our blog focuses on the importance of teaching kids about the long-term implications of their digital footprint for every aspect of their health and in particular their mental health.

If you asked a group of adults what they understand by the term digital footprint it’s likely that they would struggle to give an answer! So, it is little surprise that children struggle to grasp this concept. Most kids, understandably, don’t think of the long-term implications of what they are sharing today i.e. that it might have an impact on their lives in the future. So, what does your child need to be aware of when it comes to managing their digital footprint?

**In the digital world content is never fully deleted:**It’s very easy to get caught up in the excitement of sharing something with friends through social media or a messaging app, but it is important to remember that nothing is permanently deleted when shared online and can in some cases be copied and shared again. Communicating digitally is needless to say, very different from the face to face communication that your child is used to.

**Think before you post:**This is something that might appear very obvious, but it is extremely important for children and indeed adults to remember when it comes to posting online! Take even a few minutes to reflect before you post something or respond to a message. Given a child’s age and stage of development it is a good idea to have regular conversations about being conscious of what they post online and what they say when they are messaging friends using apps. The t-shirt rule that we promote at Zeeko is a great way of reminding kids of reflecting before they post. If you wouldn’t wear what you are going to post on the front of a t-shirt and wear it all day, then it’s probably best not to post it. It’s surprising how this makes children think twice.

**What you post today may have long-term implications:**This is particularly relevant for teenagers. It is very common now for potential employers to research interviewees via their social media platforms. In some cases, it can even be a requirement that the interviewee must include links to their social media on their application. This is something you should definitely make your child aware of. It’s a good way of encouraging your child to moderate their online behaviour. Realizing that their online behaviour could have an impact on their future is bound to resonate with them.

The term digital footprint can seem a little daunting when it is first mentioned, however, if you break it down into having regular conversations with your child about it it can be easier to deal with. Remind your child that communicating online has very specific challenges as opposed to face to face communication. Essentially in a very similar way to their environmental footprint what they do now online can have a long-term impact for them and their peers.

Read more here: <https://zeeko.ie/blog/>