



Raising Digitally Safe & Responsible Students

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The Digital Landscape for Kids

- Common devices: smartphones, smartwatches, Kindles/e-readers, gaming consoles, tablets
- Popular platforms: YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Roblox, Discord
- Reality: technology is woven into school, social life, and home
- Pervasiveness requires proactive family management

Statistic: 54% of teens 13–17 have faced online harassment or cyberbullying ([Pew Research Center, 2022](#))

Statistic: 97% of teens use the internet daily; 46% say they're online "almost constantly" ([Pew, 2022](#))





Opportunities and Risks

- Opportunities: learning, creativity, connection, skill-building
- Risks: privacy breaches, contact with strangers, inappropriate content, excessive screen time, digital footprint issues
- Parent role: proactive supervision, consistent boundaries, open dialogue

Balance is key. Tech is not inherently bad; however we need to manage exposure time thoughtfully.



Smartphones & Smartwatches: What Parents Need to Know

- Key features: calls, texts, GPS tracking, app ecosystem
- Apple Watch Schooltime: limits notifications and app access during school hours to reduce distractions ([How-to video](#))
- Screen Time controls: set Downtime schedules, App Limits, Content & Privacy Restrictions
- Demo: Screen Time settings for call/text approval, app blocking, content filters





Apps & Social Media: What Parents Should Know

- Age requirements: COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) sets 13+ for most platforms ([Tik Tok](#), YouTube, [Instagram](#))
 - Privacy settings: switch profiles to private; review friend/follow requests; disable location tagging
 - Risks of oversharing: avoid posting kids' location, full names, schedules, identifying photos
 - Model appropriate behavior: what we post about our children teaches them about digital footprints
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Kindles/E-Readers and Reading Online

- Content filters: enable parental controls to restrict mature books and web access
- Purchase controls: monitor store access and set spending limits
- Regular check-ins: discuss what they're reading; celebrate positive reading
- Safe e-reading habit: designate shared reading time and space

[Kindle FreeTime](#) (video)





Gaming and Online Play

- Popular games: Fortnite, Minecraft, Roblox, Among Us, sports titles
- Rating systems: ESRB (E, T, M) and PEGI (Green, Yellow, Red, Black) guide age-appropriateness
- Risks: headphones, in-game chat/messaging with strangers, in-app purchases, mature content, play-time addiction
- Family settings: enable time limits, restrict online chat, control spending

In game chat dangers (let's watch together)



Ratings



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Content is intended for young children.



EVERYONE 10+

Content is generally suitable for ages 10 and up. May contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.



MATURE

Content is generally suitable for persons ages 17 and up. May contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.



RATING PENDING

Not yet assigned a final ESRB rating. Appears only in advertising, marketing and promotional materials and related to a game that is expected to carry an ESRB rating, and should be replaced by a game's rating once it has been assigned.



EVERYONE

Content is generally suitable for all ages. May contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.



TEEN

Content is generally suitable for ages 13 and up. May contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.



ADULTS ONLY

Content suitable for adults 18 years and up. May include prolonged scenes of intense violence, graphic sexual content and/or gambling with real currency.

Controls

Parental Controls on Gaming Consoles



NINTENDO SWITCH

- The only gaming console that has its own parental control app in addition to its in-console controls.
- You can set daily time limits, choose from pre-set options or custom select games, limit communication with others, and restrict the ability to purchase games.



SONY PLAYSTATION

- Lets you set restrictions for individual children.
- Restrictions include age levels for games/movies, the use of PlayStation VR/internet browser, communication with other users, and more.



XBOX ONE

- Parental controls are within the console itself.
- Restrictions include: Setting age limits, what info others see about your child, limit online communication within the game, view status and gaming history, limit content and purchases, block inappropriate games, and more.



Security & Privacy Basics

- Strong passwords: use uppercase, numbers, symbols; avoid birthdays and pet names; consider password manager
- Two-factor authentication (2FA): enable on email, social media, gaming accounts
- Phishing awareness: teach kids not to click suspicious links or provide personal info
- Keep devices updated: regular OS and app updates patch security holes

[Padlock Picasso video for littles](#)





Grade Band: K–2 Foundations

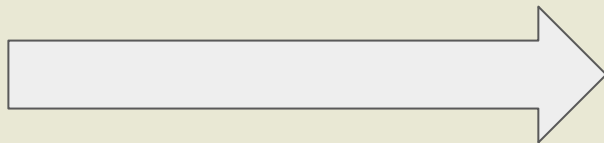
- Device placement: keep devices in shared family spaces; no devices in bedrooms
 - Supervised sessions: short, parent-approved app time only; preview all content first
 - Teach safety: "Tell a grown-up if something feels wrong"; practice saying no to uncomfortable online contacts
 - Build awareness: discuss why we have rules; celebrate following them
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Grade Band: 3–5 Building Digital Literacy

- Digital footprint: explain that "what goes online stays online"; discuss permanence
- Online kindness: talk about how words hurt online too; model and reinforce respect
- Co-create rules: involve kids in setting screen time, device location, app approval processes
- Regular check-ins: review apps and activity together monthly; ask open-ended questions

Family
collaboration



Independence





Grade Band: 6–8 Navigating Social Media & Peer Pressure

- Group chats and exclusion: discuss loyalty and cyberbullying awareness; teach empathy
- Peer pressure online: FOMO, screenshots, dares, challenges; reinforce family values
- Cyberbullying and blocking: know how to report and block; discuss when to involve adults
- Routinely check privacy settings: empower teens to audit their accounts independently with parent oversight
- Digital footprint impact: discuss college/job implications of online behavior

Trust

Control

Remember, their social world is online





Family Digital Agreements

- Written contract: specify when/where devices used, app approval process, screen time limits
 - Device locations: designate charging stations (away from bedrooms at night)
 - Behavioral expectations: what 'responsible use' means; rules for social media, gaming, messaging
 - Consequences: both positive (reward system) and natural (loss of device access)
 - Revision schedule: review and update as children mature and technology evolves
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Group Texting in Elementary School

Why group texting can be challenging for young students

Elementary students are still developing:

- Self-control before responding
- Understanding how words affect others
- Problem-solving skills
- Perspective taking
- Recognizing sarcasm and jokes
- Handling disagreements appropriately

Without facial expressions or tone of voice, messages can easily be misunderstood.





Group Texting in Elementary School

Parent Tips for Success :

1. Delay if you can
 2. Teach the "Pause before you send" rule
 3. Help your student understand that not every message needs a response
 4. Monitor without spying
 5. Teach your student how to handle mean messages
 6. Don't let group texting replace face-to-face friendships
 7. Remember: Screens Make Kids Braver Than They Would Be In Person
 8. Teach Children to Be an "Upstander"
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ECS Core Expectations & Positive Culture

- Endeavor's 4R's: Respect, Responsibility, Relationships, Resilience
- Positive reinforcement: Class Dojo points, Positive Office Referrals, leadership opportunities (Student Council & NJHS), standing ovations
- School-wide events: pep rallies, morning meetings, Fall Fun Fest where community values are reinforced





ECS Digital Conduct: Rules & Definitions

- Social media: prohibited during school day and all school-sponsored events (dances, field trips, athletics)
 - Tech misuse: unauthorized app/website access, hacking, texting/emailing without permission, downloads without approval
 - Bullying/harassment: any repeated written, electronic, or verbal communication creating fear or hostile environment
 - Off-campus conduct: may result in consequence if it disrupts school order, safety, or climate
 - Academic integrity: no plagiarism, AI-generated work, or copying without required citation (ECS Honor Code)
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Group Texts

Parent Tips for Success

- Set expectations before there's a problem.
- Teach the, "would you want it shared?" rule
- Set a nighttime cut off
- Help them understand that "private" isn't really private
- Teach responsible screenshotting
- Teach them what to do when a text goes wrong
- Talk about the dangers of "piling on"
- Don't rely solely on surveillance, have the conversation with your child





ECS Consequences & Disciplinary Process

- Documentation: all incidents logged with date, time, strategies attempted, parent contact
 - Consequences escalate by context, not always progressively: silent lunch/recess, loss of Pride Time, detention
 - Serious infractions: In-School Suspension (ISS), Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), long-term suspension (>10 days), exclusion, expulsion
 - Not all violations follow 'small to big' sequence—severity and context guide immediate action
 - Class Dojo transparency: parents see all logged behaviors (positive and negative) in real time
- *Depending on the group text, ECS may not be able to intervene.
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Monitoring & Parental Controls

- Built-in tools: Apple Family Sharing (iOS), [Google Family Link](#) (Android), console family settings, web filters
 - Balance: use monitoring as a teaching tool, not a 'gotcha'; gradually increase independence with trust
 - Regular device check-ins: schedule monthly app reviews, discuss usage, audit privacy settings together
 - Communication: keep tone curious, not accusatory; ask questions rather than accuse
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Conversation Starters & Ongoing Talk

- Open-ended questions: "What do you enjoy doing online?", "Has anything ever made you uncomfortable?", "Who do you talk to online?"
- Daily check-ins: brief, natural conversations during car rides, meals
- Non-judgmental tone: "Tell me what happened; I want to understand"
- Active listening: ask follow-up questions; resist the urge to lecture or punish immediately





Quick Scenarios & Parent Responses

- Scenario 1 (Group Chat Exclusion): Validate feelings; check privacy settings; discuss conflict resolution
 - Scenario 2 (Unknown Friend Request): Don't accept; review who can contact them; report if threatening
 - Scenario 3 (Late-night Gaming/Chatting): Adjust Screen Time Downtime; reinforce family agreement; problem-solve together
 - Scenario 4 (Oversharing Post): Take the post down; discuss why it's risky; remind about permanence
 - Scenario 5 (Encountering Inappropriate Content): Don't panic; ask how they found it; adjust controls; report to platform
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Resources for Families

- Common Sense Media: age-appropriate app/game reviews, parental tips ([commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org))
 - [ConnectSafely](https://connectsafely.org): expert advice on social media, digital safety (connectsafely.org)
 - Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI): research-backed resources and webinars (fosi.org)
 - [ECS Handbook](#): full discipline policies, grade-level info, school contacts
 - [Class Dojo](#): real-time behavior updates and communication with teachers
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Key Takeaways & Action Items

- Be proactive: set clear, reasonable digital boundaries now
- Set and revisit: update rules as children grow and technology changes
- Use controls wisely: parental controls + open conversation beats either alone
- Partner with ECS: communicate early if concerns arise; leverage school resources
- Model behavior: remember kids watch what we do online more than what we say



I challenge you to go home tonight & check or set security/privacy settings.

