

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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A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL NETWORKING



- Comments
- Info
- Photos
- Profile
- Inbox

Help! My child is on a social networking site!
 While you may be concerned when your children join a social networking site, it doesn't mean they're in danger. Social networking sites are places online where young people go to socialize with their friends, talk to people with similar interests, and share what's going on in their lives. But these sites can also be places where kids post something inappropriate or meet the wrong people.

How can I keep my child safe?
 Check, check, check! The most important thing you can do to protect your child on these sites is to get involved and regularly check his/her profile.

What do I look for?
 Sometimes looking through your child's social networking profile can be overwhelming. Where are the privacy settings? What is a "wall"? Use this practical guide and check off each section when you're done. That way, you won't miss anything.

5 Positive Things Your Child Can Do On Social Networking Sites

- 1. Create family photo albums**
 What better way to keep your distant relatives up-to-date on your family's activities?
- 2. Champion a cause**
 From animal rights to bullying awareness, social networking sites are the place to go for social activists.
- 3. Join a group**
 Niche communities have found a home on social networking sites where people can connect and discuss their interests with like-minded people.
- 4. Market a talent**
 Stars are born every day online. No need to move to Hollywood to pursue that recording contract; with one hit video the producers will come to you!
- 5. Find a college**
 Social networking makes it easier to chat with college students and faculty, so your child can make an informed decision about where to go to school.

POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES FOR TEENS
 Facebook | MySpace | myYearbook | Bebo | Gaia

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