

STOP BLOCK and TALK



Top 10 Things We Wish All Parents Knew About Technology and Social Media

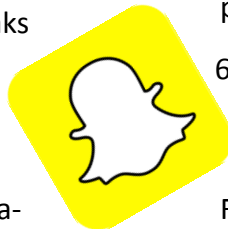


Are you a parent or guardian of a child? Do you have a child you care about in your life?

That child is using technology to learn, communicate, socialize and explore the world.

While much of the internet offers a positive and worthwhile experience, there are parts of our online world that need to be discussed. With good, there is bad.

- 1. Kids are using technology at a very young age — even if they aren't allowed to.** They have friends who have unlimited access to devices and games or older siblings who are exposing them to many of these things. They secretly call Jaimie's house "screen time central."
- 2. Apps are made to be addictive and your child wants as many fans, followers and likes as possible.** Likes, hearts, emojis, gold coins, and other icons and credits are social and gaming currency. These gifts from others signal the reward center in your child's brain, making them feel loved and sometimes allowing them to do more within the app or game. Kids want these rewards, will be sad if they are lacking, and will do things to get them.
- 3. If your child is over 12, they use SnapChat and it is their language of choice.** Your child probably has at least five SnapStreaks going at all times. If your child does not keep up with these streaks their world will collapse and they will die of humiliation. This is one reason they cannot be without their phone. If you take away their device for some reason, they will give a friend their password and ask them to keep the streaks going for them. Passwords are shared like candy.
- 4. Social media and any content sharing sites can get real mean real quick.** You're 13 and someone has made you mad so you call them some names in a group chat. Or you just feel like causing some drama so you create a fake Instagram account and start talking about the kids you know. Or you go online and comment anonymously on someone's YouTube or Tic Tok videos. It's easy to be mean from behind a device. And easy for kids to get their feelings hurt.
- 5. Your child has been asked for a nude.** It's possible that they didn't send one, but it's also very possible that they did. They may have shared one with a peer from school or someone they met online or while gaming. They may even have been coerced or threatened to send more pics or videos. If so, they're struggling to decide which option is more frightening — telling a parent or dealing with a predator.
- 6. There are millions of sex offenders in the world. And they want to talk to your kids.** They know what sites kids use — from Roblox and Fortnite to Kik and Instagram — and know how to talk to them. They'll give your child a compliment, credit or gold coin and your child will think they have a new friend.



7. **Kids are regularly connecting with strangers, including the aforementioned sex offenders.** It's not only kids' pictures and videos being seen by strangers online. Kids are live broadcasting from their bedrooms and people around the globe — including the aforementioned sex offenders — are watching them as they get ready for school, hang out with friends, sing, play games, sleep (yes, sleep) and more. Parents and teachers are occasionally in their live broadcasts, too, but just don't know it.



8. **Even if you have a great relationship with your kids, they don't want to tell you when something upsetting happens online.** They're scared you will overreact, scream, take their device, punish them and possibly humiliate them. They are embarrassed enough already and don't know what to do. Even if you ask, "Is something bothering you?" they likely won't tell you.



9. **It will be ok. Awareness is the first crucial step.** Please be aware that these are ever present risks. We suggest you not only talk to your kids about these things but also **PRACTICE** online safety with them. Teach them to **STOP** the communication if someone asks them for something personal or is rude, **BLOCK** that person without feeling bad or guilty about it, and **TALK** to someone they trust when they need help. Be cool, calm and allow for missteps. Problems will arise but the way you deal with them will make all the difference in the world. Kids can empower themselves with a **STOP BLOCK** and **TALK** approach. Repeat it with them and use it and model its use.

10. **We'll say it again: Stay calm.** Tell them they can talk to you without feeling ashamed. Tell them you will not yell or blame them and then don't. It wasn't their fault. Our online world is difficult to manage at any age, let alone at 12 years old.

Resources:

suffolkdistrictattorney.com

suffolkcac.org

[@StopBlockTalk on Instagram](#)

Cybertip Report: 1-800-843-5678

www.cybertipline.com

www.netsmartz.org

www.FTC.gov/kidsonline

Always remember to STOP BLOCK and TALK