



Encourage Digital Citizenship with Your Child

A Practical Guide for Parents

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INTRODUCTION

Digital citizenship skills are essential for children to communicate, collaborate, think critically, and learn effectively with technology. These skills will also ensure they have a healthy relationship with technology as adults, both in their personal lives and in their future careers.

While media and technology hold great promise for learning, children need support and education to make appropriate judgments as they navigate the digital world. And with children spending more and more time online and using technology, the support they need can only come from their parents and their teachers. For instance, children under eight years old spend almost two and a half hours in front of a screen per day. That number almost doubles for tweens and jumps significantly to over seven hours a day for teens.

Average amount of daily screen usage for teens and tweens
(not including for school or homework)

 **4 hours, 44 minutes**
Tweens

 **7 hours, 22 minutes**
Teens

By socioeconomic status

Tweens in higher-income homes:
3 hours, 59 minutes

Tweens in lower-income homes:
5 hours, 49 minutes

Young people in lower-income homes use nearly two more hours of screen media per day than their peers in higher income homes.

Note: "lower-income" is <\$35,000;
"higher-income" is \$100,000+ per year



Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the internet, and technology to engage with society on *any* level.

In this guide, we'll address what topics parents need to discuss with children in order to instill good digital citizenship habits. We'll cover:

- Empathy
- How the internet works
- Understanding user data
- Practicing digital literacy
- Acknowledging the digital divide
- Practicing digital wellness
- Securing digital devices

With each of these topics, we've included *why* it's important and *how* parents can help reinforce these habits at home. Although the information and advice in this guide are for ideal situations, we understand that families, and their children, have unique and specific needs. Therefore, we have included advice and tips for both ideal and practical situations.

But first, let's define what this whole guide is about: **digital citizenship.**

WHAT IS DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP?


Digital citizenship refers to **the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the internet, and technology to engage with society on *any* level.** This is why digital citizenship is such a crucial topic to teach children from a young age. Digital citizenship touches nearly everything in today's world.

Good digital citizens have a foundational understanding of how to use technology empathetically, safely, effectively, and responsibly. Bad digital citizenship entails cyberbullying, irresponsible social media use, and a general lack of knowledge about how to safely use the internet.

As schools integrate more technology into daily instruction, creating a culture of digital citizenship among students, faculty, and parents is essential. Fortunately, many of the requirements to be a good digital citizen can be taught in the classroom and at home.

“My goal is to educate parents on the risks, so they can be mentors to their kids. Secondly, to educate students, they need to understand red flags, if they’re victimized, and empower them to come forward and get the help and support they need.”

Rich Wistocki, Detective and Child Cybercrimes Expert, BeSure Consulting

 Listen as Rich Wistocki discusses easy, actionable solutions for districts to implement to keep their students safe online: [10 Major Threats to Student Online Safety, and How You Can Avoid Them](#)

WHY SHOULD PARENTS CARE ABOUT DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP?

How can parents teach their children to use technology responsibly when it feels as though technology changes every day? The internet has become so integrated into everyday activities—checking a bank account, purchasing a product, keeping in touch with friends—and while there are positives to the increased access to technology at school and home, there are also negative consequences. The increase of device use has been quickly followed by an increase in cyberbullying and inappropriate content being sent and received by children online.

According to DoSomething.org:

- 1. About 37% of young people** between the ages of 12 and 17 **have been bullied online.** 30% have had it happen **more than once.**
- 2. 95% of teens** in the U.S. are **online** and most of them **access the internet on their mobile devices,** making cell phones the **most common medium for cyberbullying.**
- 3. 23% of students** reported that they’ve **said or done something mean or cruel to another person online.** 27% reported that they’ve **experienced the same from someone else.**
- 4. Nearly 40% of all teenagers** have posted or **sent sexually suggestive messages,** but this practice is **more common among boys** than girls.
- 5. 15% of teens** who have sent or **posted inappropriate images of themselves** send these messages **to people they have never met in person** but know from the internet.
- 6. 61% of all sexters** who have **sent nude images** admit that they were pressured to do it **at least once.**
- 7. 17% of sexters** share the **messages they receive with others,** and 55% of those who share them do so **with more than one person.**



With stats like these in mind, it’s crucial to teach your child to practice good digital citizenship so they don’t engage in risky online behaviors that may lead to embarrassment, identity theft, or worse. When your child practices good digital citizenship, you’ll have the confidence of knowing they can safely navigate and enjoy technology, and ultimately have a healthy relationship with it as an adult.



As a parent, it is your right to request information about your child's education and inquire about the curriculum that your school district uses.

HOW ARE EDUCATORS TALKING ABOUT DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM?

School districts have spent hours upon hours sourcing and vetting digital citizenship curricula that include topics like empathy, how the internet works, and understanding user data. High-quality digital citizenship lessons tackle real challenges and digital dilemmas and give students the skills to succeed as digital learners, leaders, and citizens.

As a parent, it is your right to request information about your child's education and inquire about the curriculum that your school district uses. The topics below are ones many schools cover when teaching students about digital citizenship and knowing about them will help you be on the same page with your district. While it would be impossible to prepare for every eventuality your child might encounter while using the internet and fast-changing technology, **the following sections cover the foundations of good digital citizenship and are a good starting point as you teach healthy internet and technology habits and practices to your child.**

1. Empathy

When children are taught about digital citizenship, they also need to be taught empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Empathy is critical to understanding how people talk and behave online.

Internet use relies largely on written communication. It's not always possible to hear someone's tone of voice, see their facial expressions, or understand other non-verbal cues that are present when speaking face-to-face. As a result, it's easy for people on the internet to make quick, harsh judgments rather than pausing to put themselves in the other person's shoes. Children, tweens, and teens may lash out online with verbal or text-based comments intended to hurt someone's feelings and not respond as they would over the phone or in a face-to-face conversation.

Let your child know they should act with compassion online and offline. Tell your child that even though they may be online or using an app, they should still **treat others with respect, just as they would if the interaction were happening in person.**

 **COPPA**
Children's Online
Privacy Protection Act

In accordance with the U.S. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), all social media platforms require users to be 13 or older.

But how do you teach empathy? How do you teach something that many still consider to be an innate part of someone's psyche and attitude? Teaching empathy is a challenge, but Applied Educational Systems (AES) has developed a [module of lessons, activities, and assessments](#) about customer service and empathy that makes teaching empathy to any age group easier.

Approaching social media

While there are valid concerns about social media, it can also be a positive force for connection and social networking for children who are 13 or older. In fact, in accordance with the U.S. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), all platforms require users to be 13 or older.

However, in many cases, kids can lie about their age to gain access to the platforms that their friends or older siblings already have. Children can quickly and easily make a social media account with a personal email by simply clicking a box stating that they are at least 13 years old.

With that in mind, have early and open conversations with your child about social media, going over its benefits and its risks. It's also important for parents to **remember that the social media guidelines you set with your child can and should change over time and may vary by child.** What works for your youngest child might not for your oldest. Revisit the conversation with your children about social media as often as feels appropriate.

If your child does use social media, remind them that social media shows an ideal state, not reality. Smiling pictures and exciting posts can give a false impression that all their friends and the people they follow are happy all the time and have no problems. Remind your child that social media presents a snapshot into someone's life that can be easily manipulated. Let children know photos can be edited and that the right filter, pose, and lighting can make something look more glamorous than it is or give the impression that someone has a perfect body. Make sure your child knows they shouldn't compare themselves to what they see online. Approaching social media as a form of entertainment—not the norm or a standard they need to live up to—can help your child have a healthy mindset when it comes to social media.



Discuss how to recognize negative online behavior ... Whether your child is being bullied or bullying others, it needs to be taken seriously and addressed immediately.

Put a stop to cyberbullying

Teaching children and young adults to engage respectfully online is the first step to prevent cyberbullying. That means it is *equally* important to be aware of what your child is saying to others online.

As noted in the empathy section above, discuss with your child that just because something is happening online doesn't mean you should behave differently than you would in person. Depending on your child's age, you might talk to them about cyberbullying and inappropriate messaging. Discuss how to recognize negative online behavior, what to do if they see it or are the target of it, and encourage your child to report any sign of cyberbullying to a parent or a teacher. Whether your child is being bullied or bullying others, it needs to be taken seriously and addressed immediately.

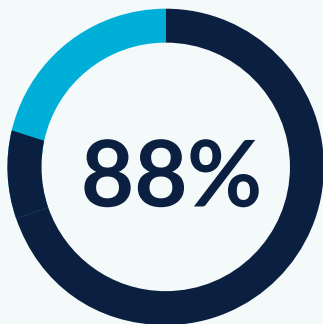
Bullying can have a serious and negative impact on a child's mental health. They may even drop out of school or consider harming themselves or others. Before bullying has become a problem, walk through the steps your child should take if they are being bullied—especially if it's impacting their mental health. If your child tells you they're being bullied, reassure them that they are supported and cared for, save any evidence of bullying, and report the bullying to the school or to the other child's parents where next steps will be determined.

Other tips for dealing with online bullying include:

- ✓ Block the person doing the online bullying—but save any evidence first
- ✓ Don't respond or retaliate
- ✓ Consider deleting social media accounts
- ✓ If the bullying is considered harassment, inappropriate, or dangerous, police may need to be involved

The pressure to post on social media every day, to have a lifestyle filled with wealth, and to look a certain way has caused an increase in anxiety in young people. This anxiety can be expressed in many ways—including through cyberbullying. We have known for many years that people who put others down may be feeling insecurities of their own. Although this is never an excuse for bullying, it does provide insight into why some kids bully others online. And understanding why can help you and your child address it.

The internet is a tool, not a toy, and anything posted online is permanent.



According to Pew Research Center, 88% of teen social media users believe people share too much information about themselves.

Source: Pew Research Center, Teens, Social Media and Technology 2018

2. How the internet works

The internet is a network of interconnected servers and computers that direct web browser requests through wired and wireless connections. That concept is difficult for many young children to understand. A more practical way to explain it may be: the internet is a tool that people can use for information or entertainment. It's important that young children understand that the internet is meant to be a tool, not a toy, and anything posted online is permanent. [Study.com has created lessons and resources](#) that educators and parents can use to explain the internet and digital footprints to children.

Talking about the internet and digital footprints

If your child is using the internet in *any* form, they need to understand what the internet is, and what their digital footprint is. Although the goal is not to scare or instill a sense of fear in your child, it is important for them to understand that anything posted online is permanent—even if something gets deleted, it can still be found.

An easy and tangible way to explain these concepts to children of any age is by using language and examples your child can relate to. If they like to search for fun or interesting things online, let them know their search history is saved. If your child likes to chat with other people on an app, it's crucial they understand that those chat messages are also saved online.

Since anything posted online is persistent, searchable, replicable, and scalable, the stakes of online participation are raised. According to Pew Research Center, [88% of teen social media users](#) believe people share too much information about themselves, and sharing has only become easier with device and app features designed to support seamless posting in real-time. While this online activity may seem innocent, objectively problematic posts may have future negative ramifications. One-off comments, compromising pictures (including inappropriate images or videos), or the expression of hateful views, such as racist or sexist speech, can result in school suspensions or expulsions, revoked college admission, loss of scholarships and jobs, and more.

Teach your child to be aware of anyone recording them, to ask that person questions, or to ask that person to stop.

Keep the following in mind when talking with your child about how they use the internet:

- **Set the tone for the conversation.** Begin your talk in a calm, neutral way. Taking a nonjudgmental approach when you talk about digital citizenship with your child can help create open, trusting relationships, which will help your child feel comfortable talking about their online presence.
- **Ask before you tell.** Ask your child what apps or platforms they're using. And before you make a judgment or a rule, let your child explain how the platform works, why they like it, and how they use it.
- **Stay calm.** If you learn that your child has been using a site inappropriately or is using an app you don't approve of, stay calm. It's important to gather information and let them know you appreciate them telling you.
- **Lead by example.** Talk to your child about how you use the internet in a healthy way. Let them know they can come to you with any questions or concerns. Being honest and transparent helps them trust you in serious moments.
- **Talk about permanence.** Let them know that *everything* posted online is permanent.

Bearing this in mind, digital footprints are not always in our own control. Other people can record and post moments online, tagging or naming those featured without their permission. Teach your child to be aware of anyone recording them, to ask that person questions, or to ask that person to stop.

3. Understanding user data

Just as important as understanding how the internet works is understanding how your personal information is being shared. Many of the apps, games, and websites children use are free to access and play—but might still extract a price in that your child may have to give away personal information to use them.

Any website, app, game, or service that requires a login will ask for personal information. Usually this is a username and password but will often also include your child's real name and email address. Some sites and apps will let your child create a profile—uploading a photo, adding their date of birth, and even listing their hobbies and interests.



Teach your child to avoid engaging with strangers online and **to never give out private information.**

While these may seem innocent at first glance, information like this should remain private. The reality is, hackers and scammers only need a small amount of information to get what they need.

Private information

An online predator can do a lot of harm with what seems like only a little information. This information, in the wrong person's hands, can later lead to hacked accounts or stolen identities.

Explain to your child why and how to protect data such as:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Where they live | ✓ Location of parents' work |
| ✓ Their age | ✓ Debit/credit card numbers |
| ✓ Where they go to school | ✓ Parents or siblings' full names |
| ✓ Their email | ✓ Family members' birth dates |
| ✓ Their phone number | ✓ Pets' names |

Teach your child to check the settings of the apps and social media accounts they use to make sure their profiles are secure. Be sure they understand how to change their social media account settings to "private," so only people they know can see their full profile and photos.

Realistically, you cannot hover over your child's shoulder every time they play a game online or are scrolling through their phone. But you can teach them the skills necessary to make smart choices online. Knowing what data they can share, and what data they should keep private, will help your child stay safe online and offline.

Don't let apps share location or data

It's become increasingly common for apps to allow users to share location data. You might be able to tag photos with the exact place they were taken, or have your location tracked and automatically updated. If location services are on for certain apps or social media platforms that do not fully protect the user, anyone on the internet can see the user's location.

Unless you use an app that lets you track your child's location for safety reasons, turn off location services on their phone; you can turn it on again anytime in the settings app.

If your child sees something that feels false or isn't supported by other sources they trust, encourage them to talk with an adult.

When you download a social app, it will ask if it can access information stored on your phone, such as contacts, photos, music, and calendar. Teach your child to say no or to ask your permission before they grant an app access to their user or device data. If the app won't work without the requested data, consider if you can find a similar app that doesn't ask for that information. If not, go into the app's settings and deny it from sharing user and device data and change the privacy settings to as high as they can be.

4. Practicing digital literacy

Encourage children to use critical thinking when they watch videos online and to trust their instincts. If something seems too good to be true or too crazy to be real, it probably is. It's just as important to teach your child to look for authoritative sources when learning about current events, historical figures, or other popular topics.

When searching online, look for unusual URLs or site names—including those that end with “.co”. Often these sites are trying to appear like legitimate news sites, but they are not. Review the site for signs of low quality, such as:

- Words in all caps
- Headlines with grammatical errors
- Claims with no sources
- Inappropriate images

These are clues that you should be skeptical of the source.

If your child sees something that feels false or isn't supported by other sources they trust, encourage them to talk with an adult.

Is it real or fake news?

If you get your news online or from social media, it can be difficult to decide what's real, what's fake, and what's satire. Now that anyone with access to a phone or computer can publish information online, the lines can seem blurred.

Most kids and teens get their news from their internet feeds, so they need to learn how to view stories critically. Even little kids can start to ask some key media-literacy questions. And as kids get older, parents can help them become more sophisticated critical thinkers.

Here are a few basic questions your tween or teen can ask themselves when they encounter a piece of media:

- Who made this?
- Who is the target audience?
- Who paid for this? Or, who gets paid if I click on this?
- Who might benefit or be harmed by this message?
- What information is left out of this message that might be important?
- Is this credible, and how can I know?

Although not many young children read online news, it is easy for them to land on a strange, or even dangerous, website. Teach your child to ask:

- Have I been to this website before?
- Does this website look like it's meant for adults?
- Do I understand the pictures and words on this website, or is it confusing?

Be aware of scams

Thousands of citizens fall victim to scams every day. Some send money to people pretending to be a relative in trouble or a “debt collector,” and others get their personal information stolen because they clicked on a malicious link in a phishing email.

It may seem like a reach, but there have been many cases of scammers using a child’s information to open new lines of credit, take out online bank loans, and even steal identities. Adding to this, kids are often actively targeted in online videos and games and encouraged by scammers to put their personal information online or give out their passwords.

When children understand scams, they can become more vigilant. Scams and phishing are rampant on the internet, and as they become more sophisticated, they also become increasingly difficult to identify. Help your child define the key aspects of a phishing email or online scam.

Teaching your child to be aware of scams and learning the telltale signs can save your child from potential trouble in the future.

Teach your young child to:

- Never click on links without asking an adult
- Ask permission before downloading games or apps
- Tell an adult if someone is trying to chat with them online
- Do not watch unknown videos without parent permission

Teach your tween and/or teen how to:

- Identify clickbait titles and spam email subject lines
- Look for misspelled words and unusual capitalization
- Check the sender before they open an email that looks suspicious
- Hover over links before clicking them to ensure the link is taking them to a legitimate site
- Think twice and use common sense before downloading an attachment or replying to an email
- Remove scam emails by reporting them as phishing to your email provider or moving them to the spam folder

Teaching your child to be aware of scams and learning telltale signs they should look out for to spot and avoid scams can save your child from potential trouble in their future.

5. Acknowledging the digital divide

To most people, the digital divide refers to the gap between people who have a reliable internet connection and those who do not, or the gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not. Internet access and technology are still very much a luxury for most families, even in the United States.

However, very few think of the digital divide as people who understand how to use technology versus those who do not. It's often assumed that everyone has a baseline knowledge about technology and the internet, but this is far from the truth. A major component of the digital divide that is not discussed enough is the challenge faced by students who do not have family members they can rely on for help when accessing the internet.

Whether your child's online assignments are piling up, they need help understanding their homework, or your family needs assistance getting internet access, we've included some tips to help parents and caregivers.



Technology tips and keeping families connected

As your child moves through each grade level, it may seem like they're being assigned more homework than ever before. This makes it challenging to stay organized and keep up with the workload. Here are some tips to help your child stay organized and not only get caught up on but gain a firm understanding of their assignments:

- Make sure your child has a quiet space to do their work
- Encourage them to sit in a chair with their device on a flat surface (doing homework laying down can make it hard to focus)
- Create a schedule to keep them on track
- Reach out to their school if there is a miscommunication about assignments

If your child is falling behind or needs help with schoolwork, these free resources can be helpful:

- [Khan Academy](#)—educational videos for math, science, reading, social studies, and SAT prep
- [Education.com](#)—activities and worksheets available for pre-K to 5th grade
- [PBS for Parents](#)—resources to help promote learning for children 2-8 years old
- [BrainPop](#)—short, animated videos to help explain complex topics to kids in science, math, reading, and more
- [Learning Heroes](#)—information for parents about their child's learning needs to help best support them

If your family needs assistance getting internet access or other essential resources for your home, you can reach out to the following organizations:

- [EveryoneOn](#)—helps connect low-income families with affordable internet plans and devices in their area
- [Devices for Students](#)—provides children with the tools they need to learn remotely by using donations to purchase laptops and hotspots, configuring the devices with the necessary software for online learning, and then distributing them to children in need
- [Together We Rise](#)—helps foster and homeless youth pay for groceries, housing, and utilities

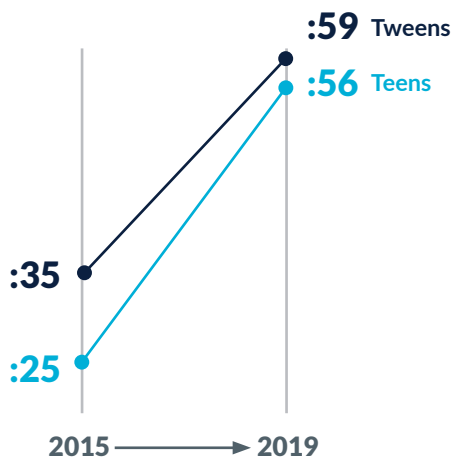
More information on getting internet access and technology resources can be found at allconnect.com.

6. Practicing digital wellness

Aside from using the internet and technology properly, children must be taught how to maintain a balance between screen time and offline time. Setting screen time limits—and helping kids set their own habits—is about finding the right balance for your family’s needs and lifestyle. What works for one family may not work for another.

It can be very easy to set up parental controls on your child’s devices and to check their accounts. It has become standard practice for phones, tablets, laptops, TV streaming devices, and even internet and cable providers to provide parental control capabilities in their software. Although it may feel like you’re sheltering your child or being overbearing, remember that setting up these precautions can keep your child safe until they’ve reached an age or a maturity level when they can use the internet responsibly. But be sure to have a conversation with your child about why you’re setting certain rules and parental controls: Doing this helps your child be involved in the process, which instills healthy usage habits as they grow.

Time spent watching online videos has increased substantially



Source: CommonSense.org, [Teaching Digital Citizens in Today's World](#), Research and Insights Behind the Common Sense Digital Citizenship Curriculum. 2021

Build healthy usage patterns

Excessive use of technology can have a negative effect on the developing minds of children, but even many adults have trouble controlling the time they spend online. It is crucial that children are taught from an early age how to maintain a healthy balance between their technology usage and offline lives. Help your young child see the benefits of getting off their devices and doing an off-screen activity such as:

- Reading a book
- Creating a board game
- Playing outside
- Having a dance party
- Writing letters to family members

Tweens and teens may have fun doing an off-screen activity such as:

- Crafting
- Walking the family dog
- Learning to bake a new recipe
- Calling or Facetimeing a relative to catch up (while they’re still using a screen in this case, they’re using it to connect with a loved one)
- Exploring new hobbies

Tell your child that **they should only connect with and talk to people they know in real life.**

While it's great to have technology readily available, finding the right balance between an offline life and screen time is something that parents and caregivers should be aware of and talk about with their child. Implementing a schedule or setting up parental controls can help your child learn to manage their time and learn healthy boundaries for certain activities.

7. Securing Digital Devices

Making sure that children, tweens, and teens secure their devices is critical to keeping their private information from getting into the wrong hands. There are many ways that you can help a child protect their private information. Having secure passwords, activating facial recognition on their phone, turning off location services, implementing virtual private networks (VPNs), and using anti-virus software are good starting points.

Help your child understand what information they need to keep private. Tell them that **they should only connect with and talk to people they know in real life.** Strangers, online or not, should never have their private information. Another important point to teach children is that there may be people online, or face-to-face, who pretend to be someone they know. Many adults heard stories growing up of people pretending to be a family friend or a parent's coworker, who then convinced a child to get into a stranger's car. The same thing is now happening online. Unfortunately, it's becoming increasingly difficult to determine if someone is being truthful on the internet.

In an ideal situation, a family might think about implementing the following:

- **VPNs**—When your child uses a VPN, they get an added layer of protection that can make the difference between a carefree life online and identity theft.
- **Anti-virus software**—Every computer, laptop, and tablet should have software installed to prevent viruses and malware from stealing data or installing dangerous viruses.
- **Facial recognition software**—Many smartphones have facial recognition software already implemented. It may be a good idea to have your child use this software to prevent other people from accessing their private information.

Children should know how to create and store safe, strong passwords.

More practical topics to discuss with your child may include:

- Always keeping track of their devices
- Being aware of people who are near their devices when they set them down
- Keeping their devices locked when they're not using them

The best way to help your child keep their devices secure is to help them create strong passwords, which we'll discuss in the next section.

Create secure passwords

Children should know how to create and store safe, strong passwords. Passwords should *never* be given out to friends or strangers, but it's smart for parents to have their child's passwords to keep updated on their activity.

In an ideal situation, we would all have a different password for each website and app. Each password would include the following:

- Lowercase letters
- Uppercase letters
- Special symbols
- Numbers
- At least 12 characters

If you choose to take this route, have your child use a secure app to store their various passwords.

Practically, a password containing everything listed above may be too complicated for a lot of young children, but it's still possible to create secure passwords.

Teach your young child to:

- Use numbers that are easy for them to remember
- Use phrases that they are familiar with
- Never change their password without their parents' permission (they may forget this new password and get locked out of their account)



Parents carry the responsibility of **setting rules and limits for their child at home.**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Parents carry the responsibility of setting rules and limits for their child. By being involved with their district's digital citizenship program, and starting the conversation at home, parents can ensure their child is safe and responsible online.

Young children can use the strategies below to make sense of being safe online:

- **Hands:** Use your hands to balance your time between online and offline activities
- **Guts:** Listen to your gut to stay safe
- **Feet:** Use your feet carefully when leaving tracks online
- **Legs:** Use your legs to stand up to cyberbullies
- **Heart:** Use your heart to be kind and respectful
- **Head:** Use your head to ask questions about what you see online

Tweens and teens can use the following strategies to make sense of being safe online:

- Do not give out private information—tell an adult if someone asks for it
- Resist the pressure to be constantly connected
- Think about when and why you're posting something before you share it
- Talk to your friends and family about your boundaries for tagging or posting about each other
- Use your device settings to limit how much time you spend on apps and social media

Keep these things in mind when having conversations about safe and healthy internet and device usage with your child:

- **Set the tone for the conversation.** Begin your talk in a calm, neutral way. Taking a nonjudgmental approach when you talk about digital citizenship with your child can help create open, trusting relationships, which will help your child feel comfortable talking about their online presence.
- **Ask before you tell.** Ask your child what apps or platforms they're using. And before you make a judgment or a rule, let your child explain how the platform works, why they like it, and how they use it.

It is critical for kids to learn how to safely use technology at a young age.

- **Stay calm.** If you learn that your child has been using a site inappropriately or using an app you don't approve of, stay calm. It's important to gather information and let them know you appreciate them telling you.
- **Lead by example.** Talk to your child about how you use the internet in a healthy way. Let them know they can come to you with any questions or concerns. Being honest and transparent will help them trust you in serious moments.
- **Talk about permanence.** Let them know that *everything* posted online is permanent.

It is critical for kids to learn how to safely use technology **at a young age**. It's not fair or realistic to expect them to figure out technology on their own, including how to avoid unsafe activities. Work with your child's school to become part of their digital citizenship initiative. Teach your child to practice good digital citizenship so they don't fall victim to the dangers that lurk online, can safely navigate and enjoy their technology, and ultimately, have a healthy relationship with technology as adults.

STUDENT SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

At Lightspeed Systems® we provide the most up-to-date enterprise-class software and support, ensure the privacy of student data, and protect customers' data. Our mission—to advance educational effectiveness and safety for every student—serves as a daily roadmap of our commitment.

Although the information and advice in this guide are for ideal situations, we understand that families, and their children, have unique and specific needs. Therefore, we have included advice and tips for both ideal and practical situations.



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