

Set limits

- Make sure your teen uses privacy settings that limit access to who can view her online profile.
- Have your teen limit friends to people she actually knows, not strangers; review her friend list.
- Help your teen create a safe screen name that won't reveal identifying personal information, such as where she lives, gender, or age.
- Explain to your teen why some things, such as telephone numbers, addresses, and financial information, should stay private.

Teach online etiquette

- Teach teens to think twice before posting photos and videos; once they're on the web, they're out there, perhaps forever.
- Teach teens to use appropriate language and be courteous online.
- Caution teens not to use sex talk and to advise you if anyone approaches them inappropriately online, even if they know the person.

Communication is key

Learn how to communicate openly with your teen. By building an atmosphere of trust and understanding what your teen is experiencing in the social media world, it's more likely that he or she will come to you if something disturbing happens while on the Internet.

Hold weekly family meetings

- Hold a weekly family meeting. Set aside 15 minutes before or after a meal. Sit on the floor to equalize height (which corresponds with power), and ask your kids questions about their recent online experiences.
- Start the conversation with a question such as, "I heard that some kids have been bullied on Facebook. Do you know anyone who's been bullied? What happened? How did they feel about it?"
- Really listen to your teen's answers with a nonjudgmental expression on your face.
- Let your teen talk five times longer than you do.
- Do not criticize your teen; the idea is to build trust and open communication.

Have regular family dinners

- At least four times a week, sit down with all family members for dinner.
- Make this an opportunity to talk to each other by having everyone turn off their cellphones.
- If your family can't make it through a meal without checking their cellphones for messages, have everyone check their phones for one minute prior to eating, then turn them off and place them face down on the table. Set an alarm for 15 minutes. At that time, everyone can check their phones for one minute; then reset the alarm for 15 more minutes of family time.

Excerpts taken from article of Dr. Larry Rosen.

