Frequently Asked Questions

Adapted from: [NetSmartz](#)

Note

- **Before giving any presentation for parents, guardians and communities, please look over the following frequently asked questions.**
- **Please note that the answers below are simply guidelines; ultimately, you should respond according to your knowledge and skill as a presenter.**

Question: What software should I install on our home computer?

Answer: Every family's needs and purpose are different. First, consider software that monitors, filters, and blocks unwanted websites and downloads. Second, check if your Internet service provider offers free software. **Note: children often learn how to circumvent this type of monitoring, so be sure to continue to supervise your child's online life.**

Question: How safe are sites like Twitter®, Facebook®, Instagram®, Club Penguin®, etc.?

Answer: There are definite benefits to supporting your child's connections online. Although these sites, and others like them, have some risks, these can be minimized by helping your child select non-self identifiable screen names (no names, birthdates, pet names, etc.), making profile settings set to private, and reminding your child to think critically before posting any images, videos, or comments. Look for sites that help them recognize that these are real people they are connecting with and that emphasize interactions to learn the new skills of playing cooperatively, recognizing emotions, taking turns, losing gracefully, accepting different perspectives, taking no for an answer without getting upset, and getting and giving honest feedback.

Question: How old should my child be for me to start talking to them about Internet safety?

Answer: The rule of thumb is when they are ready (interested) to go online. The age is really up to you based on what you know your child is ready for. Many children begin

to go online when preschool aged. However, many parents choose to wait until they are within the elementary years.

Question: How many hours should my child be online?

Answer: The answer varies by family and situation. Many families determine the number of hours, and a schedule, together and have seen great success through revisiting this as their child grows. Not all screen time is the same, however, so consider the multi-use and creative opportunities that smart phones and tablets offer.

Question: How do I get my child to spend less time texting or on their phones?

Answer: Connecting with friends has always been a big part of tween and teen life. If you are noticing that connecting digitally is getting in the way of family time, homework, chores, etc., you should consider how to help your child learn to manage their phone/computer time. Start by modeling the manners you want to see in your child. Make time for face-to-face conversations and put your phone down in order to be present. Narrate your use of the phone by explaining how you are using it to find directions, and excuse yourself from a conversation if you need to tend to an urgent matter on your phone. Develop an agreed upon place for device charging at night, for example, your room, a spot where everyone has a view, etc. Sometimes, children need an excuse to disengage. Agree to established consequences for problematic use before it arises to decrease the emotional charge in those situations. One final thought – there are Internet service providers that offer parental controls that can be used if problematic behavior continues or escalates. The key is to have open and honest conversations with your children before an issue gets out of control.