Parental Control Solutions

HOW TO KEEP CONTROL OF THE WEB AND YOUR DEVICES

DIGITAL FUTURES INITIATIVE

Disclaimer: there is no "best" solution that fits everyone. Like any control system and every family situation, they are all different in their merits. For younger children, controls from inappropriate content and apps are a must. For older children and teens, they will need some access to sites and apps that we do not recommend for young children. Many of the platforms don't just stop at parental controls, but look to invade and trace every message, conversation and login time on every device. We do not advocate spy apps or tracking your children, especially without their knowledge as it simply creates a void of trust that may just last longer than the need to track their device. Below is a list of many of the control and tracking systems out there. Some will be better suited for your individual family needs and that is why we list many of them. In addition to these systems, make sure you have a continuous conversation with your children about this topic and create an overall plan, not just a tool approach to keeping safe and responsible on your apps and the web.

Best Safeguard: Avoid giving your children a device for as long as you can.

Be Aware:
- **More than phones** - You should consider measures for your home network, WiFi, Computers and Devices (Phones, web-enabled TVs, Voice enabled devices like Alexa, iPads, Kindles…)

- **Time Controls** – Digital devices are not a babysitter. Set time limits per day, less time the younger they are. Cut off 1 hour before bed until needed in the morning.

- **Viewing Threats** – devices are a gateway to the "worldwide web" – that means exposure to pornography, violence, extreme views and more. If you are not ready for you children to be exposed, you are not ready to give them a device

- **Mental Threats** – your child will likely be bullied either through text or social media on a device. Severe and /or extended bullying can have long-lasting and extreme effects

- **Physical Threats** – There are bad actors feeding off the naivety of kids online. It starts with extortion and leads to contact in real life and potentially human trafficking.

- **Your Kids are smarter than you** – when it comes to their digital freedom. Kids freely exchange devices, use private browsing and have a VPN on their phone that hides their activity. It's important to have conversations with them.

Parental Control Software

Not inclusive and not in any order. Below are some of the stronger solutions on the market

Bark	Qustodio	Kidslox
Bark is the simplest parental control app on the market, but it delivers powerful protection. Bark steals the show when it comes to social media monitoring, and with its recently updated its offerings that now include web filtering and screen time limits, it's hard to beat. (iOS & Android) **$14 / Month** **Unlimited devices** https://www.bark.us/	Well rated, sophisticated solution with all the features you would expect. This stands out for families with multiple device types (iOS, Android, Kindle) **$55 / Year up to 5 devices** www.qustodio.com	Powerful parental control solution for iPhone, iPad and Android phones. Control your family's device usage, filter web content, block apps or websites, and set weekly schedules with screen time limits, all from one place. **$4.29 / Month per device** https://kidslox.com/

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Norton Family Premier	Kaspersky Safe Kids	Wondershare Famisafe
Family Premier offers parents a variety of features and makes it easy to manage all those options. A notable feature is its robust web supervision, which allows you to block sites entirely, or simply keep a log of sites visited **$49.99 / Year** https://us.norton.com/norton-family-premier	A full-featured, **affordable** parental monitoring system for desktop and mobile platforms that doesn't impose limits on the number of devices you can monitor and works well on Android, iOS, Macs, and PCs. **$14.99 / Year** Unlimited Devices https://usa.kaspersky.com/safe-kids	Features all the usual tools for keeping kids safe, including setting time limits and blocking inappropriate content, but can also detect potentially inappropriate photos and text messages, block games, and monitor your kids' whereabouts with GPS and geofencing **$60.99 / Year** Up to 30 Devices https://famisafe.wondershare.com/

Whole Home Router Level Solutions

Most Internet providers and Wifi platforms include a series of parental controls – we recommend you start there if you have existing equipment. Looking at independent blocking technology, try these (remember, these only work on your home network, not when kids are outside the house):

OpenDNS FamilyShield: https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/

Owned by Cisco, FamilyShield is a free service from OpenDNS. Its parental control tools automatically block domains that OpenDNS has flagged under the headings "tasteless, proxy/anonymizer, sexuality, or pornography".
One of the big pluses here is that while FamilyShield can run on PCs and mobile devices, you can also apply it to your network router and filter all the traffic that passes through it – it's just a matter of changing the DNS server numbers in your control panel. For more options, there's also a premium service available.

Circle Home Plus   https://meetcircle.com/

A quality solution for younger kids. Parental control device Circle Home Plus delivers good tools for keeping an eye on your home network and protecting your children's phones and tablets. Circle Home Plus can monitor devices at the router level on your home network or via an app on your child's mobile devices. Circle's joint hardware and software solution is simple to set up and a good solution for parents who want control over all of their children's internet activity at home. A bit expensive but easy to set up and use, it requires the purchase of a device, $129 one-time and an ongoing monthly subscription for $9.99.

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Manufacturer & Carrier Protection Solutions

Tech Platforms

- **Apple Parental Locks**- https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT201304

  Apple devices only. Apple's parental locks, allow the parent to control use of selected apps, downloads, and prevention of access to explicit content. free

- **Google Family Link**- https://families.google.com/familylink/

  Android only. Manage apps, keep an eye on screen time, and set a bedtime for your child's device. free

Wireless Carriers Family Protection Options

- **Verizon Smart Family**- https://www.verizon.com/solutions-and-services/verizon-smart-family/ $4.99/month or $7.99/month for premium. Verizon users only. Smart Family helps you find the right balance between device time and family time. Establish time and data controls, and whether your kids are on Wi-Fi or using your data, you can block apps and set content filters. The premium version will also allow location services and driving insights.

- **AT&T Secure Family**- https://www.att.com/shop/wireless/smartlimits.html - $7.99/month for up to ten lines. AT&T customers only. With Secure Family, it can block cellular data usage, set text and purchase limits, block numbers, limit phone time during certain times of the day, and track your child's location.

- **T-Mobile Family Allowances**- https://www.t-mobile.com/support/plans-features/family-allowances - T-Mobile customers only. Family Allowances allows the parents to control time spent on phone, messages, downloads, and numbers to block.