Child Identity Fraud: A Web of Deception and Loss

November 02, 2021 By: Tracy Kitten

Overview

Child identity fraud costs U.S. families nearly $1 billion annually. It affects one out of every 50 children and takes parents and guardians a tremendous amount of time to resolve. Although child ID theft and fraud are not new, the topic has taken on new and concerning relevance amid the accelerating use of social media, remote learning, and digital purchasing. This report delves into child ID theft and fraud in the United States and showcases the behaviors and characteristics that put children at greatest risk. The report also equips consumers with resources and advice to help identify child ID fraud, resolve it, and prevent it from happening in the future.

Javelin Strategy & Research has made this report a complimentary resource available to the general public. Simply fill out the '**Download Whitepaper Form**' on the right. As child ID fraud is extremely underreported and misunderstood, our goal is to help consumers understand how they can best protect themselves and their children.

Key questions discussed in this report:

- Why is child ID fraud often overlooked, misunderstood, and undetected?
- What roles do social media and unmonitored Internet access play in child ID theft and fraud?
- How is child ID theft and fraud evolving by capitalizing on remote learning, digital device usage, and social engineering?
- What should parents and guardians do if they discover fraud that affects or uses their child's identity?

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Our Goal: Protecting Children from Identity Fraud

It's been a challenging couple of years for parents around the globe. Families, regardless of the age of their children, have been dealing with all sorts of new and daunting scenarios. Couple the challenges of the pandemic with a rapidly accelerating digital world and it presents a lot for families to manage and monitor. As the parent of three children I can certainly attest to some of these challenges. Every day it seems like there is something new to learn about what my kids are up to online, or perhaps what digital behaviors my wife and I should be demonstrating. There is no shortage of teachable moments, but ultimately it can also be a challenge to relate to our children's digital behaviors. We don't always relate and that's ok – but we do need to know how to keep them safe. No matter what age your children are, there are digital dangers that they face daily.

Javelin Strategy & Research, part of the Escalent family, has been advising on the subject of identity theft and fraud for two decades. A little while ago, on the heels of publishing our flagship annual Identity Fraud Study, we came up with the idea of doing a similar report, but focused strictly on child ID theft and fraud. It's a topic that unfortunately does not get enough attention. Our aim is to change that, and in the process provide a complimentary resource of insights and guidance to families as they navigate the perils of the digital world with their children. This report is provided to the public free of charge, it may be shared and distributed to anyone it can help.

Our goal is to provide trending analysis for parents, guardians, and educators about child ID theft and fraud.

This report would not have been possible without the commitment of our sponsors. I would like to personally thank AARP Fraud Watch Network, ID Watchdog from Equifax, and Iris Global Identity & Cyber Protection, powered by Generali for their dedication to this important issue.

Jacob Jegher
President, Javelin Strategy & Research

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAMILIES TO HELP REDUCE THE RISKS OF CHILD IDENTITY FRAUD:

- Keep personal information private, online and on paper.
- Don't share your children's' information on social media.
- Set positive online examples for your children by practicing safe online behaviors yourself.
- Limit and monitor the use of social media and messaging platforms.
- Monitor your child's online activity, particularly as it relates to potential cyberbullying.
- Platforms that allow users to direct/private message (DM), friend, or follow other users via public search pose the greatest concern.
- Keep a watchful eye on your child's credit and consider freezing it.
- Enroll in an identity protection service.

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