

THE EMOTIONAL SIDE: Children

Basic network monitoring for your home actually starts with talking to your kids! Always remember, the network in your home is **yours**. Others use it at your discretion: it's not food, water, shelter. It is a luxury, not a necessity. Most importantly, this needs to be conveyed with **tact, timing, and tone** awareness. You want to give things to your kids, you want them to succeed and be happy. A large, overarching part of this happiness and success is **limiting screen time**. If it were not a factor, owners and CEOs of the current tech giants would not be doing the same for their kids – **limiting screens and social media**. You can go and search the Internet for anything like, "Google CEO does not allow kids on social media" and a plethora of articles pop up from Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and others who **do not allow** their children on devices or social media.



Depending on their ages, don't allow them to have a mobile device (a standard answer to the question, "When can I get one?" Might be, "When you get a job and you can pay for it.") Computers and mobiles could be used for limited times, as rewards throughout the day. Best practice dictates that **you are the parent** and the **device is yours, not theirs**. Children could consider the mobiles as a "long-term loan" from the parent, to be rescinded at any time.

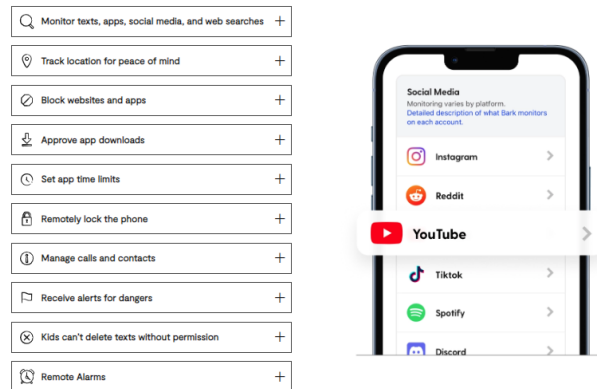
Toddler accidentally buys a car from Ebay - 1962 Austin-Heely Sprite car bought by 14-month-old Surella Stout (spelling?) in 2013 (ABC News, 2013). They kept it and will fix it up for her 16th birthday. It was a modest \$225.



I would strongly recommend using the parental controls built into the mobile device. As of late 2019, Android has a setting called “Digital Wellbeing and Parental Controls” that allow for monitoring and timing of apps and overall usage, and there are similar controls in Apple settings. You might also set up another account on the phone that is much more limited in what it can do. A different Google account would do the trick for Android phones, and a similar trick for Apple would work as well.

There are also options like the Bark Phone, with an application and built-in monitoring. See www.bark.us. It was named “Time Magazine’s Best Invention” in 2023.

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One thing that is strange to me is the fact that Android took off their “Guest Mode.” This was very handy if you wanted to let someone else use your phone but only use certain apps - like just the phone, or YouTube, or other apps (so no one could buy anything!). Guest Mode was set on the lock screen of the mobile - one password worked for the Owner, and another for the Guest. Or, the Owner was password protected, but just swiping on the word “guest” would get someone else on the device without a password, but in the limited mode. It was a great feature for anyone who wanted to simply hand their device over to someone else without compromising any security.

Basic trust and respect are built flowing both ways - and since you're the adult, it starts with you showing them things, including respect. The cute baby pictures in the bathtub are great, but **SHOULD NOT GO ONLINE ANYWHERE**. Please remember, screen shots exist, and Murphy's Law is always in effect: Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. Be sure to know that future employers use Google, classmates use Google, and employers might use more extensive background checks. The one picture you thought was “safe” or “locked down” to private will not be. This is just Murphy's Law.



As the parent, you can “join” your kids online, too. Does this mean you have to play video games, or participate? Heavens, no! I know I will never enjoy games like my son, and will not be as sociable as my daughter. No big deal. The key is being present and celebrating their game victories. I do not know how to play Minecraft, but I know what you can build in the worlds there, and both of my kids show me, proudly, what they built over the years. I “oohh and ahhh” at the right times. It has worked out well so far.



Age-appropriate explanations for what YOU choose to do or not do online are also very important in building trust. Your kids need to be able to trust you in posting online about them.

You need to think about your kids' digital lives and how to "shut down" your parent's digital life, too.

