



## **PowerTalk for Families**

### **Electronic Media Awareness**

Social media and electronic communication are powerful tools. And like any powerful tool, they can be very useful, but they can also be misused. Most middle school/junior high schools students have the ability and intellectual aptitude to figure out how to use social media, but does that mean they are all *ready* to use it? Most adolescents are not developmentally or emotionally prepared to handle the sometimes overwhelming amount of information available to them through electronic communication and social media.

Whether your child currently uses social media or will in the future, it's important for you to be aware of the POWER that electronic media can have. Parents need to stay informed about electronic communication, phone apps and social media sites that their children may be exposed to.

#### **Family Activity- Aliens Have Landed!**

Pretend that you (the parent) are an extra-terrestrial (ET) that has just landed from another planet. *(You can make this role playing activity more fun by asking silly questions)* You studied and learned about our planet before you left on your journey. You have learned a lot about our planet and our people, but when you left your planet, the internet had not yet been invented and cell phones didn't exist (it took a really long time to get here). Your child is the kind Earthling that is going to help you learn and understand the internet. Have your child explain the internet, social media and cell phone communication (including texting) to you. This will allow you to evaluate his/her understanding of these tools. Then have him/her tell you how Earthlings use these tools to communicate with each other. If he/she has used them, they can actually demonstrate how each is used. If both of you are unfamiliar, you can do the research together to learn more about them. As the ET newcomer, you will need to ask questions that will help you better understand this strange new world of the internet, social media and phone apps. There are many advantages and disadvantages to this type of communication. Talk about those advantages and disadvantages and as a family to help your child have a healthy awareness this powerful tool.

For more information on electronic media and for a list of social media sites and phone apps, check out this month's Parents Use Your Power newsletter at:

<http://thepowerofchoice.info/6-8/parents/newsletters/parents-use-your-power-newsletters/>