Digital Safety Resources for Parents & Caregivers

Helping children stay safe, connected, and healthy in a digital world.

1. Trusted Digital Safety Resources

Bark — Resources for Families — Parent guides, app and game information, technology agreements, and advice about emerging online risks. Best for practical guidance on today's digital challenges.

Bark — Family Tech Contract — A starting point for setting shared family expectations for technology use.

NetSmartz (NCMEC) — Free, age-appropriate guides, videos, and tip sheets on online gaming, smartphone safety, cyberbullying, exploitation, and online risks. Useful for elementary through high school families.

Common Sense Media — Reviews of apps, games, movies, and online content, plus age recommendations and digital citizenship guidance.

Linewize Online Safety Hub — The hub includes tips on cyberbullying prevention, internet safety, digital citizenship, and much more.

2. Set Up Parental Controls

Parental controls can help manage screen time, app downloads, content access, and online activity. Settings vary by device and platform, so review them regularly with your child.

Qustodio —*Qustodio* allows you to monitor your child's device usage, set screen time limits, and filter content to ensure a safe and productive online experience. Forsyth County Schools has partnered with Linewize to provide the *Qustodio* app for parents and guardians free of charge.

Apple Screen Time — Manage app limits, downtime, communication settings, content restrictions, and family controls on supported Apple devices.

Google Family Link — Manage supported Android devices, screen-time limits, app approvals, and other parental controls.

Google Family Safety & Parental Controls — Additional guidance for setting up family safety features.

Common Sense Media — Use reviews and family guides when deciding whether an app, game, or platform is appropriate.

Remember: *Parental controls are one layer of protection—not a replacement for ongoing conversations and supervision.*

3. Understand Common Online Risks

Cyberbullying and harmful interactions

Learn to recognize harassment, document incidents, report abusive behavior, and support children who are targeted.

StopBullying.gov — Digital Awareness for Parents

Online exploitation, grooming, and sextortion

Understand how online contacts may manipulate children, pressure them to share images, or threaten them.

NCMEC NetSmartz Parent Resources

Online gaming and private chats

Discuss voice chat, unknown contacts, personal information, in-game purchases, and moving conversations to other platforms.

NCMEC NetSmartz Resources

Social media, AI, and mental well-being

Explore digital pressures, inappropriate content, manipulated images, privacy, and how online experiences may affect emotional health.

American Academy of Pediatrics — Online Health & Safety Resources

The resources listed in this document are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of any organization, product, service, or website does not constitute an endorsement by Forsyth County Schools, nor does the district guarantee the accuracy, availability, or effectiveness of any third-party content. Families are encouraged to review each resource and determine what best meets their child's individual needs.

4. Create a Family Digital Safety Plan

You do not have to figure everything out in one night. Start with a few clear agreements and revisit them as your child matures.

- ☐ Talk about which apps, games, and websites your child uses.
- ☐ Review privacy settings, location sharing, and who can contact your child.
- ☐ Set expectations for screen time, device-free family time, and charging devices overnight.
- ☐ Agree that your child will tell a trusted adult if something online feels uncomfortable, frightening, or unsafe.
- ☐ Discuss what to do if someone asks for personal information, photos, money, or secrecy.
- ☐ Make a plan for reporting harmful content and preserving relevant evidence safely.
- ☐Revisit your family's rules as new apps, devices, and concerns emerge.

American Academy of Pediatrics — Family Media Plan — Create a personalized approach to technology use and healthy digital habits.

5. If Something Goes Wrong: What Parents Can Do

Listen first. Stay calm, thank your child for telling you, and reassure them that asking for help was the right decision.

Preserve relevant information. Keep usernames, dates, messages, and report details when safe and appropriate. If an image may depict child sexual abuse, do not download or forward it.

Report and seek support. Report concerning activity to the platform and appropriate authorities. For suspected online child exploitation, use the NCMEC CyberTipline. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

Connect your child with support. Contact your child's school counselor or another trusted professional if the experience affects safety, relationships, or well-being.

6. Trusted Organizations to Bookmark

Organization / Resource	How it can help
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Child safety information and reporting resources.
Federal Trade Commission — Kids Online	Online privacy, scams, and digital safety education.
HealthyChildren.org	Pediatric guidance on media use and child development.
StopBullying.gov	Cyberbullying prevention and response guidance.

One Small Step to Take Tonight

Choose one resource, sit down with your child, and start a conversation. Ask what they enjoy online, what makes them uncomfortable, and what they would do if they encountered something unsafe. Our goal is connection, not just restriction. Children need to know they can come to a trusted adult for help without fear of embarrassment or judgment.

The resources listed in this document are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of any organization, product, service, or website does not constitute an endorsement by Forsyth County Schools, nor does the district guarantee the accuracy, availability, or effectiveness of any third-party content. Families are encouraged to review each resource and determine what best meets their child's individual needs.