



National Association
of Attorneys General

PARENTAL CONTROL SERIES

Keeping Children Safe Online





Introduction

The Internet is part of many children's daily lives and, because of COVID-19, their time spent online may be increasing. Kids are:

- Streaming TV and movies
- Using social media platforms
- Communicating through cell phones and computers
- Accessing other entertaining and educational content

Risks

While the Internet provides a lot of benefits for children, it also contains content inappropriate for minors. Additionally, it can give children the ability to buy content, products, or apps without a parent or guardian's permission. Worst of all, is the risk that children will be exposed to cyberbullying or contacted by harmful predators.

Tools to Protect

Fortunately, tech companies have responded to these dangers by providing parental control tools which allow parents and guardians to set appropriate limitations on their children's online activities. Parents are also encouraged to speak with their children to discuss issues of concern.

Parental Control Series

The NAGTRI Center for Consumer Protection (CCP) is publishing a series of tips for parents to access these parental controls. The installments, which are being periodically released, include tips on:

1. [Streaming services](#)

Released August 7, 2020

- Including Amazon Prime, AppleTV, Disney+, Hulu, Netflix, and YouTube.

2. [Social media](#)

Released September 15, 2020

- Including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Tumblr, and Twitter.

3. [Mobile devices](#)

Released November 9, 2020

- Including iPhone, Android, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon

4. Video game consoles (Coming soon)

5. [More installments to come!](#)

The CCP does not endorse the use of any of the products, platforms, or services highlighted in this series. If you decide to allow your children to be online and choose to use parental controls, talk to your kids about why you are using them—to keep them safe online and help them establish reasonable usage limits. Be aware that the parental control tips provided herein are not 100% foolproof. Kids can undo parental controls and directions on how to get around them can easily be found on the Internet. We recommend you monitor your kids' Internet usage, look for signs that they may be bypassing controls you have set up, and research parental controls to stay current on how they may be disabled or avoided.

We hope this series helps you keep your kids safe online!

The NAGTRI Center for Consumer Protection

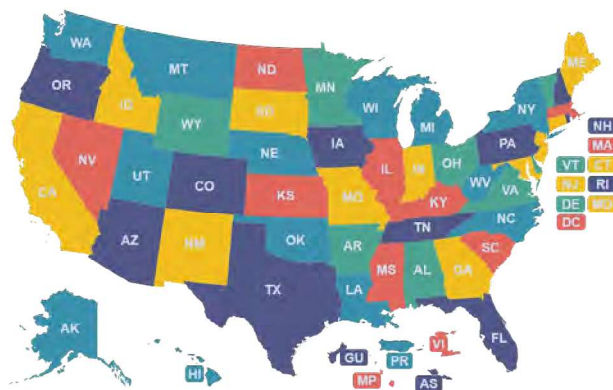
PHOTOS COURTESY SHUTTERSTOCK



**CENTER FOR
CONSUMER PROTECTION**

THE NAAG TRAINING & RESEARCH AEM

In addition, the website offers educational materials on a variety of consumer topics to help consumers to stay informed on important issues. Topics covered include common scams, education, finances and money, healthcare, internet and privacy, and travel.



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ConsumerResources.org

Parental Controls for Mobile Devices

Tips to enable controls on mobile devices



DEVICES

 iPhone

android 

Tips include using controls provided on the device and offered separately by the cell phone service carrier. Note that separate parental control apps, other than those offered by the carriers, are not addressed in this installment. Controls provided on the device and offered by the carrier may overlap. Therefore, you will want to determine which avenues of achieving parental controls are best for your situation.

CARRIERS

 AT&T

 T Mobile™

 verizon✓

iPhone

iPhone (iOS 13.4 and Later)

Screen Time settings allow parents to block apps, features, explicit websites, iTunes, App Store purchases, and more.

To activate **Content & Privacy Restrictions**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**.

- Tap **Continue** and then select **This is My Child's [Device]**.
- Choose **Use Screen Time Passcode** to create and confirm a new passcode for screen time settings. Make sure that the passcode is different from the passcode your child uses to log into their device. Anyone wishing to make changes to your child's Screen Time settings will need this passcode.
- Go back to **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and turn on **Content & Privacy**.
- Now that Content & Privacy is activated, you can block apps, purchases, websites, and more on your child's device.

To block **iTunes and App Store purchases**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**.

- Choose **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and enter your new Screen Time passcode.
- Select **iTunes & App Store Purchases**.
- You can now choose **Allow** or **Don't Allow** for the following: **Installing Apps**, **Deleting Apps**, and **In-app Purchases**.
- You may also be required to enter the Apple ID password of the purchasing account prior to any purchases or downloads from iTunes or the App Store. Under **Require Password**, choose **Always Require** or **Don't Require**.

To block and allow **specific apps and features**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**.

- Choose **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and enter your new Screen Time passcode.
- Tap **Allowed Apps**.
- Select the apps that you want to allow. Any apps that you choose not to allow will be hidden from your child's home screen until they are allowed again.

To block **explicit content or content above a certain content rating**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**. Please note that the below instructions apply to content in the iTunes Store and App Store only.

- Choose **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and enter your new Screen Time passcode.
- Tap **Content Restrictions**.
- Tap **Ratings For** to select the country/region whose content ratings should be applied.
- You can now choose the maximum rating for the following:
 - Music, Podcasts & News: Choose **Clean** or **Explicit**.
 - Music Profiles & Posts: Choose **Off** to prevent the automatic sharing of what music your child listens to.
 - Movies: Set the maximum content rating to **G**, **PG**, **PG-13**, **R**, or **NC-17**. You may also choose **Don't Allow Movies**.





iPhone

- TV Shows: Set the maximum content rating to **TV-Y**, **TV-Y7**, **TV-Y7-FV**, **TV-G**, **TV-PG**, **TV-14**, or **TV-MA**. You may also choose **Don't Allow TV Shows**.
- Books: Choose **Clean** or **Explicit**.
- Apps: Set the age rating to **4+**, **9+**, **12+**, or **17+**. You may also choose **Don't Allow Apps**.

To filter and restrict **explicit website content**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**.

- Choose **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and enter your new Screen Time passcode.
- Tap **Content Restrictions** and **Web Content**.
- Choose from **Unrestricted Access** or **Limit Adult Websites**.
- You may also choose **Allowed Websites Only** and then enter specific websites under **Always Allow** and **Never Allow**.

To restrict what **web searches your child can make using Siri**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**.

- Choose **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and enter your new Screen Time passcode.
- Tap **Siri**.

- Choose **Web Search Content** to **Allow** or **Don't Allow** Siri to search the web.
- Choose **Explicit Language** to **Allow** or **Don't Allow** Siri to display explicit language.

To restrict what your child has access to in the **Game Center**, go to **Settings** on your child's device and select **Screen Time**. Please note that this applies only to games available through the Game Center.

- Choose **Content & Privacy Restrictions** and enter your new Screen Time passcode.
- Tap **Game Center**.
- Choose **Multiplayer Games** to **Allow** or **Don't Allow** your child to play multiplayer games.
- Choose **Adding Friends** to **Allow** or **Don't Allow** your child to add friends in Game Center.
- Choose **Screen Recording** to **Allow** or **Don't Allow** your child to capture their screen while playing games.

The above instructions can also be used to activate parental controls on your child's iPad and iPod Touch. These features can also be activated through your own device by using Apple's Family Sharing feature.

android

Android (Android 10 and Later)

Android phones use [Google Play](#) to access apps, games, music, movies, and more. Google Play allows parents to set up [parental controls](#) to restrict your child's access to content.

To set up **parental controls** for apps on your child's device, open the **Google Play Store**.

- Click the three horizontal bars in the upper-left hand corner of the home screen and choose **Settings**.
- Scroll to **User Controls** and turn on **Parental Controls**.
- Enter a parental control PIN. Make sure it is a combination your child does not know.
- To make future changes to parental controls settings, your new PIN will be required.

To **restrict apps** on your child's device, open the **Google Play Store** and click the three horizontal bars in the upper-left hand corner to open the menu. Note that the below only applies to content accessed through the Google Play Store.

- Tap **My Apps & Games**.
- Choose **Installed** and then delete any apps you do not want your child to access.
- Go back to the menu and choose **Settings** and then **Parental Controls**.
- Under **Set Content Restrictions**, you may restrict the following content types for your child based on content ratings:
 - Apps & Games: Set the age rating to **3+**, **7+**, **12+**, **16+**, or **18+**.
 - Movies: Set the content rating to **G**, **PG**, **PG-13**, **R**, or **NC-17**.
 - TV: Set the content rating to **TV-Y**, **TV-Y7**, **TV-Y7-FV**, **TV-G**, **TV-PG**, **TV-14**, or **TV-MA**.
 - Books: Choose **Restrict Sexually Explicit Books** or **Allow All**.



- Music: Choose **Restrict Music Marked Explicit by Content Providers** or **Allow All**.

To prevent your child from **purchasing apps or content** without permission, open the **Google Play Store** and click the three horizontal bars in the upper-left hand corner to open the menu.

- Choose **Settings**.
- Tap next to **Require Authentication for Purchases** to restrict purchases in the Google Play Store.
- You will be prompted to re-enter your Google account password to confirm the changes. Before making future purchases, the Google account password will need to be re-entered.


You can also prevent your child from **downloading apps from sources other than the Google Play Store**. To do so, go to the home screen of your child's device and choose **Settings**.

- Choose **Lock Screen and Security**.
- Toggle on the **Unknown Sources** setting. Now your child can only use the Google Play Store to download apps and content.



AT&T's [Secure Family app](#) allows parents who are AT&T Wireless customers to **activate parental controls and monitor their child's activity on their smartphone** for \$7.99/month following a free 30-day trial. To get started, parents will need to download the Secure Family app for [Apple](#) or [Android](#).

After downloading the app, sign in with your existing myAT&T ID. If you do not already have a myAT&T ID, tap [Register Now](#).

- After signing in, you will be asked to confirm your enrollment in AT&T Secure Family and agreement to pay \$7.99/month following a free 30-day trial. Select [Continue](#) to confirm your enrollment.
- On the next page, confirm your phone number from the list of numbers associated with your AT&T account and tap [Continue](#).
- On the next page, check the boxes next to the phone number of the child (or multiple children) that you want to add to Secure Family and enter their name. Tap [Sign Up](#) to continue and confirm your subscription.
- You can cancel your subscription at any time by tapping the  icon in the top-right corner of the app. Tap [Account](#) and then [Cancel Secure Family](#) to cancel your account.



To activate parental controls and restrict content, open the Secure Family app and select the child whose restrictions you would like to manage. Then complete the following:

- Tap [Content Filters](#). From here, you can block social media, specific apps and websites, features, and more on your child's device.
- To block social media, tap [Social Media](#). You can toggle on [All Social Media](#) to block all social media apps and websites. Alternatively, you may scroll down to block specific apps such as Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat.
- To block specific websites, tap [Add A Website](#). Then tap [Blocked](#) to add websites that should always be blocked on your child's device or [Trusted](#) to add websites that should always be allowed on your child's device.

The Secure Family app also allows you to **track your child's web and app activity**:

- After opening the Secure Family app, select the child whose web and app history you would like to view.
- Scroll down to [Recently Visited](#) and tap [View History](#).
- On the next pages, you will be able to view your child's browsing history and app activity over the last seven days.

Through the Secure Family app, you can also **set a schedule to limit your child's Internet access**—for example, during school hours or at night:

- Open the Secure Family app and select your child's device. Scroll down and tap [Time Limits](#).
- Tap [School Hours](#) or [Night Hours](#) to set the range of hours during which you don't want your child to access the Internet. Tap [Save](#) to confirm any changes.
- To add further time limits, tap [Add A Time Limit](#) and tap [Save](#) to confirm any changes.



T-Mobile/Sprint offers a free service called [Web Guard](#) to all T-Mobile customers. This feature allows parents to **restrict web content on your child's smartphone** based on their age. If you are the primary account holder for your family, you can activate Web Guard by signing in to [My T-Mobile](#) on your web browser. Then complete the following:

- Click your profile in the top right of the screen and then click [Family Controls](#).
- Click the [Down Arrow](#) to choose your child's phone number from the list of phone numbers associated with your account.
- Click [Web Guard](#) and then choose [Child](#), [Teen](#), [Young Adult](#), or [No Restrictions](#) based on your child's age. To see more about the restrictions for each filter level, click [Show Filter Levels](#).
- Click [Save](#) to confirm your changes.



Based on the age level you selected for restrictions, your child will now be blocked from viewing content above what is appropriate for their age in their smartphone's web browser.

Please note that these restrictions only apply when your child browses the web using the T-Mobile cellular network; if your child is connected to Wi-Fi, Web Guard will not be activated. Furthermore, Web Guard does not block adult content in downloaded apps or emails and text messages.




verizon[✓]

Verizon's [Smart Family](#) app allows Verizon customers to **set parental controls and monitor their child's smartphone** usage for \$4.99/mo. or \$9.99/mo., depending on the features chosen. To sign up, download the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) Verizon Smart Family app and complete the following:

- Open the app and tap **Get Started**. Enter your mobile phone number and My Verizon password and **Sign In**.
- Verizon has two pricing plans to choose from: Verizon Smart Family (\$4.99/mo) or Verizon Smart Family Premium (\$9.99/mo). Verizon Smart Family Premium includes all the features of Verizon Smart Family with the addition of location services. Choose your preferred plan and tap **Next**.
- On the next page, select the phone numbers of the child(ren) you would like to monitor and enter their names.
- When finished, tap **Sign Up**.

To fully utilize the app's features, you will also need to install the [Smart Family Companion](#) app on your child's [Apple](#) or [Android](#) smartphone. To link your child's device to your app, open the **Smart Family** app on your device:

- Tap the  icon in the top-right corner of your screen to open **Settings**. Then tap **Family Settings**.
- Tap the device of the child you want to pair with and then click **Smart Family Companion**.
- Tap **Send Invite** to send a pairing invitation to your child's phone number.
- On your child's smartphone, open the text and click the link. Follow the verification steps and tap **Allow** for all permissions requests.

Now that your devices are paired through the Smart Family/Companion apps, you can **activate parental controls** on your child's devices. To do so, open the **Smart Family** app on your smartphone:

- Choose the child whose activity you would like to restrict at the top of the screen.
- Under the **Manage Controls** section, tap **Content Filters**. Then tap **Websites**.
- Tap **Trusted Websites** and enter any websites you want your child to be able to access. Tap **Blocked Websites** and enter any websites that you never want your child to access.



You may also **block specific contacts from calling or texting your child**. To do so, open the Smart Family app on your smartphone:

- Choose the child whose contacts you would like to restrict at the top of the screen.
- Scroll down to **Manage Controls** and click **Contacts**.
- Tap **Blocked Contacts** and then **Block A Number**. Enter up to 20 phone numbers you wish to block from contacting your child. Tap **Save** to confirm your changes.
- To prevent any private and/or restricted phone numbers from contacting your child, toggle on the **Block Private and Restricted Texts and Calls** switch. Tap **Save** to confirm your changes.

You can also use the Smart Family app to **check your child's Internet and app usage**. To do so, open the **Smart Family** app on your smartphone:

- Choose the child whose activity you would like to restrict at the top of the screen.
- Under **Web & App Activity Today**, you will see a general overview of your child's activity.
- Tap **View More** to see a more detailed account of your child's activity on their smartphone and use right and left arrows at the top of the screen to view activity on different days.

To pause Internet for your child, open the **Smart Family** app and complete the following:

- Choose the child whose Internet access you would like to pause.
- Tap **Pause Internet** and **OK**. Your child's Internet access will now be blocked until you tap **Unpause Internet**.