

5 TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Talk to your kids about what they are doing in cyberspace.

Just as you need to talk openly and honestly with your kids about real life sex and relationships, you also want to discuss online and cell phone activity. It's essential that your kids grasp the potential short-term and long-term consequences of their actions.

2. Know who your kids are communicating with.

Do your best to learn who your kids are spending time with online and on the phone. Supervising and monitoring your kids' whereabouts in real life and in cyberspace doesn't make you a nag; it's just part of your job as a parent.

3. Consider limitations on electronic communication.

You can still limit the time your kids spend online and on the phone. Consider, for example, telling your teen to leave the laptop out of their bedroom before they go to bed, so they won't be tempted to log on or talk to friends at 2 a.m.

4. Be aware of what your teens are posting publicly.

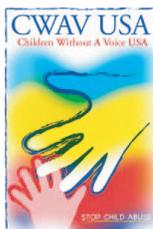
Check out your teen's MySpace, Facebook and other public online profiles from time to time. This isn't snooping—this is information your kids are making public. If everyone else can look at it, why can't you?

5. Set expectations.

Make sure you are clear with your teen about what you consider appropriate "electronic" behavior. And give reminders of those expectations from time to time. It doesn't mean you don't trust your kids, it just reinforces that you care about them enough to be paying attention.

RESOURCES

www.TheNationalCampaign.org/sextech
http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/PDF/SexTech_Summary.pdf
<http://www.realpsychology.com/node/12>

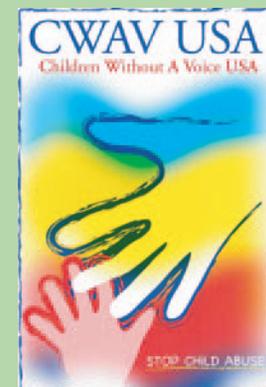


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TEEN SEXTING

Illegal & dangerous!



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PO Box 4351
Alpharetta, GA 30023

Sexting is defined as sending provocative personal images or video via cell phone or other electronic device, but they do NOT include spam or sexy images of people you do not know personally.

WHO SEX TEXTS?

Teens (13-19) that have sent/posted nude or seminude pictures or video of themselves? Younger ages are on the increase beginning at 9 years.

20% of teens overall

22% of teen girls

18% of teen boys

Teens that are sending or posting sexually suggestive messages?

39% of all teens

37% of teen girls

40% of teen boys

48% of teens say they have received such messages

WHY DO TEENS SEX TEXT?

66% of teen girls say they did so to be “fun or flirtatious”

60% of teen boys say they did so to be “fun or flirtatious”

52% of teen girls did so as a “sexy present” for their boyfriend.

40% of teen girls said they sent sexually suggestive messages or images as “a joke.”

34% of teen girls say they sent/posted sexually suggestive content to “feel sexy.”

12% of teen girls felt “pressured” to send sexually suggestive messages or images.



In a June 2009 segment on HLN, which focused on sexting, a young high school girl called in and stated that 75% of her school is engaged in sexting and the majority of the those students’ parents have no idea.

CONSEQUENCES

Because texting allows for the transmission of images, teens under the age of 18 are especially exposed to a number of legal consequences.

- When images taken on a cell phone unsurprisingly involve the teen, or their friends, and the images involve some form of nudity, the images can automatically be defined by law to constitute child pornography. As a result, the taking, sending, receiving, or distribution of such images can, under the letter of the law, constitute varying degrees of child pornography offenses.
- Additionally, another serious side effect suffered by teens who send pictures of themselves is the likelihood that their pictures will end up posted all over the internet or distributed in another form.
- Consequences have included harassment, intimidating, charges of distributing or receiving pornography, and even suicide.

TIPS FOR PARENTING

Parents should be aware of the widespread nature of sexting so they can keep an eye on inappropriate behavior, be pro-active in talking to teens about the possible legal consequences and purchase phones that don’t have cameras or texting capabilities.