

PARENT RESOURCE

INTERNET SAFETY

“It is your life, these are your friends. However, as you move about, contact new people in person or on devices, I can’t very well protect you. I want to help you learn how to make yourself safer, to be your own guardian of your own privacy & security.”

INTERNET SAFETY RESOURCES

- Common Sense Media – www.commonsensemedia.org
- Movieguide – www.movieguide.org
- ConnectSafely – www.connectsafely.org
- Facebook for Parents www.facebookforparents.org
- Enough Is Enough – www.enough.org
- Internet Safety 101 – www.internetsafety101.org
- Google’s Safety Center – www.google.com/safetycenter/families/start
- iKeepSafe – www.ikeepsafe.org
- Stop Cyberbullying www.stopcyberbullying.org
- Be Smart, Be Safe!
www.cheyenne.edmondschools.net/media-center/general_library/internet-safety
- Online Predators and Their Victims
www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-632111.pdf

The following organizations regularly feature Internet Safety updates on their blogs:

- Netsmartz (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children parent resources)
www.netsmartz.org/Parents
- Educate and Empower Kids Blog
www.educateempowerkids.org
- Covenant Eyes
www.covenanteyes.com



SEXTING

Whether or not you think your teen is sexting, many teens are or their friends are doing it. Eye opening [statistics](#) show that 1 in 5 teens admit to sexting. The key word in this statistic is “admit.” There are far more teens who are sexting but don’t admit to it. I can bet the



parents of these teens are generally unaware their teen is a “sexter.” Due to the sexting epidemic that is an unfortunate reality today, it is essential that parents talk frequently to their kids about sexting if they don’t want their teen participating in it.



The first question is when to start talking to your kids about the peril sexting brings. The first discussion should commence before your child even gets a cell phone or any device that’s capable of sending a sext (ie. computers, tablets, etc). Once a child receives such a device, they are susceptible to the influences of sexting. To prevent your teen from sexting you will want to take the initiative. After your child has a device, frequently have an open discussion on the topic. Frequent and open discussions about sexting will make your child feel comfortable to approach and talk to you about it.

The second question is how to talk to your child about sexting. Sexting is a difficult topic to approach and requires a balancing act. You don’t want to appear too judgmental or forceful, but at the same time you want to be firm with where you stand and help them to see the dangers and consequences.

To aid in your discussion we have listed a few helpful talking points:

What do you think is considered sexting?

- Sexting: sending someone sexually explicit photographs or messages, whether verbal or in pictures

Is there any harm to sexting?

- Can be charged for child pornography (by sending or receiving sexts)
- Images/messages follow you, you can't delete them once they are sent
- Sexually objectifies you
- Images are almost always shared with others besides the receiver.
- Reputation and future opportunities are often at risk.
- Many stories of children being forced into prostitution or sex trafficking begin with the "pimp" using sexts as a means of coercion to get them to comply with their demands.

Is sexting worth the attention?

- The receiver and those they show it to are likely to lose some respect for you.
- You become a sexual object instead of a real person
- The individual asking will often try to make you feel special but all he/she really wants is a sexually explicit photo. Odds are, if he/she doesn't get it from you they will just try and get it from someone else. As long as they get it, they don't care if it's from you or the next person

Do you have control over a picture/ message once it's sent?

- Absolutely not. Nearly every teen who receives a sext ends up sharing it or forwarding to others, and many sexts end up on third party websites. All of this usually occurs without your knowledge or consent.

Why do people sext?

- Seeking attention/approval
- Peer pressure
- Bullying
- Want to satisfy another

More tips to start the discussion:

- Talk about healthy media choices in general.
- Mention a story you heard in the news about other kids who are engaged in sexting.
- Ask if they know anyone who does this, maybe other kids at school.
- Ask if they have ever been asked to sext.
- Ask your kids about their future goals and then start talking about some hurdles they might encounter that would impede those goals (sexting can impact grades, college acceptance, etc.)
- Have frequent talks about healthy intimacy and boundaries, work sexting into the discussions.

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT A ONE-TIME CONVERSATION!

Obtain the **CHOSEN** documentary and show young people how easily girls can be trafficked when they “don’t know” the signs.

www.sharedhope.org/chosen

DEVICE MONITORING

Talking to your kids is the most crucial and effective way to prevent sexting. Genuinely understanding the harms and consequences of sexting will be the best form of prevention.

It’s a lot better for your kids to choose not to sext than to force them not to sext.



However, you can also consider taking actions to monitor your kids’ devices. This can be done a number of ways. To get you started, here are a few [helpful tips from Protect Young Eyes](#):

1. **Guard your kids at the location level.** Keep internet devices out of the bedroom as much as possible. Have a bedtime 'turn in' time when Mom and Dad have the devices lined up on a power strip charging in their room. Talk to parents of friends where your kids spend time. (It's worth the awkward conversation.) Ask at school and church about wireless access points and be sure you're satisfied with the answers that they are monitoring web activity etc.
2. **Guard your router/network signal.** Is it filtered? Do you worry about kids or babysitters surfing your Wi-Fi for inappropriate content? [Check out easy instructions how to filter your signal.](#)
3. **Guard the device.** Predators can communicate with your children through iPhones, Chromebooks, Mac Books, iPads, and laptops. [Here is a simple go-to guide](#) to monitor and filter all of these devices. Although many parents don't realize, predators can also communicate with Xbox/Playstation consoles. Here is a [simple guide to filter Xbox/Playstation consoles.](#)
4. **Understand and Monitor Social Media.** Social media is an integral part of our children and teenager's world. It's important for parents to understand the various platforms, how they work, and to talk to our children about how to be smart when using social media. Here is a handy [overview document of various social media platforms.](#) You'll also find this guide helpful: [Parenting the Internet Generation: A Blueprint for Teaching Digital Discernment](#)

Instagram and Snapchat in particular are of some of the most popular social media platforms currently. Check out Instagram's [Tips for Parents](#) and ConnectSafely's [Parent's Guide to Instagram.](#) For Snapchat check out their [Safety Center](#) and ConnectSafely's [Parent's Guide to Snapchat.](#)

5. In short, **internet devices need parental controls** just like when you prepare your child to get their driver's license...but BEFORE you hand over the keys. You control access to the vehicle, practice with them, quiz them, and remain in control until you're ready to hand over the keys. But even then you want to know where they are going, with whom, and when they will be back. Internet access is no different and can be just as dangerous as an unmonitored teen behind the wheel.

MORE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- A list of resources for parents, includes: talking about porn, safe media choices, technology solutions, discussing healthy intimacy, etc.
www.endsexualexploitation.org/resources-parents
- How to find if your teen is sexting on Snapchat
www.money.cnn.com/2014/09/03/technology/social/spy-on-snapchat
- Sexting Prevention Course
www.txssc.txstate.edu/tools/courses/before-you-text
- **Programs for monitoring your child's device:**
 - WebWatcher: www.webwatcher.com
 - TeenSafe: www.teensafe.com
 - Review of the best cell phone parental control software of 2017:
www.toptenreviews.com/software/privacy/best-cell-phone-parental-control-software
- **Resources for talking with your children:**
 - www.whowillyouempower.com/craigsblog/2014/4/22/sexting-a-digital-topic-to-talk-about-with-your-teen?rq=sexting%20a%20digital%20
 - www.childmind.org/en/posts/articles/2011-6-8-how-talk-your-kids-about-sexting