



The Kinship Connection

For grandparents raising grandchildren



Internet, Social Media & Cell Phone Safety

Dear Grandparents:

Each day brings new opportunities and challenges as we raise our grandchildren in a world where the internet and social media play such a vital role in their lives.

Our grandchildren don't know a world without the internet. Therefore, it is important that you guide them so that their experience is a positive one.

While often good for social connectivity, business or just fun, the internet and social media also present many pitfalls and avenues for trouble and danger.

It is important that your grandchildren understand that social media can have negative effects, including job loss and even criminal charges.

This newsletter sets out to empower you with information to help you and your grandchildren navigate the internet safely—from creating a media use plan—to knowing safety measures to take—to monitoring their time and usage on the internet.

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Family Media Use Plan Suggestions

- Keep TVs and electronical devices with screens out of bedrooms.
- Establish a time when all devices are to be turned off for the day.
- Enforce a media blackout during meals.
- Limit screen time to less than two hours per day depending upon the age of the child. Excessive media use has been associated with obesity, lack of sleep, school problems, aggression, etc.
- Look for media and App choices that are educational, or teach good values.
- Become familiar with popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Consider having your own profile on these sites so you can view what your grandchildren are posting.
- Discuss with your grandchildren, that when on-line, where you go and what you do is remembered. Comments, photos and posts remain indefinitely.
- Make sure your grandchildren know it isn't appropriate to send or receive pictures of people without clothing or sexy text messages from anyone.

Source: *How to Make a Family Media Use Plan*
www.healthychildren.org

The 4-1-1 on Cell Phones, the Internet and your Grandchildren

What's the right age for a child to have a cell phone?

There really is no "right" age to allow children to have a cell phone. You do, however, need to make decisions based on what makes sense for your grandchildren and their situation.

Some things to consider:

- How responsible is your grandchild? Cell phones are expensive and if you consider that there is a likelihood that the child will break or lose the phone, then waiting may be a better decision on your wallet.
- Consider the maturity level of your grandchild. Every child is different and although some experts may agree that middle school is a good time to give kids the responsibility of their own phone, some children may not be ready and should wait.
- It may be important for your grandchild to have a cell phone for emergencies or safety reasons. If there are medical issues with the child, a cell phone is a great safety precaution in case they need immediate assistance. Also, if the child spends time alone at home, having a phone can be peace of mind for you and your grandchild.
- If you do decide it is time for your grandchild to have a cell phone, monitoring the use of the phone as well as the applications they use is critical to their safety. Allow the child to use technologies that make sense without granting them access to ones that do not make sense for their age.

WHY should you Turn Off the Location Services on your grandchild's cell phone...

- For Safety! Location Services makes it easy for your child to broadcast their location unknowingly or on purpose.
- Keep your grandchild's location private to prevent apps like Instagram from automatically tagging a photo with a geographic location for everyone to see.
- When in doubt opt for privacy. Settings can be changed to allow your location to be known, in certain situations, for example when you are trying to obtain directions, your location is necessary, so turn it on.

Stay Safe online!

There are steps that each and every social media user can remember while using social media apps and platforms online. Avoiding common pitfalls can help users have a more enjoyable social media experience and stay safe.

Things to remember about social media:

- It never goes away even if you delete it.
- The whole world may see it; never has the world been so connected.
- You can lose an employment opportunity; many employers request to see your social media accounts.
- You can face criminal prosecution.

Avoid Pitfalls:

- Do not post when and how long you are going out of town.
- Delete or block negative followers
- Do not share anything you wouldn't want your family to see.

Be Aware!

The internet and social media present many opportunities to learn and have social connections. However, because of the possible danger and opportunity for trouble with children and young adults, it is important to be mindful of the consequences of being online.

Look out for these online behaviors:

Trolling – cyber harassment which can be emotionally harmful.

Cyberstalking – is as harmful as stalking in person and carries similar criminal charges.

Cyberbullying – a relentless teasing in a mean or negative tone that is used to make someone feel bad. Young people have been known to commit suicide in extreme cases of cyberbullying.

Revenge Porn – a new cyberbullying trend where former romantic partners post homemade photos and videos to embarrass someone. This is a crime and has criminal charges attached.

Sexual Predators – although often pedophiles, sexual predators can inflict sexual harassment on someone of any age.

Lack of Privacy – social media exposes your whole life to strangers and can be seen by people all over the world. It is important to protect your personal information.

Source: The Dangers of Social Media, Cape May County Prosecutors Office

Remember:
Pictures and posts on the internet are there forever, even if you delete them.

Popular Social Media Sites

are available to people across the world. There are hundreds of Apps or websites that are just a click away, a few of the most popular are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

A sample of Apps that are listed in the CMC Prosecutor’s Office APP Reference Guide

Apps for Hiding Pictures, Messages and Video:



Keep Safe Calculator Photo Vault KYMS

Text Messaging Apps:



Kik (new) Text Now Whatsapp Messenger (FB)

Social Media and related Apps:



SnapChat ask.FM YouNow YouTube



Periscope Facebook Instagram Skype



Twitter House Party ooVoo Sarahah

Source: Cape May County Prosecutor’s Office

Kid's Checklist for Internet Safety

- Never give out personal information about yourself or your family.
- Do not upload photo's of yourself without your parent/grandparent's permission.
- Do not give out username or password information to anyone except your parent/grandparent.
- Don't open emails with attachments from people you do not know.
- Never agree to meet someone you met online without your parent/grandparent's consent.
- Beware! People are not always who they say they are.
- Information you believe is private may not be so. Be careful and think before you write.
- If someone writes something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, log off and tell your parent/grandparent.
- When in doubt, always ask or tell your parent/grandparent.

Source:#thinkB4upost

Cape May County Prosecutor's Office

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call (609) 465-5115 ext. 3609, or email rochford@njaes.rutgers.edu.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group is a program of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cape May County Family & Community Health Sciences that provides educational and social support to grandparents residing in Cape May County who are primary caregivers for their grandchildren.

The group meets the third Wednesday of the month except in June and July.

For more information about the **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group**, please call **(609) 465-5115 Ext. 3609**

The Kinship Connection is published for grandparents raising grandchildren. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group and all of Rutgers Cooperative Extension's educational programs are offered without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

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