



FOR PARENTS

Start the Conversation. Talk it Out.

Sixty-three percent of students indicate that parental conversations help them stay safe online. Asking questions, engaging in conversations and being a strong influence on their online and technology decision-making can increase positive experiences and choices online for students.

Ask your child...

- ◆ What are your favorite video games? Who do you play with or against when you play online? How do you communicate with them?
- ◆ When you are on your (name device), what sites or apps do you visit? Which one is your favorite? Who do you interact with most there? How do you communicate with them?
- ◆ Have you ever been a part of a group text? Tell me about it.
- ◆ Could you show me how you accessed that site? Created an account?
- ◆ How do you decide who gets to follow or friend you (for apps such as Instagram, Snapchat, Musical.ly, etc.)? Why haven't you accepted my follower/friend request?
- ◆ What do you share, post, download, upload, view? Show me.
- ◆ How do you decide what pictures and videos to post?
- ◆ What do you do if someone you don't know offline direct messages you or comments on your posts?
- ◆ Your mood has suddenly changed. Who are you chatting with or messaging?
- ◆ Why do you hide your electronics when I enter the room?
- ◆ Can you show me how to block a gamer, phone number, user?

Taking action.

- ◆ Prior to allowing children use of technology, set [parental controls](#) on their devices and determine what apps, games and sites are appropriate for each child. Help them set up their accounts, so you know their usernames and passwords. Then set up an account of your own.
- ◆ Set time limits for children to be on their technology, including cell phones, gaming systems, iPads, etc. As children get older, they can be in on the planning of time limits.
- ◆ Determine a tech safe zone within the home—preferably somewhere that you can monitor use and easily check in on what they are doing. At night, collect devices to ensure that there is no use past bedtime and overnight. Much technology misuse occurs overnight when youth are alone, feeling safe and confident in their rooms.
- ◆ Discuss the dangers of communicating with people online. As opposed to in-person friends, online friends and followers can pretend to be anyone while on the internet. Sometimes people pretend to be nice when they are actually mean. Ask your children how they determine who they can trust online, who to communicate with while gaming and who can see what they post?
- ◆ Remind youth that the internet is a permanent, public platform where the choices they make cannot be “taken back.” Help them determine the type of digital footprint they want, then discuss how to achieve it safely and effectively.