

# PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

May 2015

## Social Media: Parent's Responsibility

**"Parents, you are responsible for your kids, and that also means their online life."**

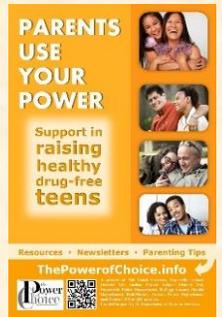
*Detective Rich Wistocki*

*Naperville Police Department*

Tweeting, posting and sharing every thought and action are a fact of life for adolescents. Connecting and interacting with their friends on line is how they communicate. "These connections are really integral to the social lives of today's kids," says Caroline Knorr, parenting editor for [Common Sense Media](#). Our job, as parents, is to understand the technology our children are using so that we can parent them effectively and keep them safe.

It seems technology is changing every day. Where do we start? Our kids are often way ahead of us on that learning curve, so it's imperative that we keep aware and alert. Our children need for us to set the boundaries that will keep them safe as they venture into this new and exciting world.

Use these Parenting Power Tips to get started.



### Parenting Power Tips:

- **Learn about the [social media, apps and websites](#) your child uses-** Check the history on your child's internet use—on computers as well as phones. If you are unsure about how to do that, take a class, go to a seminar or talk to other parents. Don't be intimidated by the technology. Use this month's [PowerTalk Activity for Families](#) to find a fun way to allow your child to teach you about technology and social media.
- **Set up accounts together-** When you and your child agree it's time for them to get involved with social media, work *with* them to set up their account. Learn with them as they begin their journey into this new world. Be sure to set privacy boundaries on their account to protect them from unwanted and unsafe activity. Always know the passwords to all of their accounts.
- **Talk about reasons for the rules-** Rules are put in place to keep us safe. Most social media sites have a rule that users must be 13 years old to open an account. There is very good reason for this—it's the law! The [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act](#) was created to protect the privacy of children under the age of 13. When an individual opens an account on social media, that site then collects personal information from the user. This Act was designed to protect the privacy of young users. Remember, when we allow our children to break one law or rule, we are sending a message that breaking the law is acceptable.
- **Provide a safety net** - Your child may find themselves in a difficult situation online. Let them know that you will help them resolve those situations when they come to you.
- **Outline consequences-** Use of social media is a privilege, not a right. Let your child know your expectations when it comes to internet use. If they violate your rules, they need to know that there will be consequences and you will enforce those consequences.
- **Social rules apply-** The internet can provide the distance and "invisibility" that make it easier to send messages that could be hurtful. It is important to treat people the same way on social media as you would treat them in person. Encourage your child to use the [THINK](#) strategy (Is it **T**True? **H**elpful? **I**nspiring? **N**ecessary? **K**ind) before sending any electronic message.
- **Spot check-** Make random, surprise checks of your child's electronic communications. Ask to see their phone or computer and check not only your child's posts but also their friends' posts.
- **Watch for "secret" accounts-** To avoid a parent's watchful eye, some adolescents may set up alternate accounts. If they seem to be spending time online, but you don't see much activity on the account you are monitoring, they may have an alternate account.
- **Use Alert software-** Stay in touch with what's happening with your child's on line. Use [Google alert](#) or [TeenSafe](#) to set alerts to come to your email or phone to help you monitor your child's online activity or find out what is being said about your child on line.
- **Use monitoring software on any device your child uses-** Find monitoring software that works for you. You should be in control of how your child uses their technology, the amount of time they spend online and what reaches them. The Naperville Police Department and the school districts have internet safety pages that offer parents more information and resources. [District 203 Internet Safety page](#) [District 204 Internet Safety page](#) [Naperville Police Department- Internet Safety](#)
- **Prevent overuse-** Social media can be exhausting...it's constant. This can cause stress and take your child away from important social interaction, family time and school work. Enforce time limits on your child's use of technology.
- **Model acceptable use-** Your child is always watching you. You are their most important model of healthy behavior. Make sure your social media and technology use reflects the behaviors you are looking for in your child.

### [PowerTalk Activity for Families](#)

Aliens have landed!  
Sometimes it feels like we live on a different planet than our children. Use this activity to have your children educate the newly landed alien (you) about technology and social media

Summer's Almost Here!  
Make the most of it with:  
[FAMILY ACTIVITIES THAT MAKE MEMORIES](#)



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