

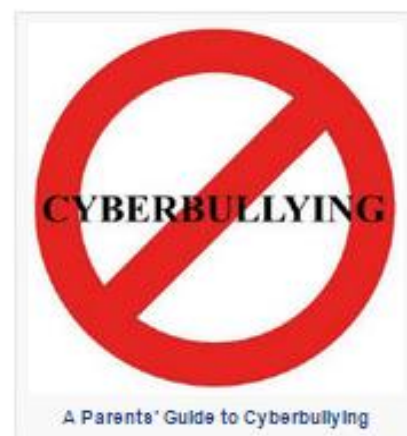
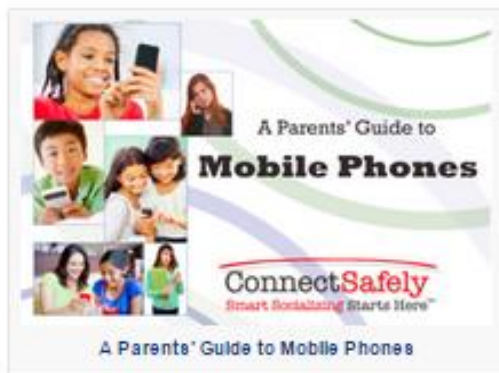
CONNECTSAFELY.ORG – some great guides to different topics

Check it out at <http://www.connectsafely.org/guides-2/>



Parents' Guides From ConnectSafely

By parents, for parents: A growing cohort of short, clearly written guidebooks that demystify apps, services and platforms popular with kids and teens. In PDF format. Feel free to download, print and share (if you share in bulk, please let us know via admin@connectsafely.org). Educators/community groups, find out how to get 150 printed copies free of charge.





Top 5 Questions Parents Have About Instagram

1. *Why do kids love Instagram?*

Because they love media, sharing it and socializing with it on their phones, and Instagram makes all that doable in a simple, eye-catching way. Teens like taking, cropping, enhancing, sharing and commenting on photos and videos. But the commenting isn't just commenting – in effect, they're socializing in mixed-media conversations that include plenty of likes and links too.

2. *Does Instagram have a minimum age?*

Yes, it's 13, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. But Instagram doesn't ask users to specify their age, and there are many younger children who use the service, often with their parents' permission. Whether Instagram is "safe" depends more on how it's used than on the age of the user, but Instagram will delete underage accounts if they're notified and can verify the users are under 13.

3. *What are the risks in using Instagram?*

Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Instagram, the main things parents worry about are typical of all social media: mean behavior among peers and inappropriate photos or videos that can hurt a child's reputation or attract the wrong kind of attention. Parents are also concerned that people their kids don't know can reach out to them directly. Kids can learn to manage these risks, which is why we wrote this guide.

4. *What's the best way to help kids stay safe on Instagram?*

As with all social media, being respectful of ourselves and others makes us safer. Our posts and comments reflect on us and others in our photos and videos. Whether serious or silly, they become part of our public image. Respecting others in how media is shared, tagged and commented on reduces risk. While most kids are smart about this, it doesn't hurt for parents to be sure kids aren't posting provocative images or having inappropriate interactions with people they don't know, which leads to the next question...

5. *Should my child's profile be private?*

For many kids, part of the fun of Instagram is developing a big following – a good thing for parents and kids to talk about. Having a public account on Instagram means anyone can follow you. A private account means that you have to approve anyone who wants to follow you, so many parents have their kids start using Instagram with a private account. But there's no guarantee your child won't be seen on Instagram or any other photo-sharing service, because people post photos of each other. *Even not having an Instagram account can't ensure a child won't appear in a photo there.* How positive or negative a young person's experience is on Instagram or anywhere online depends as much on the person and his or her friends as on the app.



Top 5 Questions Parents Have About Snapchat

1. *Why do kids love Snapchat?*

They love the spontaneity of it. It's been (rightfully) drummed into their heads for years that photos and videos you share are on the Web forever and are really hard to take back, so Snapchat's a relief in a lot of ways. It's playful and "in the moment" – a nice change from the self-presentation and reputation issues in social media services that display photos and videos indefinitely. They don't have to worry about some invisible audience.

2. *Does Snapchat have a minimum age?*

Yes, the minimum age is 13, in compliance with the U.S. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). But, when you download it, Snapchat asks for your date of birth, and – if your birthday indicates you're under 13 – you're redirected to the kid version, called "Snapkidz." Snapkidz users can't add friends or share anything, and the app doesn't send any information to the company. Instead, kids' photos and videos are saved just to their devices' "camera roll." But some kids know that means you can take a "Snap" and draw on it in Snapkidz, then share it with friends using *another* messaging tool, like a texting app, email, Facebook, etc. – or you can just delete Snapkidz and start over with a fictional birth date.

3. *What are the risks in using Snapchat?*

Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Snapchat, early news coverage fairly predictably associated disappearing photos sent on phones with "sexting." Many assume Snapchat's **biggest draw** is the temporary nature of its messages, which encourages people to share racy images without worrying about the repercussions. But most people – including most teens -- don't use Snapchat that way. They use it because it's fun.

4. *What's the appeal of having your messages disappear in seconds?*

Because photos and videos go away and aren't on display anywhere, there isn't the reputation anxiety or image-curation fatigue people feel in other services. The ephemeral aspect also adds a degree of safety, as long as people don't have a false sense of security about it. Images can be saved as screenshots or captured with another phone and shared without the originator's knowledge. If your Snap gets captured by someone you send it to, Snapchat notifies you, but people have found workarounds for that too. So, as always with digital media, 100% safe sharing doesn't exist.

5. *What's the best way to help kids stay safe on Snapchat?*

As with all social media, respect toward self and others makes us safer. Whether the experience is positive or negative depends so much on how people use the app or service, whether or not they're really friends, and how they treat each other on Snapchat. Friends may kid around, but most kids treat their friends well. It just never hurts to have a conversation (never a lecture) with them about how they use Snapchat just to be sure.

Parents' Top 5 Questions About Mobile Phones

From Connectsafely.org

1. What's the best age to get a child his or her first cellphone? The short answer is, “it depends.” Only you can know if your child is mature enough to follow family rules, take care of the phone and not lose it. Another major factor is whether the child understands how to use the phone in a way that considers the feelings and rights of others. The average age of kids getting their first mobile phones keeps going down. It was 16 a decade ago; in 2009 it was about 12, according to the latest available data from Pew Research Center. More recent (2013) Pew Research found that 68% of 12-13 year-olds own a cellphone and 23% a smartphone, while 83% of older teens (14-17) have cellphones and 44% have smartphones.

2. How can I limit or monitor what my kids do with their cellphones? In addition to family rules and lots of communication, there are parental-control tools you can use to block access to websites and apps; monitor what kids are doing (including texting) and control who can call them. You can check with your cellphone company and search for third-party parental-control tools in app stores to find what’s available. If you do use a parental-control tool, we recommend you tell your child why you’re using it. Also seriously consider how much information is too much. Some monitoring apps record a user's every keystroke—even in text messages. Think about whether you really need to know the content of every text.

3. How can I make sure my child's privacy is protected? There are two types of privacy protection—the kind that can be set or installed on a phone and the kind that develops in a child's head. Privacy settings in apps and on phones can provide control over use of your child's data, and parental controls can give you more control or oversight over his or her phone activities. Locking a phone reduces the risk of it being used by someone to impersonate the phone's owner or bully others. The second kind—learning how to protect your and your friends' privacy—is just as important because the information users post and share with their smartphones has just as much impact on privacy as settings and other tech safeguards. Helping our kids share information carefully, showing respect for themselves and others, spells real protection of both privacy and well-being. It helps to be up front with your kids about the measures you take and learn together what rules and tools best keep their mobile phone use positive and constructive.

4. How can I make sure my child only uses apps that are safe and appropriate? The best way to ensure that your kids are using safe and appropriate apps is to talk with them about each app they use or want to use and do a little research to make sure it’s appropriate. You can look at reviews in the mobile app stores, search the Web for information about an app or talk with friends who have used it. You could also have a rule that no app gets downloaded without a parent's permission or use parental controls to put app-downloading behind a password so that your child can only download one with your help. But even some appropriate apps can be misused, so kids still need to make sure that what they share doesn’t jeopardize their privacy and security.

5. How do I control the cost of my child's cellphone service and apps? First, review your cellphone plan to make sure it’s appropriate for your child’s use. Factors to consider are limited or unlimited texting, the number of voice minutes and how much data can be used each month. Consider calling Customer Service at your service provider to make sure you have the right plan for your family. Also talk with your kids about Wi-Fi, which enables them to use their mobile devices to watch video or download apps or content without incurring the cost of cellular data use. People can also run up costs buying and using apps, so consider having a family policy that addresses spending money for or within apps or setting a password (your kids don’t know) that keeps them from buying apps or spending money via “in-app purchases” that can sometimes really add up. Setting limits on your child's use can help keep costs under control.