

Technology Tips

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is using technology to harass, taunt, embarrass, or threaten another person online.

Young people often don't tell their parents they're being harassed or bullied because they are embarrassed, afraid, worried their parents will overreact or that the bully will retaliate.

If you see any of the following signs, ask your child if someone is causing problems for him/her online or at school:

- ▶ more anxious, quiet, insecure
- ▶ a drop in grades
- ▶ not wanting to go to school

If your child is the target of cyberbullying, support him/her, and work with the school until the problem is addressed and resolved.

Be a good role model

We adults give up the right to preach and lecture if we don't exhibit the self-control and self-discipline we're expecting of our children. If our faces are buried in our devices rather than interacting with our children, friends, and family, we have no credibility.

Try to reserve your online use to specific times, and as much as possible, only use your devices when you're not in the company of your children.



Let's Be Realistic

As much as parents may want to monitor or control their child's online behavior, this is very difficult, if not impossible to do.

The most important thing you can do is to pay attention to your child's technology use. Have ongoing conversations with your teen about what is appropriate to share, and what content is appropriate to view. Also emphasize the importance of treating others respectfully online.

Technology isn't inherently "good or bad," "healthy or unhealthy." It is what we make it. If we set reasonable limits, provide guidance, and have open lines of communication, our children will grow up healthy and strong.

For more information on internet safety, go to
commonsensemedia.org
netsmartz.org



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Parent InfoGuide

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633-21

PARENT

Help Your Child Be Tech Smart



Parents Make the Difference



Help Your Child Be Tech Smart

Today's youth are often more tech-savvy than their parents. Young people today, however, still need their parents to provide guidelines and set limits.

According to recent studies...

- ▶ 92% of teens report going online daily—24% “almost constantly.”
- ▶ 50% of teens say they feel addicted to their mobile devices.
- ▶ Today's teens spend, on average, more than nine hours a day consuming media—watching TV, listening to music, browsing the web, and playing video games.
- ▶ Approximately 25% of all driving accidents involve texting and driving.

While statistics never tell the whole story, it is apparent that our youth are spending more and more time using technology—and it's changing how our children are growing up.

What You Can Do

Help your child enjoy the benefits of technology, while minimizing the risks.

- ▶ Tap into your child's interests and expertise. Ask your child to show you some websites that are popular, and to share some of his/her favorite sites. This is a great way to stay connected, keep up on technology, and bond with your child.
- ▶ Discuss what information is appropriate for social networking sites, and what information is appropriate (and inappropriate) for your child to share online.
- ▶ Find websites that support your child's interests and passions, and that help him/her prepare for a career and/or college.



- ▶ Discuss the importance of being respectful and kind to others online. Also remind your child to never put anything online he/she would not want a parent, teacher, or college admissions officer to see.
- ▶ Remind your child that people online may not be who they say they are—and to never put personal information online (e.g., phone number, address, etc.).
- ▶ Make sure your child understands that when you send or post something, *it becomes permanent*. Remind your child to never send or post something he/she doesn't want to be seen *forever*.



- ▶ There is so much online that is inappropriate (violent videos, pornography, etc.). If you don't entirely trust your child to be transparent with you, there are ways to monitor and limit his/her cell phone/online activities. If you need assistance with parental controls, contact your phone and/or internet provider, or search online for “parental controls.”
- ▶ If your child plays video games, sites such as esrb.org and commonsensemedia.org can help you determine if a game is appropriate.
- ▶ Consider creating a Technology/Internet contract that spells out how you expect your child to use the internet, his/her phone, etc. You can find sample contracts online, or you can create your own.

Unplug!

Insist that all communication devices be turned off and put in a basket during dinner and other family times.

To ensure that your child gets a good night's sleep and isn't on his/her phone late at night, require that all phones be plugged in for recharging in a central location (e.g., your bedroom) an hour before bedtime each night.