

Technology Safety

The first thing you can do is just start the conversation. Many young people, for instance, don't really think about the consequences of their media use. They may not realize that internet images are very difficult to recover, or that their peers can forward emails and texts faster than lightning. Discuss your values about what is ok and not ok to do via media, and help them to grasp the fact that their immediate use has very long term and lasting outcomes.

Computers 101

- You can't help your child be safe on the computer if you struggle to use it. Take a basic computer class so you know how to access documents, internet history, and passwords.
- Keep the computer in a public room in the house. Your child is less likely to engage in inappropriate behavior in one of these rooms, especially if you are there, too.
- Use passwords so you can control what activities your child may engage in; consider requiring a password for any internet usage. This only works if you change the password often, or you must log the child on.
- Use software that filters out inappropriate content, or even tracks where your child visits on the internet. Any computer retailer can assist with this.

Social Networking

- Remind your child that "once it's out there, it's out there" and that they should only share information that they are comfortable with ANYONE having access to at ANYTIME during social networking. (Like FaceBook or MySpace).
- Encourage your child to tell you immediately if he or she is the subject of cyberbullying, or if he or she observes it happening to someone else.
 - Remind your child that if s/he engages in this behavior it can have very serious consequences, like expulsion, legal charges, and lasting emotional issues.
- Don't erase bullying or harassing content; instead print and save it. This may be necessary for use as evidence later. Keep track of all of it.
- Try to identify any anonymous threats and/or harassment.

- Contact the police if the messages are threatening, contain sexualized content, or are harassing.
- Negative, threatening, or harassing behavior may violate agreements users have agreed to on their email or networking sites. File a complaint with the respective companies whenever possible.
- Let the school know about any cyberbullying, and tell them the address it is coming from.
- Block emails as needed, although the bully may just start using a different email.
- Don't let your child have a social networking site that you (and several of your friends or relatives) aren't also part of. This helps you monitor your child and his or her friends.

Cell Phones

- Make sure you talk about healthy and unhealthy uses of texting and photos.
- Texting should not be used for emotionally 'hot' topics; like a break-up, conflict, or expression of sadness or jealousy.
- Photos and texts that are provocative cause problems for a number of reasons:
 - Make sure your child knows that the messages and photos can go ANYWHERE to ANYONE
 - Make sure you and your child are both aware that there can be legal consequences in some cases.
- Many parents do not realize that they can have extensive control over cell phones; find out what your plan offers.
 - Some companies can allow parents to turn off phones during certain hours; for example, turning it off from midnight-six so your child sleeps.
 - Some companies have a feature to allow you to read texting.
 - Notify the police of any threatening, harassing, or inappropriate content you receive. The sender may face charges.
 - You may be able to monitor your child's location by GPS on the phone if you want to do this.
- Create boundaries, so kids know how to use the phone. Some examples; no phones during meals, no phones during homework, or no phones after 9:00 pm.
- Help your child understand the costs associated with their phone use.
- Ensure your child knows the dangers of distracted driving.

Other Resources on SAFE technology:

To receive a free booklet- NET CETERA- Chatting with Kids About Being Online, contact us at: safelinefb@shbh.org or visit OnGuardOnline.gov.

OnGuardOnline.gov Practical tips from the federal government and the technology community to help people be on guard against internet fraud, secure their computers and protect their privacy.

FTC.gov/idtheft The Federal Trade Commission's website has information to help people deter, detect and defend against identity theft.

StaySafeOnline.org The National Cyber Security Alliance seeks to create a culture of cyber security and safety awareness by providing knowledge and tools to prevent cyber crime and attacks.

CommonSenseMedia.org Common Sense Media is dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education and independent voice they need to thrive in a world of media and technology.

GetNetWise.org A project of the Internet Education Foundation, the GetNetWise coalition provides internet users the resources to make informed decisions about their and their family's use of the internet.

CyberBully411.org Cyberbully411 is an effort to provide resources for youth who have questions about or have been targeted by online harassment.

ConnectSafely.org ConnectSafely is for parents, teens, educators and advocates for learning about safe, civil use of Web 2.0 together.

iKeepSafe.org iKeepSafe educational resources teach children of all ages, in a fun, age-appropriate way, the basic rules of internet safety, ethics and the healthy use of connected technologies.

NetFamilyNews.org A nonprofit news service for parents, educators, and policymakers who want to keep up on the latest technology news and commentary about online youth, in the form of a daily blog or weekly email newsletter.

NetSmartz.org The NetSmartz Workshop is an interactive, educational safety resource from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

StaySafeOnline.org – The National Cyber Security Alliance seeks to create a culture of cyber security and safety awareness by providing knowledge and tools to prevent cyber crime and attacks.

WiredSafety.org WiredSafety provides help, information and education to internet and mobile device users of all ages.

Safekids.com Safety and Advice tools for kids that are online.