



manage your kid's digital life

Smartphones. Tablets. Gaming systems. With so many options, it seems almost impossible to limit what (and how much) your child views. Don't worry: We've got a plan to regain control. **by MICHELLE CROUCH**

STEPHANIE Gardner's 7-year-old son was playing with a friend at their Charlotte, North Carolina, home when she noticed his bedroom got oddly quiet. Gardner poked her head in and found the two boys hunched over her iPhone, gawking at a pornographic video. Shocked, she grabbed the device. "My heart was in my throat," she says.

The boys hadn't found the X-rated site entirely by accident: They had typed in "having sex." Still, even if

your kid isn't looking, he could easily stumble onto inappropriate content.

Despite the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation to select and view online content together with your children (see "Guidelines for Screen Time," page 26), the explosion of Internet-connected devices has made it a challenge to monitor and limit screen-time habits. Kids ages 9 and under spend 3.6 hours a day using a screen, according to a survey of

500 moms by *Parents* and Asurion, a cell-phone-insurance provider that also offers tech expertise. Three out of five worry about exposure or access to inappropriate content, and 40 percent fear that strangers might contact their kids online. Yet most haven't set up Wi-Fi parental controls or time limits on their kids' devices, maybe because the process is so daunting. We'll cut through the confusion and make you Genius Bar smart (or close to it!).



Limit site access and you won't have to hover.

→ Safe Browsing, by Age

How much freedom should you give your child on the Web? Follow these guidelines from Caroline Knorr, senior parenting editor at Common Sense Media.

- ★ **For kids under 5: Build a "white list."** Choose a handful of sites you're comfortable with, and plug them into the device your child uses. As he gets older and needs greater access, simply add to the list.
- ★ **For kids 5 to 8: Use a kid-friendly browser.** Disable the browser (Safari, Chrome, etc) on your child's device by going to Settings. Then replace it with a kid-friendly one that you download from the app store. Consider Mobicip (free), which lets her access only sites it identifies as safe. Mobicip offers three filtering levels—strict, moderate, and mature—and lets you block specific domains, website categories, and keywords.
- ★ **For 9 and up: Go with Google SafeSearch.** Paired with the controls built into your operating system and browser, this search engine does an effective job of filtering explicit images and content. On a computer, go to google.com/preferences, click "Turn on SafeSearch" and then "Lock SafeSearch." On a mobile device, go to google.com, click "Settings," then select "Search settings" and choose "Filter explicit results." Repeat for each browser.

MOM SCREEN SOLUTION

"We created a folder on our devices where our children put all their apps. The rule is that they're not allowed to click anywhere else. If I catch them, I take it away."

Katie Greer, Internet-safety consultant and mom of two; Andover, Massachusetts



G-Rate Movies and Videos

If you're ready to let your child stream videos (but don't want him to stumble onto the Game of Thrones red wedding episode), follow these directions.



On Netflix

Set up a separate profile for your child and restrict the content by age (Little Kids, Older Kids, or Teens). Then safeguard your own account so your child can't access mature content if you share a device. Open Netflix on a computer and go to Parental Controls. After entering your password, you'll be prompted to set the viewing level and choose a four-digit PIN.



On Amazon

Go to "Amazon Video Settings" and establish a PIN for purchases so that your child can't download anything inappropriate. You can also filter content by device.



On YouTube

Download YouTube Kids, which offers everything they love about the video channel in a protective bubble. The simple interface is designed for kids 5 and under and includes a voice search for pre-readers. Older children may find it babyish, in which case you can opt for regular YouTube's Restricted Mode (you'll find it under Settings at the top of the home page). However, be aware that it's not a flawless filter: There's no sub for checking in on what they're watching.

Kid-Proof Your Wi-Fi



Circle with Disney

This little white cube monitors every device connected to your home Wi-Fi via an app on your phone. Set limits for screen time or specific apps (finally a way to shut down endless games of Minecraft!). You can block sites and apps, check your child's usage, and pause the Internet. Since devices can only be assigned to one person at a time, it may not work as well for households in which kids share devices with each other (or you). meetcircle.com, \$99



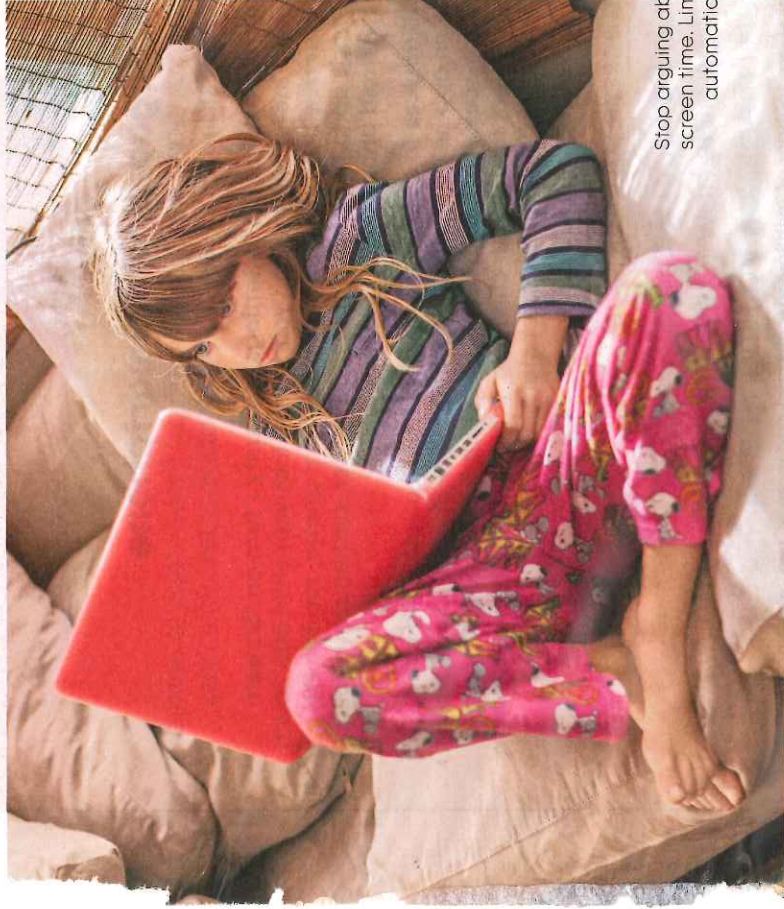
Kid-safe routers

Plug KodaSafe into your existing router, or Clean Router into a modem, then select which content to block and set time limits by device. You can also view your child's browsing history. KodaSafe: \$99; kodasafe.com. Clean Router: Free device, subscription starts at \$13 monthly; cleanrouter.com



Screen

This app/set-top box restricts device usage inside and outside the home, regardless of an Internet connection. Download the app to a smartphone or tablet and then set limits for how much it can be used per day and when. You can shut down all devices in the home (even if you're not there) with a shake of your phone. Though Screen doesn't filter or block content, you can view what's on your child's devices in real time or take screen shots to view later. \$159 at getscreen.com



Stop arguing about screen time. Limit it automatically.

What You're Doing Right

There are always extra steps you can take to safeguard kids' online activity, but a big thumbs-up for what you are already doing.

72%

of moms have password-protected your and/or your partner's devices.

60%

have established purchase-authorization controls for apps and websites.

55%

turn off location identification from social media when posting about your kids.

MOM SCREEN SOLUTION

"We use ClearPlay (\$8 a month), which edits non-child-friendly content out of DVDs, Blu-ray, and streamed movies. That way we can watch films together and avoid overly sexy content and four-letter words. It also eliminates gratuitous violence, picking up at the next scene."

Dana Villamagna, mom of three, Seminole, Florida

26%

of moms said it's easier to get their kids to eat their vegetables than to stop using their devices.

➔ Guide Their Gaming

It's easy to forget that your Xbox, Wii, or PlayStation is also a portal to the Web (and everything on it). See how each platform's parental controls measure up from most to least protective.

most

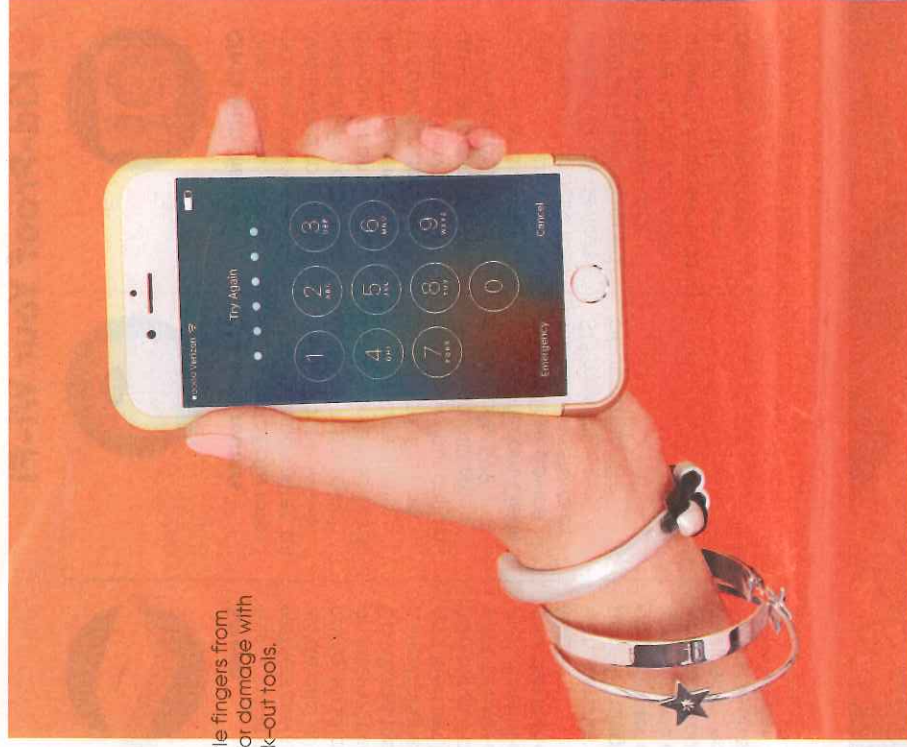
Xbox One/Xbox 360 Limit your child's access to games, movies, TV shows, music, and online interaction based on his age (which you enter when setting up an account). Or customize each setting. For Web access on Xbox One, you're able to choose from three levels of filtering, including an "allow list" of safe sites and the ability to block adult content (Xbox 360 does not offer Web filtering). You can prevent purchases of free and paid content. The Xbox 360 (but not the Xbox One) lets you set time limits.

medium

PlayStation 4 You can restrict the use of game and video content by age, as well as shut off the Web browser. Plus you can block voice chat and messaging with other online users. If your child is ready to download games, set up controls for what he views in the store and a monthly spending limit.

least

Wii U While the Wii lets you limit access to games based on rating and turn off the Internet, you can't filter video content by rating or age. And if you turn these features off, you'll need to enter a PIN whenever your kid wants to watch something.



Prevent little fingers from doing major damage with simple lock-out tools.

➔ Safeguard Your Smartphone

Before you hand over your cell, follow these steps to ensure that your kid won't delete half your apps or text your boss.

★ **Android devices** Go to **Settings > Security > turn on "Screen Pinning."** Then open the app you want to lock your child into. Touch the overview button at the bottom of your phone, tap the PIN that pops up in the lower right-hand corner, and hit start. Voilà! Your Android phone is childproofed.

★ **iOS devices** To disable the home button (so your child can't close an app he's playing on), tap **Settings > General > Accessibility > Guided Access**. Turn it on and then set up a passcode. Open the app you want to lock your child into. Triple-click the home button to launch Guided Access and click start.

MOM SCREEN SOLUTION

"Club Penguin is a great way to teach 4- to 8-year-olds how to interact safely online. It's social media on training wheels."

Leticia Barr, founder of TechSavvyMama.com and mom of two; Washington, D.C.

Know Your Options

Chances are your devices already include robust protection features. The rub: You need to activate (and in some cases download) them.

Android

Fire

iOS

Windows 10

	Android	Fire	iOS	Windows 10
PARENTAL CONTROLS	You can restrict apps, games, movies, and TV by maturity level. For music and books, you can restrict downloads or purchases of explicit content. The filter setting is protected by a PIN.	FreeTime (built into every device) restricts purchases, bans ads, and allows access only to content you approve.	Use a passcode to shut off access to many apps and features; filter music, movies, TV shows, websites, and apps by rating or age; and restrict your child's browsing to sites you specify.	Microsoft family lets you filter the Web, create a list of safe sites, restrict specific apps, regulate your child's ability to make purchases, and get e-mail reports of your child's Web, app, and game activity.
LIMITS/ TRACKING	You need to download a third-party app from Google Play like DinnerTime Plus (free).	Yes. You can set time restrictions for various activities and prevent the playing of games or videos until your child, say, reads for a set amount of time.	You need to download a third-party app like OurPact (free) to set time limits.	Yes. You can set limits for individual user sessions.
CAN YOU SET UP SEPARATE ACCOUNTS?	Yes.	Yes, you can create two password-protected adult accounts and four child accounts; it's easy for you to toggle between them.	No. Apple doesn't allow multiple user profiles on one device.	Yes.
BEST FOR	Any age. Download "Kids Mode" to lock a young child into a safe environment. For an older kid, download a third-party app like ShieldMyTeen (free) to filter mature content.	Kids 8 and under. FreeTime is too limiting for older kids. However, Amazon guarantees a replacement if your child drops or breaks the Fire Kids Edition, a huge plus.	Kids 6 and older who are ready for their own device. Assign your child an Apple ID and enable Family Sharing, which requires your approval before your child can download anything.	Kids over 8 who may be able to use a Windows 10 tablet in place of a PC or laptop.
WHERE TO START	Choose Settings > Users > Add a New User.	Open Settings > Profiles & Family Library > choose "Add Child Profile."	Go to Settings > General > Restrictions > Enable Restrictions.	Using your browser, go to account.microsoft.com/family , sign into your account > click "Add a child."
KEEP IN MIND	Make sure your device works with Google Play (some lower-end models don't) so you can download mainstream apps.	Your child's device can be used as a regular Fire tablet by switching to the adult setting on the FreeTime profile.	Unless you hide your own past purchases by logging into iTunes, your child will be able to see every app, song, and movie you buy.	You'll have to set up an online Microsoft account and e-mail address for your child.



Need help getting started? Google the name of your device and "parental controls." There's a good chance that another parent has made a how-to video. (BTW: Thank you!)