Online Safety Presentation

Click on the link below to access this online safety presentation.

https://childrenscenter-cc.zoom.us/rec/share/pvK6cBBEgi9RgZ1R5b1AEUgSJnXiSSl7YFeO2M1ocBiJN5jywYReKOcDcnhm0QwF.I85bLhvzvMFLYVeL

Use the Passcode: D6u!d6#2

Tips and Resources for Navigating the Tech World with your Pre-teen and Teens

Caring for children in the age of technology is challenging! We've gathered some resources and created some recommendations to help as you navigate this process. Every family has different values and expectations, so we ask that caregivers review any material before sharing it with your child. This allows you to assess whether it's appropriate for your child specifically, see how it connects to your values and expectations, and gives you a chance to prepare for conversations that may come up. If the message doesn't align with your values, it may still be beneficial to share it and discuss the ways it does and doesn't align. You are the expert on your child and should explore what topics, content, and messages are important for them. We hope that the information included here is helpful regardless of where your child and family are at in using and discussing technology.

We encourage every caregiver to have an agreement about phone, social media, and internet use with their child. If you don't already have one, this is a great way to start a discussion. Simply the process of creating an agreement has benefits, and it will give you common ground to start with if you need to address concerns in the future. The [Family Online Safety Institute](#) and [Common Sense Media](#) have good templates for creating an agreement and additional resources below may be helpful in having these conversations with your child. Some benefits of creating and maintaining an agreement include:

- It creates an opportunity to clarify and affirm personal and family values.
- Caregivers get to communicate their concerns and expectations to their child. Although phones and technology are deeply integrated in our lives, the norms and expectations about using them vary across settings, communities, families, and individuals. Those expectations often aren't explicit. Kids do well if they can! Starting with clear expectations and information gives them the foundation to be safe and successful.
- Kids get to share what the internet, social media, and/or their phone means to them. We know that this technology is a significant source of identity and connection for kids in this generation. How they use and feel about the internet, social media, and their devices is different than the adults around them. Expressing curiosity and empathy about its importance in their lives sets the stage for collaboration and can help caregivers understand how to continue to support your child.
- The process of creating an agreement builds collaboration and problem-solving skills. Phones and technology can be a great mechanism for kids to practice gaining progressive responsibility. A good agreement should outline next steps including consequences for if the agreement is broken and how the child might gain more responsibility. Having a set timeline for when you will review the agreement can be a great way to check in about how things are going and consider any changes.

These conversations can be really challenging, and the issues associated with social media, phones, and the internet often feel overwhelming! There are some great guides and resources for caregivers that can help you think about these topics and prepare for conversations. **We want kids to have an open dialogue with their caregivers so they feel like they can ask questions, address concerns, and share the fun parts of this aspect of their life.**

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www.childrenscenter.cc

- The FTC has created some resources around online safety and their Net Cetera booklet is a great general guide for talking to kids about being online.
- The Family Online Safety Institute has a video series and tool kit about how to be a good digital parent.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a site called Netsmartz with a lot of great information. Each of their "Topics" pages has a "How to Talk About It" section, including ones on sexting, cyberbullying, and social media.
- Common Sense Media has a good blog post with additional resources on how to talk to kids about sexting.
- The New York Times has a great guide going over consideration for screen time, family media use, and limiting kids tech use.
- If your child has their own device or spends unsupervised time on the internet, it's time to talk with them about porn. Amaze has a good overview to help you decide if it's time to have that conversation and other resources to support you in navigating those conversations.

The culture of technology continues to change quickly. Kids are savvy, and not everyone using these spaces is safe or making good decisions. Porn and other inappropriate content is easy to come across without intention. **We encourage every caregiver to consider using parental controls and content monitoring programs as part of the plan to support and protect your child.** There are a wide variety of options out there and some platforms have content filtering options built in, as well as mechanisms for reporting inappropriate content.

- Find out what apps, sites, and devices your child likes to use (or is interested in using) and how they use them. Thorn for Parents has a great guide for ongoing discussions about digital safety starting with this curiosity.
- Familiarize yourself with those apps, sites, and devices and the options they may provide. Protect Young Eyes (a faith-based organization) has a pretty comprehensive review of apps based on their risks and features, as well as a guide to parental controls available on different devices. Common Sense Media also includes reviews of apps and websites along with movies and games in their database of content reviews.
- Explore other parental control and content monitoring options. There are many different types of programs for different devices with a variety of features, ranging from free to expensive. Tech Radar has an article reviewing the best parental controls and Common Sense Media has a good overview of options that are organized based on your goals.
- Once you decide what strategies to use, include them in your family agreement. Although kids often express that these systems feel invasive, many of these programs filter/monitor content and create alerts so caregivers can do less reviewing content directly. Regardless of the tools used, we encourage caregivers to set the expectation that kids' devices can be accessed by the caregiver at any time.

There is also a lot of creative content and resources directed to kids about these topics. One of the challenges facing kids using technology is that their brains aren't fully developed! **Since the skills of**

forward thinking and understanding other people's perspectives are still being learned, it's extra important that adults teach kids about the potential outcomes of their actions. When these skills aren't matured, the lack of face-to-face communication and often anonymous feeling of being on the internet makes these spaces especially risky.

- Common Sense Media has short videos with teens talking about different issues including responding to hate speech, managing friendships and boundaries, risks of sexting, and dealing with drama. Each one has a guide to prompt a reflective conversation after watching.
- NCMEC's Netsmartz has a lot of great educational content. This simple tip sheet promotes good decision making by outlining five things to think about before sending an image or message. This page summarizes what to do if you have sent a sext or someone is sharing your picture.
- Common Sense Media has a great infographic walking through the decision making of whether or not to share a picture.
- This NCMEC video You Can't Take It Back explores the consequences of cyberbullying and their video Your Photo Fate goes through all things that could happen to a picture after you share it, along with a nice discussion guide.
- As you teach responsible decision making, it's also important to educate kids about the behaviors of others (adults and peers) that may put them at risk. Thorn created an awesome animated video using cats to explain what sextortion is.
- There are a lot of resources created for kids of different ages and developmental stages. For kids who are younger or earlier on in their development, NCMEC Netsmartz runs a website for kids with videos, learning games, and activities about online safety. The websites referenced all have the option to sort articles and content based on the age it addresses or is created for.
- ReThink has a free app that detects content that may be offensive or bullying and prompts the teen in the moment to rethink their decision before posting, promoting stop and think skills that can help teens manage impulsivity. There are other apps such as Bark, Qustodio, MM Guardian, and Net Nanny that are similar.

It can be really hard to be a caregiver addressing these issues with a child, and it also can also be really hard to be a kid navigating these issues! Outside of these types of resources we've suggested, don't forget the resource of your community. Discussions with other caregivers about the concerns they're dealing with and how they've addressed them is an important way to continue the conversation.

Website Resources
www.fosi.org
www.commonsensemedia.org
www.missingkids.org/netsmartz
parents.thorn.org
www.protectyoungeyes.org
www.rethinkwords.com
www.amaze.org

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Children's Center
A child abuse intervention center

Teaching Body Safety Rules

It is important for caregivers to talk to their children about their bodies and safety rules. This teaches children about appropriate boundaries and to tell their caregiver if anyone violates those boundaries, which makes children less vulnerable to sexual abuse. Start with reading a book to your child: For young children, a good choice is *My Body Belongs to Me*. For school-age children, try *The Bubble Book*. Please refer to the Children's Center resources page for these books. Afterwards, allow time for your child to respond to the book.

Help your child identify at least two other safe people besides yourself that they could tell if someone broke the touching rules.

Teach touching rules: Private body parts are the parts we cover with a swim suit. Private body parts are special—that's why we keep them covered.

- It's not okay for another kid or an older person to touch you on your private body parts except for people whose job it is to keep you clean and healthy. Examples of "clean" would be when a young child needs diapering or help in the tub. Examples of "healthy" would be having a doctor or nurse check your privates.
- It's not okay to show your private parts to others.
- It's not okay to ask others to see their private parts.
- It's not okay to touch other people's private parts.
- It's not okay for someone to take pictures of your private parts.
- It's not okay for you to take pictures or look at pictures of someone else's private parts.
- It's also not okay for another kid or an older person to ask you to touch or look at their private body parts.
- You should tell a safe grown-up if someone breaks the body safety rules.
- It is okay to touch your private parts as long as it is in private and does not take time away from other activities.

If you are interested in more information about Body Safety Rules or children who are sexually acting out, please call the Children's Center at 503-655-7725. Please also refer to the "Sexual Behavior Problems in Youth" resource for more information. If you are worried that a child has been abused, make a report to the Child Abuse Hotline **(1-855-503-7233)**

Tips and Resources for Navigating the Tech World with your Child

Caring for children in the age of technology is challenging! We've gathered some resources and created some recommendations to help as you navigate this process. Every family has different values and expectations, so we ask that caregivers review any material before sharing it with your child. This allows you to assess whether it's appropriate for your child specifically, see how it connects to your values and expectations, and gives you a chance to prepare for conversations that may come up. If the message doesn't align with your values, it may still be beneficial to share it and discuss the ways it does and doesn't align. You are the expert on your child and should explore what topics, content, and messages are important for them. We hope that the information included here is helpful regardless of where your child and family are at in using and discussing technology.

There are many decisions to make during this process: when to give your child access to different devices and types of media, how much and how to supervise them, and how to teach them to be safe. We encourage families to be thoughtful in making these choices for each child. Remember, these decisions do not have to be all or nothing. Consider ways that you can give your child opportunities to demonstrate trust and practice relevant skills while giving them progressive responsibility with media and devices. If your child asks you if they can have a phone or a tablet and the answer is "no" or "not yet", find ways to set that limit while keeping the communication going.

- As you consider when to get your child a phone, this article from the Child Mind Institute has a good overview of factors to consider.
- If you decide to move forward, take a look at FOSI's article about steps to take before and after the purchase of a device for your child. They also have device-specific cards that help you set expectations about your child's use of that device.
- If your child has their own device or spends unsupervised time on the internet, it's time to talk with them about porn. Amaze has a good overview to help you decide if it's time to have that conversation and other resources to support you in navigating those conversations.
- Proactively teach your child skills to be safe on the internet. Don't wait for the point when you get them a device. Thorn has a guide for starting discussions about social media and the fundamentals of digital safety.

All of these conversations can be really challenging, and the issues associated with technology use often feel overwhelming! There are some great guides and resources for caregivers that can help you think about these topics and prepare for conversations. **We want kids to have an open dialogue with their caregivers so they feel like they can ask questions, address concerns, and share the fun parts of this aspect of their life.**

- The FTC has created some resources around online safety and their Net Cetera booklet is a great general guide for talking to kids about being online.
- The Family Online Safety Institute has a video series and tool kit about how to be a good digital parent and an article about preschoolers and technology safety.
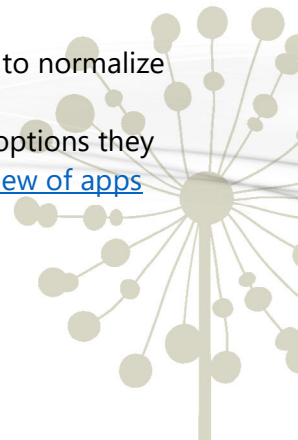
- The New York Times has a great guide going over consideration for screen time, family media use, and limiting kids tech use.

We encourage every caregiver to have an agreement about the use of devices and internet with their child. If you don't already have one, this is a great way to start a discussion. Simply the process of creating an agreement has benefits, and it will give you common ground to start with if you need to address concerns in the future. The Family Online Safety Institute and Common Sense Media have good templates you can use and additional resources below may be helpful in having these conversations with your child. Some benefits of creating and maintaining an agreement include:

- It creates an opportunity to clarify and teach your family's values.
- Caregivers get to communicate their concerns and expectations to their child. Although phones and technology are deeply integrated in our lives, the norms and expectations about using them vary across settings, communities, families, and individuals. Those expectations often aren't explicit. Kids do well if they can! Starting with clear expectations and information gives them the foundation to be safe and successful.
- Kids get to share what the internet, media, and devices mean to them. We know that these technologies are a significant source of identity and connection for kids in this generation. How they use and feel about these technologies is different than the adults around them. Expressing curiosity and empathy about its importance in their lives sets the stage for collaboration and can help caregivers understand how to continue to support your child.
- The process of creating an agreement builds collaboration and problem-solving skills. Gaining the privileges of device use, getting a phone, and other digital access can be a great mechanism for kids to practice gaining progressive responsibility. An agreement can start even before you give your child access to a device or specific content, by laying out expectations for them to meet in order to gain that privilege, and ways they can demonstrate the necessary responsibility in other areas of their life. A good agreement should outline next steps including consequences for if the agreement is broken and how the child might gain more responsibility. Having a set timeline for when you will review the agreement can be a great way to check in about how things are going and consider any changes.

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- We encourage internet and device use to take place in shared spaces in the household to normalize supervision and make technology use a shared experience instead of an isolating one.
- Familiarize yourself with the apps, sites, and devices your child is interested in and the options they may provide. Protect Young Eyes (a faith-based organization) has a comprehensive review of apps

based on their risks and features, as well as a [guide to parental controls available on different devices.](#) Common Sense Media also includes reviews of apps and websites along with movies and games in their [database of content reviews](#).

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There is also a lot of creative content and resources directed to kids about these topics. One of the challenges facing kids using technology is that their brains aren't fully developed! **Since the skills of forward thinking and understanding other people's perspectives are still being learned, it's extra important that adults teach kids about the potential outcomes of their actions.**

- NCMEC Netsmartz runs a [website for kids](#) with videos, learning games, and activities about online safety.
- Google has helped develop the [Be Internet Awesome program](#) that has a lot of activities for caregivers to use with their kids to learn and practice skills, including a video game style series of games that help kids practice online safety skills.

It can be really hard to be a caregiver addressing these issues with a child, and it also can also be really hard to be a kid navigating these issues! Outside of these types of resources we've suggested, don't forget the resource of your community. Discussions with other caregivers about the concerns they're dealing with and how they've addressed them is an important way to continue the conversation.

Website Resources
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[www.protectyoungeyes.org](#)
[www.rethinkwords.com](#)
[www.amaze.com](#)
[beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com](#)

Family Media Agreement

I, _____ , will:

... take care.

☐ I will take care of the device I'm using and tell my family if it's broken, stolen, or lost. As a family, we have agreed on the consequences if I lose or break a device, and I understand those consequences.

☐ Unless I have paid for a device with my own money or it was a gift, I understand that the device belongs to the family member(s) who bought it.

☐ _____

... stay safe.

☐ I will not create accounts or give out any private information — such as my full name, date of birth, address, phone number, or photos of myself — without my family's permission.

☐ I will not share my passwords with anyone other than my family. I will ask my family to help me with privacy settings if I want to set up devices, accounts, or profiles.

☐ If anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable or acts inappropriately toward me online, I'll stop talking to that person and will tell a family member or other trusted adult about it.

☐ _____

... think first.

☐ I will not bully, humiliate, or upset anyone online — whether through sharing photos, videos, or screenshots, spreading rumors or gossip, or setting up fake profiles — and I will stand up to those who do.

☐ I know that whatever I share online can spread fast and far. I will not post anything online that could harm my reputation.

☐ Whenever I use, reference, or share someone else's creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist.

☐ I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true. I will consider whether a source or author is credible.

☐ _____

Family Media Agreement

common sense®

... stay balanced.

☐ I will help my family set media time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.

☐ I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities — and people — in my life.

☐ If using media or being online is making me unhappy or it's hard to stop, I will take a break and talk to a family member.

☐ _____

... communicate openly.

☐ I will talk to my family about what media I use and what I do online and answer any questions they have openly and honestly.

☐ I will tell my family if I'm struggling with media use, have made a mistake online, or need help.

☐ _____

In exchange, my family agrees to:

☐ recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.

☐ talk with me about what worries them and why before saying "no."

☐ talk to me about my interests and embrace my world, including helping me find media that's appropriate and fun.

☐ _____

X
_____
SIGNED BY ME

X
_____
SIGNED BY MY PARENT OR CAREGIVER

www.commonsense.org 2

Tips for Setting Family Tech Agreements

Using this agreement

- Edit pages 3-5 if needed, and then print to discuss with your child or teen.
- Further considerations are listed on page 6. Prior to starting the conversation, we also recommend working through the related module content found at https://parents.culturereframed.org/tech-guide

Ask each family member to think about these before the meeting

- What are the short- and long-term desired outcomes for parents or caregivers and the child or teen? (e.g., safety, harmony, success in life, education, positive social relationships, etc.)

Positive statements & positive reinforcement

- Try whenever possible to use positive rather than negative language when discussing agreements and commitments. For example, use "I will" rather than "I will not."
- Try to offer positive reinforcement for sticking with agreements rather than implementing negative consequences for failure to comply (though there may be times when consequences are necessary).

Safety first

- Remember that teens' brains are still developing, and they may make mistakes or break the commitments you've agreed to. Be sure to frame this agreement as an issue of safety, not about trust – it is important that they know that you are concerned about their safety and wellbeing, and that even when they make mistakes, you will be there to help them work things out.

Set conditions for the meeting

- Think about when, where, and how long. The evening may not be a great time as their frontal lobes are less active and so they may be more prone to having an emotional reaction. Choose a shared area if possible, such as the kitchen. Set an agreed-upon time, and keep it relatively short – we recommend blocking off 30 minutes.

Agenda

List what will be discussed. Here are some examples:
1. Where and when devices can be used.
2. Agreed-upon time limits for things such as homework, social/fun time, when to turn off devices, bedtimes, etc.
3. Allowable apps/games and platforms.
4. Passwords for devices and social media accounts to be shared with parents (recommended until at least mid-teens). In your discussions it is important to explain to teens why this is important. Tech use check-ins.
5. Discuss what apps will be used for monitoring or managing devices, and online privacy settings.
6. Responsible posting. THINK is a helpful acronym: Is it True? Helpful? Inspiring? Necessary? Kind?
7. Expected responsible behavior, such as reporting problematic content or behavior.
8. Safe followers and online friends (no strangers).
9. Tech-free hobbies or physical activities (e.g., 30-day challenges, yoga, walks, art, sport).
10. Tech-free family time.
11. Responsibility for the safety of devices.
12. Tech controls and management apps (see Enrichment 3, Section 2).
13. Weekly reports for devices and online activities.
14. Restrictions or consequences if agreements are not adhered to. (Avoid total bans, and start small. Write them down, and have a mechanism in place so that the child can earn back a privilege.)

Meeting Guidelines

- Agree that each person has a say, without interruptions. Additionally, encourage using "I" statements rather than "you".
- Agree that everyone stay calm and respectful. It is safe to disagree.
- Agree that if the meeting does not go well, you will meet on another day.
- Understand that the agreements can be renegotiated if they don't seem fair or don't work. Provide an opportunity to regroup every couple of months to give feedback: parent to child and child to parent.
- The agreements should change over time to align with their age and stage of development.
- Parent(s) or caregiver(s) do get the final say.

Tech Use Agreement

Between _____ & _____   Date: _____

Where can devices be used?

_____

_____

Allowable apps/games and platforms

_____

_____

Passwords for devices and social media accounts shared with parents: _____

Notes on Tech Use Check-in/Parent Supervision: _____

_____

Check when discussed and/or make notes of agreed-upon use:

I will maintain privacy settings & expectations on safe sharing.	☐
I will THINK before posting. Is it TRUE, HELPFUL, INSPIRING, NECESSARY, KIND?	☐
I will use my tech with respect for myself and others.	☐
I will ask permission before sharing or taking pics. o My parents/caregivers agree to check before commenting on my posts or sharing pictures with me in them on their social media accounts.	☐ ☐

I agree to behave responsibly with personal privacy online and will be honest about my accounts and device usage. ☐

I agree to post responsibly and will keep my digital reputation in mind. ☐

I will only allow friends/followers who are REAL friends and only respond to messages and calls from people I know. (This should not include friends of friends.) ☐

I will report strangers or harassers to parents/caregivers. I will block that person from my account. ☐

I will take care of my devices to prevent loss or breakage. ☐

I will tell my parents/caregivers about upsetting content or incidents online: ☐
o For example, if I have been told not to tell anyone about a new friend, or if I have shared something I shouldn't have.
o Also, I will ask for help with mean or bullying behavior, if I am uncomfortable with any communication, or if someone is trying to find out about my personal information (e.g., where I live, go to school, personal relationships).
o If I have concerns for a friend's safety. (e.g., a friend posting self-harm images or expressing thoughts of suicide). ☐

I understand that no one has a right to ask me for naked pictures. ☐
o If this happens, I will not be in trouble; I will tell a trusted adult—the person asking needs to be stopped as it's dangerous and illegal.
☐

We all agree to stay calm if something goes wrong. ☐

Parents agree to be available to help and reinforce that the child will not be 'in trouble' if they have made a poor decision or mistake, even if they have been warned in advance.

Ideas for tech-free hobbies or physical activities:

_____

_____

Ideas for tech-free family time:

_____

_____

Restrictions or consequences if agreements are not kept.

_____

_____

_____

Digital Timetable

E.g., Mon-Fri Homework 1hr 45m - Social/Creative 1hr (set times start/finish)

Mon-Fri Times:	_____
Saturday Times:	_____
Sunday Times:	_____
Holiday Times:	_____
Time Limit on Social Networks:	_____
The central location to keep devices overnight is:	_____

Young Person Agrees to:

I understand that if I maintain these agreements I will benefit from a more balanced and positive experience on my digital device.

This will help me as I get older and learn to take more responsibility for my own online wellbeing.

If I don't maintain these agreements, I understand that there will be some fair consequences. I am open to renegotiating these agreements as circumstances change.

Parent Signed: _____

Young Person Signed: _____

Further Considerations

- It may be helpful to discuss how much the device costs per month and who is paying for this, or what chores may be expected as a form of contribution. Clarify how much data is available.
- Ensure your teen knows why parental controls or monitoring apps are being used including what they are and why they are being used.
  - Be clear about the alerts the monitoring app will send if your teen tries to disable it or tries to circumvent the settings.
  - Also ensure that your teen can ask for exceptions to any settings, but the parent does have the final say.
  - Be clear and transparent about what parents have access to and can see.
  - Be aware that if you are using message monitoring you may see other children's interactions and you don't really have a right to monitor other children's posts. If you have any concerns about another child, discuss them with your teen.
- Prior to saying yes to any requested apps, be sure to have fully investigated what these apps involve and consider the safety for the age of the child. Check Common Sense Media for their app and game reviews and be aware that the age "13" relates to data-collection parameters. It does not refer to the safety or content of an app. When discussing sexting, emphasize that it is never safe to share a naked or sexualized photo or video, even if they look anonymous (from the neck down). Focus on the peer fallout in addition to the legal implications—young people tend to be more concerned about peer reactions.

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

The onus of mitigating the potential harms of social media should not be placed solely on the shoulders of parents and caregivers, but there are steps they can take to help protect and support children and adolescents against the risk of harm.

- **Create a family media plan.**[97] Agreed-upon expectations can help establish healthy technology boundaries at home – including social media use. A family media plan can promote open family discussion and rules about media use and include topics such as balancing screen/online time, content boundaries, and not disclosing personal information. For information on creating a family media plan, visit www.healthychildren. org/MediaUsePlan.

- **Create tech-free zones and encourage children to foster in-person friendships.**[98] Since electronics can be a potential distraction after bedtime and can interfere with sleep, consider restricting the use of phones, tablets, and computers for at least 1 hour before bedtime and through the night. Consider keeping family mealtimes and in-person gatherings device-free to build social bonds and engage in a two-way conversation. Help your child develop social skills and nurture his or her in-person relationships by encouraging unstructured and offline connections with others and making unplugged interactions a daily priority. See the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines for media use.

- **Model responsible social media behavior.** As children often learn behaviors and habits from what they see around them, try to model the behavior you want to see.[97, 99] Parents can set a good example of what responsible and healthy social media use looks like by limiting their own use, being mindful of social media habits (including when and how parents share information or content about their child), and modeling positive behavior on your social media accounts.

- **Teach kids about technology and empower them to be responsible online participants at the appropriate age.**[100] Discuss with children the benefits and risks of social media as well as the importance of respecting privacy and protecting personal information in age-appropriate ways. Have conversations with children about who they are connecting with, their privacy settings, their online experiences, and how they are spending their time online. Empower and encourage them to seek help should they need it. Learn more about the benefits and risks of social media use and get guidance from experts at AAP's Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health and from the American Psychological Association's Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence.

- **Report cyberbullying and online abuse and exploitation.** Talk to your child about their reporting options, and provide support, without judgment, if he or she tells or shows you that they (a) are being harassed through email, text message, online games, or social media or (b) have been contacted by an adult seeking private images or asking them to perform intimate or sexual acts. You or your child can report cyberbullying to the school and/or the online platform, or your local law enforcement.[101] Visit CyberTipline, Take it Down, or contact your local law enforcement to report any instances of online exploitation.

- **Work with other parents to help establish shared norms and practices and to support programs and policies around healthy social media use.** Such norms and practices among parents facilitate collective action and can make it easier to set and implement boundaries on social media use for children.

What Children and Adolescents Can Do

The burden of mitigating the potential harms of social media does not rest solely on the shoulders of children and adolescents, but there are measures they can take to navigate social media in a safe and healthy way.

- **Reach out for help.** If you or someone you know is being negatively affected by social media, reach out to a trusted friend or adult for help. For information from experts, visit AAP's Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988 for immediate help.

- **Create boundaries to help balance online and offline activities.** Limit the use of phones, tablets, and computers for at least 1 hour before bedtime and through the night to enable sufficient and quality sleep. Keep mealtimes and in-person gatherings device-free to help build social bonds and engage in two-way conversations with others. Nurture your in-person relationships by connecting with others and making unplugged interactions a daily priority.

- **Develop protective strategies and healthy practices** such as tracking the amount of time you spend online, blocking unwanted contacts and content, learning about and using available privacy and safety settings, learning and utilizing digital media literacy skills to help tell the difference between fact and opinion, and ensuring you are connecting with peers in-person. See this Tip Sheet on Social Media Use and Mental Health for healthy social media use created for and by young people.

- **Be cautious about what you share.** Personal information about you has value. Be selective with what you post and share online and with whom, as it is often public and can be stored permanently. If you aren't sure if you should post something, it's usually best if you don't. Talk to a family member or trusted adult to see if you should.

- **Protect yourself and others.** Harassment that happens in email, text messaging, direct messaging, online games, or on social media is harmful and can be cyberbullying. It might involve trolling, rumors, or photos passed around for others to see – and it can leave people feeling angry, sad, ashamed, or hurt. If you or someone you know is the victim of cyberbullying or other forms of online harassment and abuse:

  » **Don't keep online harassment or abuse a secret.** Reach out to at least one person you trust, such as a close friend, family member, counselor, or teacher, who can give you the help and support you deserve. Visit stopbullying.gov for helpful tips on how to report cyberbullying. If you have experienced online harassment and abuse by a dating partner, contact an expert at Love is Respect for support or if your private images have been taken and shared online without your permission, visit Take it Down to help get them removed.

  » **Don't take part in online harassment or abuse.** Avoid forwarding or sharing messages or images and tell others to stop. Another way is to report offensive content to the site or network where you saw it.

Teaching Boundaries

Good boundaries make children less susceptible to child sexual abuse. A child who knows that their body belongs to them, who has been taught that s/he has rights, and has been able to tell grown-ups, "No, thank you, I don't want a hug," may be less likely to be tricked into unwanted sexual touching.

What is a boundary?

Boundaries can be visible or invisible. An example of a visible boundary is a fence which separates our house from our neighbors' houses. Our fence is our boundary because it encloses what belongs to us and identifies what we are responsible for.

An example of an invisible boundary is the personal space or "imaginary bubble" around each of us. Although this boundary cannot be seen, we are aware of our comfort level when a stranger gets too close to our personal space, like in an elevator when everyone is packed together.

In simplest terms, whether a boundary is visible or invisible, it defines ownership and responsibility. It lets everyone know what belongs to whom, whether it is a state or county border line, yard, desk space, or who is allowed to give someone a hug. Each of us has personal boundaries because each of us is a separate individual. Inside our invisible "bubble" is the personal space of our body (skin), but also the personal space of our inner life like our beliefs, thoughts, feelings, opinions, etc.

Because boundaries define ownership, it is important that boundaries are treated with care and respect. When entering someone else's home, we knock on the door and wait to be admitted. Individual boundaries are very much like these other boundaries. Only those closest to us are allowed to hug without asking, touch our bodies, or ask personal questions about our private life. It is important that we are aware of personal boundaries and that we gain permission from the owner prior to entering his/her space.

Why are boundaries important?

- *Boundaries define self.* When we have established clear boundaries (both our outer skin boundary and our internal inner life boundary), we are more aware of our own rights, have a strong sense of self, and how we deserve to be treated by others. By first respecting ourselves, we are then able to instill respect in others and set limits around how we want to be treated. With clear boundaries, we also have a clearer picture of our own needs and desires, so that we can choose to ask for assistance if we are unable to meet our needs on our own. *Boundaries clarify responsibilities.* Clear boundaries help define what we "own;" what we are responsible for. We do not have to take on other people's

responsibilities unless we choose to, just as they do not have to take on ours. While it is important to be sympathetic to other people's needs, it is equally important to know our own limitations.

- *Boundaries give us options.* Since boundaries give us ownership, we have control over what happens to us and our bodies. Our choices and options are much broader because we have the right to say whether or not we want something to happen or not to happen.

How do we teach children to have good boundaries?

- *Children learn by mirroring their parents.* Children learn the fastest and easiest by watching others, most especially parents, so it is important that we model what we want them to learn. The healthier our boundaries are, the more likely our children will learn good boundaries from watching us.
- *Children learn what belongs to whom.* Help children identify what falls within their boundaries of ownership, and teach respect for what belongs to them. Help children identify what is within other people's boundaries by allowing them to choose what to share with others and what they want to keep special. Ask first before borrowing something from them. This will teach that s/he has ownership and rights to things that belong to him/her. Also teach that responsibilities come with ownership. It is reasonable to expect our child to care for their things, keeping in mind age-appropriate abilities.
- *Honor children's personal space and privacy.* Even children have the right to their own privacy. Model knocking before entering their bedroom or bathroom. Let them know that we respect their right to use the bathroom or dress without an audience. Respect their wishes whenever possible and ask for permission before entering their personal space or when taking care of their bodies. When we ask for permission, we let them know that their body belongs only to them.
- *Give children choices.* For certain situations, let the child decide what to do. Maybe instead of going to the park today, ask the child what s/he would rather do. When our children are given options, they realize that they do have a say in what happens in their lives and that their opinion matters.
- *Teach that it is okay to say "no."* Let children know that they do not have to accept a kiss or a hug from a relative if it makes them uncomfortable. If a child is always told to "just obey," this can actually make him/her more vulnerable to abuse. We can practice this skill with our children. Role-play asking for a hug and have the child practice saying no. It is important for our child to learn that they have rights when it comes their own body.

Learning to have positive personal boundaries ourselves, recognizing how important they are in daily life, and taking opportunities to teach our children how to have their own good boundaries are all ways to better help keep ourselves and our children safe.

For additional information contact Family Support at Children's Center, 503-655-7725.

Last revised 1.2018

FIVE *SUPER* Body Safety RULES

I am the Boss of my Body
I don't have to hug, kiss, or be touched by anyone if I'm uncomfortable. I have a right to say 'No!'

Private Parts
are the parts of our body covered by swimsuits and underwear. We use the correct words when talking about privates.
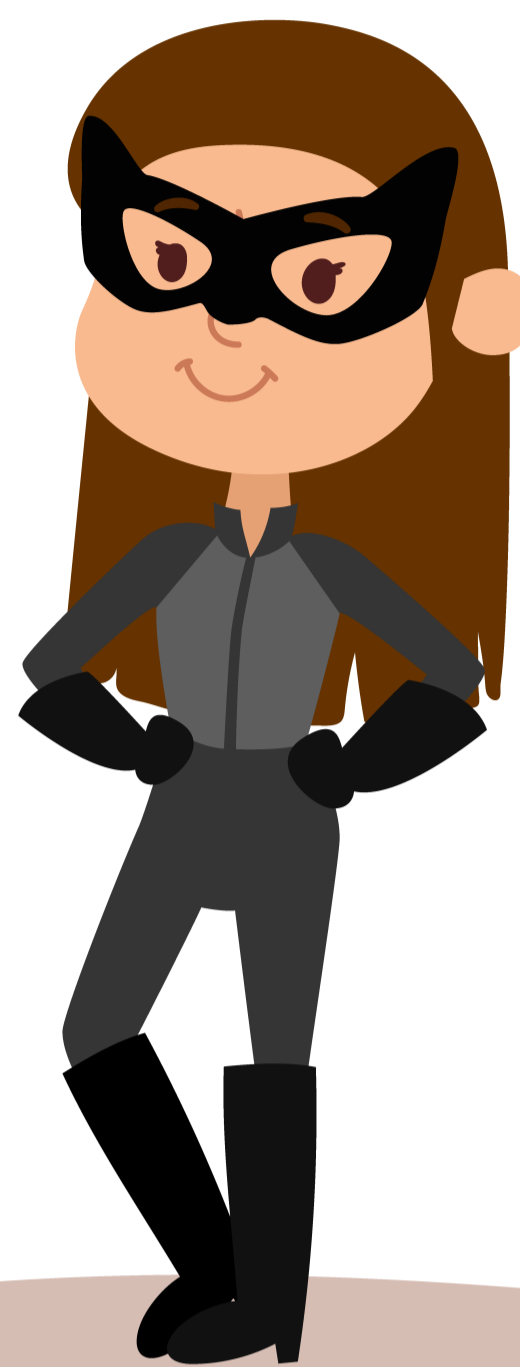
Privates are not to be shared with others -
no one should look at, or touch our private areas and we all should have privacy when using the bathroom or changing clothes.

Did you know?
Our mouth, eyes, and ears are private, too! They're sensitive and not to be touched by others.

Sometimes we may need to be looked at or touched to stay clean and healthy.
This should only be done by a caregiver or doctor - with another adult present. If you ever have a concern - you can talk to someone in your Body Safety Circle.

No one should ask us to keep a secret
even if it's fun and especially if it makes me sad, scared, or if it's about private parts.

Surprises are OK
because they're only kept quiet for a short time and then everyone knows!

⭐ **I have a Body Safety Circle** ⭐
3-5 trusted adults that know about body safety and I can talk to if I have a question or problem. I know that if a body safety rule is broken it's not my fault and it's <u>never too late to tell</u>.

the MAMA BEAR EFFECT

TheMamaBearEffect.org