



CYBER SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS



How to Raise Tech-Literate Kids and Keep Them Safe in a Digital Age



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The online world is full of wonder, but it can be a dangerous place. We want our kids to grow, learn, and have fun, but we also want to keep them safe, at every age.

Use these tips to help your kids enjoy technology safely.

ALL AGES



STAY IN CONTROL – Establishing limits helps children enjoy technology while learning how to incorporate it into their lives in a safe and healthy way. You can help set these boundaries by using built-in controls to limit device usage times, monitoring app usage, enforcing screen breaks, managing purchases, and filtering inappropriate content. Find out how to set restrictions for [Apple devices](#) and [Windows and Xbox devices](#).

FILTER AND MONITOR CONTENT – Use filtering and monitoring tools to protect children from inappropriate online content. For a list of recommended filtering tools, see Internet Safety 101's [Filtering/Monitoring/Accountability Tools page](#).

FREEZE THEIR CREDIT REPORTS – With the recent increase in data breaches, identity theft is an issue for people of all ages. Protect your children by placing a security freeze on their credit report with each of the three credit bureaus. Make it so only you can give permission to search for and open credit on your child's behalf. For more information, see the Federal Trade Commission's [credit freeze FAQs](#).



SHARE YOUR COMPUTER, NOT YOUR LOGIN CREDENTIALS – If you let your child use your computer or phone, don't let them inadvertently use your passwords too! Do not save passwords in your browser, and use a [password manager](#) such as LastPass or Dashlane.

LIMIT SCREEN TIME – The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP) recommends limiting screen time for children under age two to video chatting and watching high-quality programs. For children ages 2-5, AAP recommends limiting screen time to 1 hour per day. For children ages 6 and older, AAP recommends implementing "consistent limits."

TURN ON "DO NOT TRACK" FOR BROWSERS – Turning off tracking will give users more privacy when browsing the web. [Chrome](#) | [Safari](#) | [Internet Explorer](#)

DON'T CLICK ON ADS – Ads can lead users to different types of malicious websites where their computer or account could be compromised.

[Set profiles on social networking sites](#) (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to private so no public user can see the profile unless they request and are approved to be friends.

BEWARE OF "FREE" CONTENT – Free streaming content or anything that looks like it is too good to be true is most likely going to have a malicious party in the background trying to compromise your device or account.



AGES 3-6

CREATE A MEDIA USAGE PLAN – Your child is becoming more aware of the world as they enter their school-age years. At the same time, your child understands more of their roles and responsibilities at home. Create family rules for internet and device usage, and experience both independence and togetherness, safely. For more information, visit Healthy Children to learn more about creating a [family media usage plan](#).

FIND FUN LEARNING TOOLS – Now is the time to show that technology can be used for learning as well as fun. Find sites that bring out the best features of being online. Go to [Early Childhood Education Zone](#) for their [15 Best Online Preschool Games](#).



AGES 6-9

LIMIT TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND TEXTING –

It's a good idea to restrict or limit the amount of time your child spends on social media and texting. You may also want to consider restricting certain sites/apps. For more information, see The Guardian's article on [how to control your child's social media use](#) and Apple's support page about [enabling app restrictions](#) on mobile devices.

TEACH STRANGER SAFETY – Your child is learning about stranger danger and stranger safety in real life. Help them understand the concept of strangers online and how to protect themselves virtually. For more tips on teaching stranger safety, see these [Tips to Prevent Internet Stranger Danger](#).

PLAY ONLINE TOGETHER – Online gaming can be fun, but it can be a separating factor in the home. Show how online gaming can be used for fun family time. When buying a gaming console, consider one that has [online family capabilities](#), (such as Nintendo Wii, or Xbox).



AGES 9-13

PROTECTION ACT (COPPA) – Under COPPA, companies that collect information on children under 13 years of age must receive verifiable parental consent before collecting information. For more information, see the Federal Trade Commission's [Complying with COPPA FAQs](#).

STOP CYBERBULLYING BEFORE IT STARTS – Educate your child about cyberbullying, including how to prevent it, recognize it, speak out about it, and how hurtful it can be. For more, see [cyberbullying action steps](#) from Safe and Secure Online.

USE KID-FRIENDLY SEARCH ENGINES – Be careful about what those search results bring back. Make sure your child is using a [kid-friendly search engine](#), which does the filtering for you.



AGES 9-13

TEACH DEVICE SECURITY – Does your child lose their backpack? Retainer? Text book? As you teach them to take better care of their belongings, teach them to take care of their computers and devices as well. Teach them to not leave their electronics unattended, keep their data private, use passwords for their devices, cover web cameras, and be careful when clicking links. Your child can learn about internet safety using BrainPOP Jr.'s [interactive online tools](#).



ESTABLISH RULES FOR MOBILE DEVICES – Determine specific and realistic rules for cell phone usage. See KidGuard's [tips for setting cell phone rules](#). Also learn about your mobile provider's internet safeguards: [AT&T](#), [Verizon](#), [Sprint](#), and [T-Mobile](#).

USE STRONG PASSWORDS – Teach your child best practices for creating strong passwords, such as not using the same password for multiple accounts, making passwords as long as possible, and using special characters. For more tips, see ACA's [Password Strength Best Practices](#).



DETERMINE RIGHT TIME TO GET A SMARTPHONE – According to a [study](#) by Influence Central, most children receive their first phone at age 10. Consider whether it's necessary for your child to have a phone, whether your child is ready for the responsibility, and how well your child responds to screen time limits.

AGES 14-18

MAKE A CONTRACT – Explain your cyber concerns while showing that you recognize their need for independence. Make a contract that includes your family's policies on cell phone use, online restrictions, cyberbullying, contact with strangers, posting photos on social media, and more. See Intego's guide for more [tips on setting up a cyber contract](#).

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS – Review settings on social media sites and encourage your child to think before posting sensitive information such as their location or plans.

TEACH DIGITAL MONEY SKILLS – As your child starts making their own money, show them how to keep it safe and make it grow. Help them understand banking sites, investment sites, and digital wallet tools. Visit Mint's resource guide for how to [teach kids about money](#).



PREVENT DISTRACTED DRIVING – Make no driving while texting a hard and fast family rule. No exceptions. Educate your child on the serious consequences of distracted driving, not only to themselves but to others on the road. Model safe driving when you are in the driver's seat. Consider utilizing apps that restrict controls, monitor phone usage, and report location while driving.



SAFETY FOR KIDS AT HOME

HOME SECURITY CAMERAS – Provide peace of mind when parents are not home and kids are home from school. Home security systems ([Ring](#), [ADT](#), etc.) should have alerts set if there is any motion to the front or back entrance of your home. These cameras can be installed inside the home as well for better visibility. These systems should have strong authentication settings such as a long complex password along with multi-factor authentication.

SHARE LOCATION – Smartphones allow for locations to be shared with other users. Turning this feature on for family members lets them know exactly where someone is at any time. [Apple](#) | [Andriod](#)

SET UP AN EMERGENCY PLAN – Situations can arise when parents are unavailable and there are kids at home. Develop a plan for what they should do and who they should contact in these circumstances.



RESOURCES

Parental Controls

[American Academy of Pediatrics Announces New Recommendations for Children's Media Use](#)
(American Academy of Pediatrics)

[Complying with COPPA: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
(Federal Trade Commission)

[Family Media Plan](#)
([healthychildren.org](#))

[How can I control my child's social media use?](#)
(Jack Schofield, *The Guardian*)

[Set restrictions for your child on Windows 10 and Xbox One](#)
(Microsoft)

[Use parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch](#)
(Apple)

Content Filtering

[Disable or enable Restricted Mode](#)
(YouTube)

[Filtering/Monitoring/Accountability Tools](#)
(Internet Safety 101)

Stranger and Cyberbullying Awareness

[Cyberbullying Communication, Recognition, and Action Steps](#)
(Safe and Secure Online)

[Protecting Kids from Internet Stranger Danger](#)
(Mama Bear App)

Strong Passwords

[The Best Password Managers of 2018](#)
(Neil J. Rubenking, *PC Mag*)

[Password Strength Best Practices](#)
(ACA Aponix alert)

Educational Tools

[7 Tips on Setting Cell Phone Rules with Your Child](#)
(KidGuard)

[#CyberAware: Teaching Kids How to Navigate the Online World](#)
(Stay Safe Online)

[Internet Safety](#)
(BrainPOP Jr.)

Kid-Friendly Search Engines and Portals

(Internet Safety 101)

[Privacy and Internet Safety](#)
(Common Sense Media)

[The 15 Best Online Preschool Games](#)
(Early Childhood Education Zone)

[Ultimate Resources for Teaching Kids About Money](#)
(Mint)

Other

[Age-Based Guidelines](#)
(Internet Safety 101)

[Credit Freeze FAQs](#)
(Federal Trade Commission)

[Kids & Tech: The Evolution of Today's Digital Natives](#)
(Influence Central)

[Stop.Think.Connect. Parent and Caregiver Resources](#)
(Department of Homeland Security)

