

SAFETY IN A digital world

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In a short time, technology has improved tremendously, from paying per text message to carrying computers in our pockets. Growing up, I got my first Nokia cell phone at 16 and was very excited to play the popular ‘Snake’ game. I had a limited number of text messages, and it cost an arm and a leg when I went over. Now we’re seeing AI, new social media platforms, and constant use of technology, with more and more children using it in schools and everyday life. While technology gives kids the ability to learn, communicate, and explore in ways we never imagined, it also increases the risk of what they may see, search for, and post online. Exposure to inappropriate content, harmful online interactions, and possible predators continues to be a growing concern for our children.

Technology is only going to keep changing, so it’s important that we grow with it and help our children stay safe. A few helpful tips, tricks, and reminders include:

- Set clear limits and boundaries for what children can access online and how long they can use their devices.
- Remember that school filters and firewalls may not apply to personal phones, tablets, or iPads, so home protections still matter.
- Use free tools from your phone carrier or device settings, such as Family Link or Verizon Protect, to help monitor usage.
- Turn on features like downtime, app download approval, content restrictions, and blocked websites to add extra layers of protection.
- Regularly check what your child is searching, watching, texting, and messaging so you can stay aware of what they are being exposed to.



- Be mindful that children are still developing self-control, and many apps are designed to grab attention with fast, colorful, and highly engaging content.
- Teach children why these boundaries matter so they can begin building healthy digital habits that will serve them for life.

As parents, guardians, or mentors, we are our children’s protectors. We need to be aware of popular social media challenges, what our children are texting, direct messaging (also known as dm’ing), and what they are searching online. Setting boundaries and limits not only helps our children at this point in time but also teaches them skills to use throughout life. Creating healthy boundaries and limits applies to all areas of our lives, including work, home, social settings, and family, and is needed to ensure safety and security.

