

Summary of Internet Safety Suggestions
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How to talk to your kids about the internet:

- Talk and teach your kids about the dangers of the internet.
 - You and your vigilance in teaching about the dangers of the internet to your kids is the key.
 - In the end, what will protect them is the child making informed, wise choices on the internet on their own.
 - We as the parents, must teach and guide our kids in showing them what the best choice is.
- As a result, the answer is good old fashioned talking to your kids. There are no super technology filters or magical software which will protect them.
- Talk to your kids in a pragmatic way; explain to them that you don't want them to get screwed. Tell them that you have their best interest in mind and do not talk to your kids in some authoritative manner.
- Create an open atmosphere for your kids to come ask you questions. Give them room for error and mistakes.
 - Remember, the solution is not to ban them from using the internet until they are 18 years old. We want our kids to be internet fluent.
 - However this is parallel to teaching them how to drive. Just as we teach them all the perils and dangers of driving, we must do the same with using the internet.

When your kids get their first smartphone:

- Before you give your kids their first smartphone, create a contract agreement between you and your kids. There are a number of smartphone contract online between parents and their kids that you can Google and find. I have several great examples that I found online that I made available.
- When you give your kids their first smartphone, one of the terms that the child must follow is that you as the parent will get to look through everything in the child's phone.
 - This includes all calls, texts, social media posts, incoming messages, etc. EVERYTHING.
 - As a parent you could and should relax this requirement as the child gets older and earns your trust through responsible behavior and showing good judgment and maturity.
 - As your child uses their smartphone or device wisely and responsibly, you can phase out this requirement.
- When your child first receives their smartphone, your child also should not be able to download new apps without your research, vetting, and permission. Same thing applies in terms of relaxing this rule as your child earns your trust over time.
- Golden Rule: your child should not be allowed to take their smartphone or any internet accessing devices up into their rooms overnight.
 - This may be the most effective rule/suggestion of all.

- After a certain time of the night, say 9pm or so, your child should be required to plug in their device into a docking station which is positioned in a public place of the house.
- No child should have any internet accessing device in their room such as their desk overnight; all internet accessing devices should be docked in a public place where every one of the family member can see what someone is viewing.

What things to teach your kids:

- Teach them to respect the internet. Specifically, give them a healthy fear of the internet and social media in terms of how it can ruin their lives.
 - Actively show them news stories and videos of how things have gone wrong and talk to them about it.
 - Example, type in “sextortion” in the search box of YouTube and watch the latest news segment on some story together and talk about it with your child.
- Teach them that the internet is not private; that everything they do on a smartphone, laptop, or tablet is recorded and discoverable to the public.
 - Whatever they write, post, or even receive on their phone can and will be seen by other people. What they do online is not private.
 - Everyone else will see what the child will do.
- Stop and think before pressing “send” or “post.” Whatever your child will send or post is permanent and will have real life consequences. Give them specific examples of this.
- This is a must: DO NOT SEND NUDE PICTURES OR VIDEOS OF YOURSELF OR ANYONE ELSE ONLINE.
 - Make it clear to them that this is not a normal way to show one’s crush or affection.
 - What is on the internet is permanent and not private.
 - Do not take nude pictures or videos of yourself or others and do not pass them on online in any manner.
 - If someone else is asking you to create such images, they do not care about you; they want to use you.
 - Make them realize that this can have legal and school administrative consequences as well.
- Teach your kids that the internet is not reality. What they see online is not how the world actually exists.
 - Teach your child that they are seeing what someone else/the content creator wants them to see.
 - This is especially true when kids are communicating with people online.
- Teach your kids that you do not know who is truly on the other end of the internet.
 - Who you think you are talking to is not the same as who you are actually talking to.
 - Teach them that when your kids trust and confide in someone online, this may have the effect of them feeling like they are attracted to or feeling like they are falling in love with that person; when in reality, they do not know anything about the person they are communicating with.
- Teach your kids that they always have the option of turning off the internet and walking away.
 - Many times, kids feel paralyzed and feel like they cannot walk away.

- Often the persons on the other end create an illusion of the child not being able to do so.
- Empower your kids that they have control and the power to be able to turn the device off and walk away.
- Also teach your kids to tell a trusted adult if something happened online that they have a funny feeling about.
 - As previously mentioned, create that atmosphere of openness and understanding with no fear or judgment so that your child can come to you.
 - Encourage them to ask what may seem like embarrassingly stupid or basic questions.