

ChildrenOnline

Devoted to the safety of children and teens online

Phone: 413-214-1225

A Division of Web Safe Consulting

Quick Links

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[Resources for Parents](#)
[Children Online Website](#)

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Resources to help parents set boundaries:

1. [Parents, Teens & Boundaries by Dr. Jane Bluestein](#)
2. [Boudaries with Teens by Dr. John Townsend](#)
3. [Set Ground Rules for Children from GetSafe.org](#)
4. [The Importance of Setting Boundaries from FamilyMatters.tv](#)
5. [Setting Limits and Negotiating Boundaries on Your Teen's Internet Use By Lisa K. Schkloven](#)
6. [Setting Limits from University of Delaware's Families](#)

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There are many cultural guideposts to follow for parents trying to raise healthy children safely. Guideposts such as movie ratings, driving rules to protect teens, and numerous books on raising toddlers and young children assist parents who seek help in raising children. However, when it comes to dealing with



technology use, parents are left with little or no guidance. In fact, kids' gaming sites and social networking sites often work against parents in creating age-related rules.

Our hope is to begin to create some simple and clear guideposts to help parents steer their children safely through their technology use. This newsletter is dedicated to that pursuit.

As always, we welcome your comments. Our telephone number for Children Online is 413-214-1225. We encourage you to visit our new web site which contains many new resources for parents and educators.

Best wishes,
 Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at marjem@childrenonline.org or dougf@childrenonline.org for information about our programs or consulting services.

Setting Boundaries for Technology Use

Matter!

7. [Links at ChildrenOnline.org for filtering and time-limiting software](#)

8. [ChildrenOnline.org's Suggested Rules for Children and the Internet \(Nov., 2007\)](#)

9. [Kids Rules for Online Safety \(Pre-Teens\)](#)

Cell Phone Boundaries:

1. [Setting Limits with AT&T phones](#)

2. [Set Limits on Cell Phones for PreTeens](#)

3. [Verizon Cell Phone Usage Controls](#)

4. [Kajeet - Cell Phone Service sets limits for kids](#)

5. [Guide to Cell Phone Parental Controls](#)

"Stop hitting your brother"

"No, you may not have another cookie"

"Stay away from the ledge"

"You need to call me once you get to your friend's house"

"You may only watch PG movies"

" No, you may not take the car tonight, you father will drive you."

Being a parent means setting boundaries and limits.

Everyday we set rules and limits for our children. And it seems just as often that children are pushing against those boundaries. Some of the limits we set seem natural to us. Helping kids negotiate sharing toys, being kind, going to bed on time, eating dessert, playing outside, going to the mall, and learning to drive can be instinctual. We watched our own parents guide us and we have experienced each of those things.

But for the most part, many of us did not grow up texting, Instant messaging, socializing online or being connected to an electronic device as often as possible. We don't have memories, experiences or instincts to fall back on. And so we are forced to invent ways to parent our kids online. We have to blindly deal with cyber bullying, Facebook, texting, live multi-player gaming, instant messaging and the ever-changing world of technology.

However, we don't need to be alone. We now know a great deal more about technology and, more importantly, we know children. If we follow the age-old practice of creating developmental rules for children and teens, it is not hard to create rules for technology.

When your five-year-old asks you to watch a PG13 movie, most of us instantly say "No"; understanding that there will likely be content beyond the developmental level and understanding of our child. Child Development tells us that five-year-olds need social interactions, they need to learn how to feel part of a community, they need to play, they need to run, they need to be loved. Just as the PG13 movie is beyond their intellectual and emotional development, so are chatting online or playing online games such as Webkinz or Club Penguin. Small children will likely face material that is inappropriate for them online. Small children will be deprived

Recommendations for Technology Use:

1. **Young children (to age 9) should have limited access to the Internet and not be allowed to chat or use**

Instant messaging.

2. Parental Control software should be installed on computers to help parents provide a safer environment for their children.

3. Chatting or the use of Instant Messaging should be discouraged until age 12 or 6th grade.

4. Texting should be discouraged until age 15 or 10th grade

5. Social Networking Sites should be discouraged until age 16 or 10th grade.

6. Parents should have any-time access to all their children's online accounts until about 11th grade

7. Computers should be placed in a public location for all children and 24 hour access to the Internet should be discouraged.

8. Parents should set clear time limits and curfews for using the Internet and cell phones.

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and

of important social skills by spending time online such as verbal cues and immediate consequences for behavior.

When the ten-year-old asks to go to the mall with a group of friends without an adult, most of us would say "No", understanding that a group of ten-year-olds alone in an unfamiliar setting will likely face some peer pressure, possible bullying and tempting situations that are beyond their intellectual and emotional ability to grasp. It is similar for chat rooms, instant messaging and texting. Most ten-year-olds are not yet ready to face the challenges associated with chatting online, the tempting use of texting to tease or bully, the inappropriate language that can be used in instant messaging, or the difficulties that arise from anonymous online communications.

The thirteen-year-old begging to attend the high school party is usually met with a "no" from anxious parents. Thirteen-year-olds are not ready to make healthy decisions for themselves in the face of tempting adult situations involving alcohol, sex, or trying drugs. The same is true of social networking sites. Sites such as Facebook and My Space are filled with bullying, meanness, and conversations about sexual situations, drug and alcohol use. Our young teens are not yet ready to make healthy split-second decisions demanded by the social networking interaction with older teens.

While it may be logical to make developmental connections to online behavior, the developers and owners of online tools and environments actually work against child development. For example, sites such as Webkinz aim their advertising at young children and sell cute, soft stuffed animals in malls all over the country. These manufacturers tempt young children to buy the toys and then use the accompanying codes online to get a prize. Cell phones, tools such as instant messaging, and online gaming sites are often developed with kids in mind, using vibrant colors, cartoon-like advertisements and characters. Social Networking Sites and YouTube recommend users should wait until age 13, although many kids lie about their age to gain access earlier. Given the risks involved, we feel waiting until 16 is a better age for our children to be using social networking sites.

comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

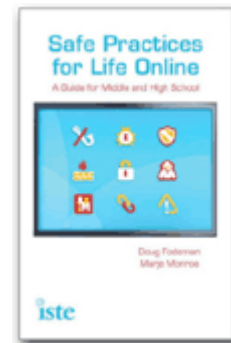
It is easy to see the risks associated with driving, drinking, sexuality and unsupervised parties. It is much harder to see into the murky world of the Internet. Children and teens are growing up faster via the Internet than is healthy or developmentally appropriate for them. The beguiling safety of a screen in a home can tempt children and teens to behave and take risks in ways they would never consider in their physical world. While there may be some cultural understanding of raising kids, we are in the dark when understanding life online. But we must turn on the light and realize that we know our children. We understand values and ethics. We can look to child development as a guide.

Parenting at the best of times is challenging. We need all the help we can get in today's fast-paced, and often isolated, world. It is increasingly harder to raise our children to be considerate, compassionate adults with values and a good moral compass. But we must. Our kids are too important.

INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM

Safe Practices for Life Online

Children Online has a curriculum on Internet Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.



There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know" sections of interesting facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page](http://publications.page) at ChildrenOnline.org or go directly to our publisher's pages:

[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)

[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

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