Cyber-bullying, Social Media & Internet Safety

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|  **What is Cyber-Bullying** Cyberbullying is the use of technology, including internet access and cell phones, to harass, hurt, embarrass, humiliate, or intimidate another person. Cyberbullying can take place in many ways. For example, some young people use social media, video games, texting, or anonymous apps to bully another child, post embarrassing pictures, share private information, or send threatening messages. (<https://www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-23.pdf>)  |
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| **CELL PHONE USE**Cell phones have changed the way we communicate. Help children and teens be safer and smarter while using their phones.* Establish rules for when they are allowed to use their cellphones, what websites they can visit and what apps they can download.
* Understand an app’s purpose before your child downloads it. Who are the users? What type of privacy settings are available?
* Remind your children that anything they send from their phones can be easily forwarded and shared.
* Talk to your child about the possible consequences of sending sexually explicit or provocative images or text messages.
* When shopping for a cellphone for your child, research the **security settings** that are available.
 | **How to Protect Your Children** * Remind your children that they never really know who is on the other end of cyber communication.

It could be the person they think it is, but because they cannot see that person, they should always proceed with caution in their exchanges.* Advise them to never share their email or social media account password with anyone, even their best friend.
* Decide whether or not you, the parent, will have access to your children’s passwords for email accounts, social media, or other technology.
* Help them determine what is and is not appropriate to share online.
* Ensure that they keep social media accounts private and do not “friend” people they do not know.
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## **When should I have a cyber-bullying conversation with my child**

The reality is that children begin to access technology at earlier ages than previously before. Children that are five years old today know how to navigate and use a tablet. There is not hard rule of thumb for when to have a conversation with your child. However, a guiding piece of advice is to remember that if you child is using technology to interact with others through sharing and uploading videos, playing video games, taking pictures or even actual social media sites, that is a good point to have a discussion regarding internet safety.

**WHAT IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED**

The most important thing to do if your child is being bullied is to talk with your child, listen to them as having your child feel heard is very important. If the bullying involves classmates from school, work with the school to find solutions.

**WHAT IF MY CHILD WITNESSES ANOTHER CHILD BEING BULLIED**

Advise your child not to participate, but to report the bullying to you and/ or a trusted adult if the bullying involves classmates.

**WHEN YOUR CHILD IS CYBER-BULLYING OTHERS**

As hard as it may be to admit, some parents must face the possibility that their child may be cyberbullying others. Some common signs to look for if you are concerned that your child might be bullying others include:

* Your child has been involved in bullying incidents at school or has been the target of bullying.
* Your child switches windows, closes programs, or hides his or her cell phone when you enter the room.
* Your child uses multiple online accounts or another person’s account.
* Your child gets excessively upset when he or she is denied access to the computer or cell phone.

To begin intervening in questionable activity and protecting your child from repercussions of cyber bullying others, you can:

* Increase your supervision of your child’s computer, gaming, and cell phone activity.
* Spend more time with your child and learn about your child’s friends, activities, and interactions at school.
* Develop clear rules and enforce them consistently. Praise family members when they adhere to rules and follow through with nonviolent, consistent consequences when the rules are broken.
* Immediately intervene if you see signs of aggression online. Explain to your child that cyberbullying and online aggression can potentially have long-lasting consequences at the school district, state, federal, and civil levels, including getting sent home from school, expelled from school, charged with a crime, arrested by a policeman, or even sued by another family.
* If necessary, talk with a school counselor or mental health professional. Ultimately, a parent’s greatest tool is communication – whether your concern is to prevent, protect, or eliminate cyberbullying in your household. Stay aware and informed, and most of all, communicate with your child – you both have much to gain.(<https://support.learning.com/parent-resources/cyberbullying-prevention-guide-parents-english/>)

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| **Common Apps & Websites**[**Houseparty - Group Video Chat**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/houseparty-group-video-chat) is a way for groups of teens to connect via live video. Two to eight people can be in a chat together at the same time[**Instagram**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/Instagram) lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or within a private network of followers. **Kids can send private messages.**  [**Kik Messenger**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/kik-messenger) is an app that lets kids text for free. It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if you only use the basic features. Because it's an app, the texts won't show up on your kid's phone's messaging service, and you're not charged for them (beyond standard data rates).[**Snapchat**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/Snapchat) is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear. **What parents need to know: It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.**Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. **There's a lot of iffy, clicky content.** Snapchat's Discover feature offers a grab-bag of articles, videos, and quizzes from magazine publishers, TV networks, and online sources mostly about pop culture, celebrities, and relationships (a typical headline: "THIS is What Sex Does To Your Brain").[**Tik Tok - Real Short Videos**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/musically-your-video-social-network) is a performance- and video-sharing social network that mostly features teens lip-synching to famous songs but also includes some original songwriting and singing. Users can build up a following among friends or share posts publicly.[**Twitter**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/twitter) is a microblogging tool that allows users to post brief, 140-character messages -- called "tweets" -- and follow other users' activities. It's not only for adults; teens like using it to share tidbits and keep up with news and celebrities.[**Live.me – Live Video Streaming**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/liveme-live-video-streaming-app-broadcast-chat-share-follow-and-be-a-star) allows kids to watch others and broadcast themselves live, earn currency from fans, and interact live with users without any control over who views their streams.[**WhatsApp**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/whatsapp-messenger) lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.[**Whisper**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/whisper-share-express-meet) is a social "confessional" app that allows users to post whatever's on their minds, paired with an image. With all the emotions running through teens, anonymous outlets give them the freedom to share their feelings without fear of judgment.[**YouNow: Broadcast, Chat, and Watch Live Video**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/younow-broadcast-chat-and-watch-live-video) is an app that lets kids stream and watch live broadcasts. As they watch, they can comment or buy gold bars to give to other users. Ultimately, the goal is to get lots of viewers, start trending, and grow your fan base.[**Youtube:**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/twitter) YouTube allows you to watch, create and comment on videos. You can create your own YouTube account, create a music playlist, and even create your own channel, which means you will have a public profile. YouTube allows live streaming. |
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