

PROTECTING YOUR KIDS ONLINE



TAKE CHARGE

Set some ground rules.

Establish basic guidelines like when your kids can go online, what sites they can visit, and how many texts they can send a month, so everyone is on the same page.

Research before you buy.

Did you know that handheld games can connect to the Internet or that many laptops have built-in webcams? Understand what technology you're bringing into your home.

Don't just sit there-- REPORT!

If your kids are dealing with cyberbullies or potential predators, report them to the website, cell phone service, law enforcement, or www.cybertipline.com.

MONITOR

Supervise Internet use.

If you can see what your kids are doing, they're less likely to get in trouble.

Safeguards ≠ Safe Kids.

Installing CIA-level monitoring software on your kids' computers does not guarantee they'll be safe online. Technology can't replace your time and attention as a parent or guardian.

Don't go overboard.

It's smart to keep an eye on your kids' social networking profiles, but it's never cool when you post embarrassing messages or pictures to their page.

COMMUNICATE

Talk to your kids; they're not as mysterious as you think.

Your kids might not tell you everything, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't ask. Get involved so you're not the last to know.

Challenge them to a duel.

If you have kids who like to play video or computer games, ask if you can play, too. When you respect their interests, they're more likely to respect your rules.

Don't pull the plug.

Taking away your kids' Internet access because they've done something wrong doesn't solve the problem. Talk to them about protecting themselves and respecting others online.

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NetSmartz.org/TipSheets



NETSMARTZ TECH TIPS



Want to learn how to check your child's browser history, use Facebook's privacy settings or report cyberbullying on Twitter? Check out these websites for information and how-to videos so you can be as tech savvy as your child.

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS AND GUIDES

- **www.howcast.com/categories/2-tech**
Videos include "How to Use Twitter," "How to Use Facebook" and "How to Use an iPhone."
- **www.fosl.org/good-digital-parenting**
Information and tips for parents about specific websites and apps.

WEBSITE HELP CENTERS

- **www.facebook.com/help**
Learn how to manage your child's account and report problems.
- **support.twitter.com**
Find out how to use Twitter and protect your child's privacy.
- **<https://support.google.com/youtube>**
Read about YouTube's safety policies and how to report inappropriate content.
- **www.google.com/safetycenter**
Browse through videos and articles for advice on using Google's safety tools and how to manage your family's safety online.
- **help.instagram.com**
Learn about the basics of this popular app and get tips for parents.
- **<https://support.snapchat.com>**
Understand how to use the app and what to do if your child is using it inappropriately.
- **<https://kikinteractive.zendesk.com>**
Read about the app and how to report problems.
- **<https://support.skype.com>**
Browse articles about securing your child's account and managing their privacy settings.
- **www.tumblr.com/help**
Learn about this blogging platform and how to manage your child's account settings.
- **<https://help.pinterest.com>**
Find out how to use Pinterest and secure your child's account.
- **help.meetme.com**
Get answers to your questions about controlling who sees your child's profile and how to report problems.
- **help.dlsney.com/clubpenguin**
Read about this popular game's rules and safety features.



Didn't find the answer to your question?
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Many teens believe that anything they want to do with *their* bodies and *their* phones is *their* business. They enjoy the privacy and freedom that cell phones give them from their parents and guardians, but what happens when they use their cell phones to explore their sexuality?

Sexting is the sending or distributing of nude or partially nude images. Scary headlines may lead you to believe this is a common practice among teens with extreme consequences. Although the actual numbers vary, many researchers agree that most teens are not sexting, and those who are usually aren't subjected to harsh penalties. However, there are still risks to consider for teens who sext. These tips will help you talk about sexting with your teen so you're both prepared if it ever becomes an issue.

Psychologists like Dr. Abigail Judge advise parents to make discussions about sexual behavior, including sexting, a regular occurrence so teens will be better prepared.


"...research suggests that parents should address the topic of sex with their children—and by extension, digital media and its use in the home—not through a one-time conversation, but through an ongoing dialogue that should begin early and occur often, across developmental time."

Dr. Abigail Judge,
Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 2012

TALKING
TO

TEENS

ABOUT
SEXTING



THE RISKS

Teens who take, send or forward sexting images may face:

- Embarrassment if their picture is shown to family, friends, classmates and even strangers.
- Bullying or harassment from peers who judge them for sexting.
- Trouble at school if they have violated a school policy. Some teens have been kicked off of athletic teams or suspended from school.
- Future consequences if the image follows them for a long time. It may be seen by college admissions officers or even potential employers.
- Trouble with the police. In extreme cases, kids can be charged for sending or forwarding nude images of minors.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT

- Ask questions to make it clear you're comfortable discussing it. "Has anyone ever asked or pressured you to sext? Have you ever received a sexy picture from someone?"
- Discuss what characterizes a healthy relationship. "Any person pressuring you to sext isn't someone you should trust. Boyfriends and girlfriends come and go, but a sexual image of you can stay around forever."
- Explain how quickly images can spread online. "Once the photo is sent, it's out of your control."
- Emphasize the importance of not forwarding sexts they receive. "You do not have the right to decide who should see someone else's body. Forwarding images is a major violation of trust and exposes the person in the picture to potential ridicule. Imagine how you would feel if someone betrayed your trust by sharing a nude photo of you."

IF YOUR CHILD'S IMAGE IS ALREADY OUT THERE

- Help them report it to the websites/apps where the image is posted. Make it clear your child is a minor, and it was posted without his or her consent.
- Talk to school officials so they can help stop the spread of the image and any harassment that may be happening.
- Contact the police if your child is being blackmailed, harassed or if it involves an adult.
- Above all, offer support. Assure them that you'll get through this together. Consider seeking professional counseling if they need help coping.