



Digital Awareness for Parents

The digital world is constantly evolving with new social media platforms, apps, and devices, and children and teens are often the first to use them. Some negative things that may occur include [cyberbullying](#), sexting, posting hateful messages or content, and participating in negative group conversations. If your child posts [harmful or negative content](#) online, it may not only harm other children; it can affect their online reputation, which can have negative implications for their employment or college admission.

While you may not be able to monitor all of your child's activities, there are things you can do to [prevent cyberbullying](#) and protect your child from harmful digital behavior:

- Monitor a teen's [social media sites](#), apps, and browsing history, if you have concerns that cyberbullying may be occurring.
- Review or re-set your child's phone location and privacy settings.
- Follow or friend your teen on social media sites or have another trusted adult do so.
- Stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media platforms, and digital slang used by children and teens.
- Know your child's user names and passwords for email and social media.
- [Establish rules](#) about appropriate digital behavior, content, and apps.

Digital Monitoring Apps and Software for Parents

Parents who want to protect their children from cyberbullying, harmful digital behavior, and exposure to adult content can use parental control and monitoring software to help them set up systems that are less invasive to their children.

There are free software options and apps available to help parents restrict content, block domains, or view their children's online activities, including social media, without looking at their child's device every day. Most of the free software options provide some features for free, but charge for more robust insight.

A parent should consider a child's age, device use, and digital behavior when selecting software: what is suitable to restrict for a ten-year old may not be useful for a teenager.

Some current popular social media venues and apps include:

- **Askfm:** A social networking site that allows users to ask other people questions, often anonymously.
- **Calculator%:** A “vault” or secret app that appears harmless, but hides photos, videos, files, and browser history.
- **Chatroulette:** There are over 20 different chat roulette sites that allow users to instantly connect via webcam and video chat. Sites typically pair the users randomly and instantly.
- **Discord:** A voice-over-IP (VOIP) app that allows users to video chat with others, private message, and join, create, or participate in public and private chat rooms. This app is often used by players to chat with each other while playing videogames.
- **Facebook and Facebook Live:** The most commonly used social media site that is accessible on many different media platforms.
- **Instagram:** A photo and video sharing and networking site that connects users through other social networking sites (e.g., Facebook).
- **Kik:** Messaging app that allows users of all ages to contact others anonymously.
- **Line:** A messaging app that allows users to make free phone calls, leave voice messages, and text. Users can delete texts or chats from recipient’s phone using a timer.
- **LiveMe:** A tool to broadcast live-streaming videos and watch other users’ videos.
- **MeetMe:** A dating app that connects users to others based on geographic proximity.
- **Omegle:** An app that pairs users with strangers in anonymous one-on-one chat sessions.
- **Reddit:** A site that stores social news, rates and evaluates web content, and discussion threads.
- **Sarahah:** An anonymous messaging app that allows users to send anonymous messages to people they may know.
- **Snapchat:** A photo messaging app that allows for sharing pictures and short videos that are intended to be erased shortly after delivery.
- **Telegram:** Messaging app that allows users to share photos, videos, and files; make calls, and delete texts or chats from recipient’s phone using a timer.
- **TikTok:** An app that allows users to create and share their own videos where they lip-synch, sing, dance, or just talk.
- **Tumblr:** A social networking site that allows posting of short blogs and media.
- **Twitter:** A microblogging site that allows users to send, read, and reply to “tweets” or short messages.
- **Vine:** An app that allows the posting of short 6-second looping videos.
- **WeChat:** An app that allows user to chat with friends, and to search for people nearby and around the globe.
- **WhatsApp:** A private messaging app that allows users to text, send photos, videos, and location information to their contacts.
- **Whisper:** An anonymous social media site that allows users to post and share photo and video messages.
- **YouTube:** A video sharing platform that allows users to post and share videos.
- **YUBO (formerly YELLOW):** An app referred to as the “Tinder for teens” that allows users to swipe right or left to accept or reject the profiles of other users.

Warning Signs a Child is Being Cyberbullied or is Cyberbullying Others

Many of the warning signs that cyberbullying is occurring happen around a child's use of their device. Some of the warning signs that a child may be involved in cyberbullying are:

- Noticeable increases or decreases in device use, including texting.
- A child exhibits emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device.
- A child hides their screen or device when others are near, and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device.
- Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear.
- A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past.
- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed, or loses interest in people and activities