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## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Attorney General Josh Kaul Warns of Current Online Dangers and Highlights Online Safety Tools During Keep Your Kids Safe Online Month**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today, during Keep Your Kids Safe Online Month, is warning parents of current online dangers and reminding Wisconsinites of the resources available through the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

“Online safety has become an integral part of overall safety,” said Attorney General Kaul. “Just like we talk to our kids about how to stay safe in other aspects of their lives, it’s vital for parents to talk to their kids about how to stay safe online.”

The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force is warning against a current and concerning trend known as “Financial Sextortion,” which is occurring not only nationwide, but also here in Wisconsin. A common situation is a victim is duped into sending nude or potentially compromising images in trade for other nude or compromising images on any number of social media platforms. Within minutes, the person on the other end will threaten to post the material sent by the victim to family, school, or friends of the victim, only purportedly being stopped by the victim sending an amount of money via many sources.

This victimization has led to numerous suicides across the United States as these victims feel they have nowhere to turn. Financial Sextortion should immediately be reported to local law enforcement.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has tools to remove and identify Child Sexual Abuse Material from common websites and platforms. [Take It](#)

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[Down \(ncmec.org\)](#) and family resources at [NetSmartz Home \(missingkids.org\)](#) are two examples.

Wisconsin ICAC Task Force leaders suggest parents talk to their children about online safety early and often. Parents should discuss online dangers and risks with their kids. They should also have an open dialogue about their kid's online activity, including the websites they're visiting, the people they're communicating with, the information they're sharing about themselves, and any situations that make them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.

The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction created the *interact!* Program to help keep kids safe online. Together caregivers and children can go through [interact!](#), a three-module course that has the goal of creating basic discussions about online safety at home. Each module varies from 15-45 minutes and allows parents to reflect on their own technology use and set a good example for their children. There are also activities to complete alongside their children. After the modules are finished, discussions can continue with follow-up resources.

The Wisconsin ICAC Task Force also produces an educational podcast called Protect Kids Online (PKO) that serves as a resource for parents, grandparents, guardians, or caregivers of children to learn about tips for combating online child exploitation and sextortion, internet safety laws, cyberbullying, protecting your child from strangers online, safe sharing tips and more. PKO podcast episodes can be found here: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dci/icac/protect-kids-online-pko-podcast>.

Parents and guardians can also subscribe to the Wisconsin Community & Parent email list to receive online safety updates and information by emailing [icac@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:icac@doj.state.wi.us) and requesting to be added.

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 <https://report.cybertip.org/> or by calling 1-800-843-5678. Visit the ICAC Task Force page for internet safety tips for parents and caregivers at <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dci/icac/resources-materials>.