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## **KIDS FOUNDATION LAUNCHES ESafety BOOK TO PROTECT THOUSANDS OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN ONLINE**

Thousands of local pre-school students are set to receive vital education on the importance of safety in an online environment, thanks to a new book and app funded by a \$90,000 grant from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation.

Written by [KIDS Foundation](#) CEO and founder Dr Susie O'Neill, the books will be distributed to 26,000 children at 650 pre-schools across the Hunter, Central Coast, Mid North Coast, Central West, New England and the Northern Rivers regions.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Chair, Jennifer Leslie, said the book and app would prove a wonderful educational resource for children, parents and educators.

"The internet is a wonderful tool, but like any tool, unfortunately it can be dangerous if not used in the proper manner," said Ms Leslie.

"In 2022, staying safe online is a critical life skill to teach our children, which means we need to ensure parents and educators know how to speak to children about the best ways to interact in an online environment, and the red flags they should be aware of.

"I also love that the book talks about the importance of putting the screens down and getting outside to enjoy a bit of fresh air and sunshine."

Dr O'Neill's passion for education around eSafety was further reinforced while at a KIDS Foundation Camp, where six-year-old Sophie shared her experience of being hacked while playing a popular online game.

The hacker appeared in the game's chat function, Sophie thinking it was one of her friends using a different name, before realising something suspicious – and potentially dangerous – was happening.

"Hacking is scary and cyber safety is very important," Sophie said.

It's a sentiment with which Dr O'Neill wholeheartedly agrees.

"We need to encourage children to speak up if they feel something is not right or they experience something out of the ordinary while online," Dr O'Neill said.

"These new tools share the importance of teaching children to use devices in shared zones around the home, setting time limits for online use and making sure adults maintain a dialogue around online safety.

"We love that Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation has given KIDS the opportunity to put our eSafety program out to 26,000 preschool children, aged four to six, to navigate and use the internet safely, reducing the threats and risks like Sophie experienced."

The book itself stars KIDS Foundation mascot 'SeeMore Safety', who takes children to visit his friend 'Netys' (AKA Safety Net) to learn all about the importance of eSafety and the three eSafety rules:

- being safe
- being kind, and
- make good choices online.

Also being launched is the SeeMore Safety App, which integrates the virtual SeeMore model into the real world, includes a photo gallery screen, and a 'page' feature to make sharing photos simple and easy. Users can select to annotate photos to demonstrate their safety knowledge of the images taken.

The app is [available to download free](#) on the App Store.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation has a proud association with KIDS Foundation dating back to 2009, during which time grants totalling over \$500,000 have been made to assist with their important work.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation distributes more than \$1.5 million in grants each year to facilitate charitable projects that make a difference to improving local communities throughout the Hunter, Central West, Central Coast, New England, Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers regions of NSW.

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