

# KEEPING KIDS SAFE ONLINE

The internet can be a fantastic educational tool and a great place to hang out, but without proper parental control software and careful adult supervision, it can be a dangerous place – particularly for children.

As we become more connected, the more privacy we need online. This means trying to ensure that our children are not exposed to inappropriate content, ideas or behavior that exist online. That is why teaching kids online safety is so important for the youth in a large, open cyber-world.

Here are a few tips to help your kids stay safe while growing up in the digital age:

1. **Increase awareness:** Ensure kids know the basics of staying safe online.
2. **Protect your kids' identity:** Remind your kids to NEVER give out personal information, such as their name, age, school name, home address, or telephone number to anyone they do not know. This includes email; social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook; direct messaging or chatting through an online gaming service such as Nintendo online, Xbox Live & PlayStation.
3. **Monitor online activity:** Monitoring the online activity can help keep them safe which includes what applications the kids use on their mobile devices.
4. **Prevent cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is still bullying, just using electronic technology. It can happen anytime and anywhere. Teach your children to think through what they are posting online before they submit it. Talking about other people can have consequences if those posts are unkind, mean, or taken out of context (even if you use LOL).
5. **Speak up:** Teach your kids to immediately tell a parent/guardian they trust if something inappropriate or offensive happens.

Technology changes all the time, and kids are constantly finding the newest websites, apps, and gadgets. It is up to you to teach them the basic rules of internet safety, so they can use all of these devices responsibly.

### What you can do immediately:

1. Place computers in a common area of the house.
2. Spend time online with your kids (hangout with them, just like watching tv as a family).
3. Set rules about what your child can and can't do when on the internet.
4. Set time limits on their computer use (unless it's for homework then don't include that).
5. Discuss the dangers of the web with your child.

Physically, we realize it is unrealistic to think that, as parents, we can constantly look over their shoulder while they use the internet. For that, here are a list of apps that would allow you to virtually look over their shoulder even when you're not around. However, keep in mind, software cannot do everything of course, and there is no substitute for properly supervising your child's online activities. Parental control software is useful and can help make parents lives much easier, particularly once your kids are a little older, more curious, and independent.

Below are our top picks of parental control tools for Windows, MacOS, and mobile devices.

1. **Norton Family Premier** – Norton Family Premier offers an impressive range of parental control and monitoring features for parents of today's open cyber world.
2. **Qustodio** - With Qustodio, you'll have more information to help protect your kids against the growing number of serious online issues such as viewing inappropriate content, cyberbullying, cyber predators and screen addiction.
3. **McAfee Safe Family** – McAfee Safe Family is a comprehensive parental control tool that protects kids from exposure to harmful digital content, locates kids' position on a map, and limits kids' screen time.
4. **Net Nanny Internet Monitoring** - With Net Nanny, you can keep kids safe from viewing adult content while allowing them to browse the internet safely.
5. **Circle Parental Control** - Their Internet. Your rules. Manage your family's online time. The Circle App is the easiest and most comprehensive parental control app for your family's Internet-connected devices. The Circle App helps parents manage their family's online screen time and content.

Do you need additional peace of mind while they enjoy their favorite video game systems?

Here is our preference of the top-rated parental control device(s) you can install.

1. **Circle Home Plus** - is the most comprehensive and simple solution to manage all online screen time and content at-home or away. The Circle App works with any iOS or Android phone to manage all the connected devices within your family. – including laptops; tablets, smart TVs and video game consoles – and your mobile devices from anywhere, on any network. It is a small device that connects directly to your modem/router.
  - **COVERS EVERY DEVICE** - Manage online content and screen time on mobile phones, computers, tablets, gaming consoles, smart TVs, and more.
  - **SIMPLE SOLUTION** - Circle Home Plus connects to your router to manage devices at home, while the Circle App covers mobile devices across all networks.
  - **CUSTOMIZE PROFILES** - Adjust individual family member's settings for appropriate online access.
  
2. **Router Limits Mini** – Manage your family's internet and control web access for all of your connected devices individually, from anywhere, using your PC, Android, or iOS device. Customize filters and schedules for computers, tablets, gaming consoles, phones, smart TVs — everything on your network. No software to install —Cloud Management System ensures you're always up to date.
  - Filter by categories like Sports, Social Media, Games, etc.
  - Filter by popular sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Netflix, Hulu, and others.
  - Track browsing history for each connected device, so you can keep tabs on internet use.
  - Limit screen time with custom schedules for each device. Control what and when content can be accessed, or turn off access altogether.
  - Customize settings by device so everyone has their own customized limits, or group them together as needed.
  - Protect WIFI & mobile data with *Router Limits Plus* mobile companion app, whether a device is on 4G, public WIFI, or at a friend's house.

Conclusion: After trying all the applications and tools mentioned above, it was clear that the best tool for online safety is being involved in your child's digital life by spending time with them while they explore the vast cyber world.

Remember, if you believe a child is in danger, immediately report it. Leave the computer or device untouched. Immediately report the crime to your local police department 417-847-4911.