

Managing your child's devices

The California Partners Project is engaged in a statewide listening tour with mothers, parents and caregivers to understand how they are navigating the integration of technology and devices into most aspects of their children's lives. A mom of two boys in southern California shared, "Internet safety is becoming a very thin line and we are kind of losing."

A mom of four told us about her frustration trying to filter websites and games she does not want her children to access and play. Not only is it challenging to set up the restrictions, but her children have also found ways to unravel her safety controls. It can be confusing to understand what to consider when it comes to securing online safety for youth. In addition to open and age-appropriate conversations with your children, four issues to consider include: content restrictions, privacy features, time limits, and in-app purchases.

Content settings, including parental filters, can restrict access to websites you deem inappropriate.

Privacy settings determine the type of information shared with internet companies and their clients.

Time limits allow users to restrict the duration of use or the time of day a device is used.

In-app purchasing preferences, including authentication requirements, can limit purchases in online games.

Tips to manage your child's devices

TIP 1: Engage in an age-appropriate conversation with your child.

According to an interview with Julia Storm, founder of [ReConnect](#), "if your tween or teen wants to access something online, no amount of parental controls will stop them. Ultimately our job as parents is to protect, mentor and guide. Talking to our kids about the reasons behind our rules shows that we are being thoughtful in our decision making." See these [tips](#) for framing a conversation with your teens.

TIP 2: Activate preferences on all devices and change default passwords.

Don't assume preferences will automatically upload to every device; activate these settings on each device. Some systems have default passwords for various settings that kids can bypass. Take the time to change and regularly update your passwords.

TIP 3: Start with Settings.

In most cases, according to research, if you want to begin to activate restrictions on devices or applications, whether for content or time limits, the best place to begin is Settings. Platforms like Google ([Digital Wellbeing](#)) and Apple ([Screen Time](#)) have programs that allow you to put restrictions on your devices. See the link for explanation [guides](#) from Common Sense Media and this [suggestion](#) to activate a Google Privacy tool.

TIP 4: Set in-app purchasing preferences.

Many games and programs promote purchases of digital options within the game. If you do not want your child to be able to purchase items without your consent, consider setting your preferred limits or authentication requirements. See [this article](#) in the *Wall Street Journal* for more information on setting limits for specific platforms.