

# Parenting Tweens and Teens in the **Digital World**



## Smartphone Safety Tips

Smartphones offer both communication and safety benefits for parents and teens. However, like most technologies, they also pose some safety risks to adolescents. In order to better protect your child, it's important to know the steps you can take to make her/his smartphone use safer.

### IMPORTANT SAFETY GUIDELINES

- 1** Take the time to learn about what features are included on the smartphone. Are there pre-installed apps (such as Instagram® and Facebook®) or games that you need to become more familiar with? Do you understand how the location-based services work and why it may be a good idea to turn location services off for photos and some apps?
- 2** Early on, set the expectation that you will monitor your teen's use of their smartphone. It's important that you follow-through on what you have told your teen, and as required, enforce consequences for any inappropriate behaviour/actions.
- 3** Explore the possibility of blocking access to sites (such as those with sexually explicit content) by using the settings on the device and/or parental control apps or by contacting the carrier/service provider.
- 4** Set a time every evening in which all technology, including smartphones, are shut off in the house. Also, establish guidelines around texting and gaming (who teens can do these things with and on what sites/apps).
- 5** Discuss the importance of not responding to harassing, harmful or unsolicited calls or messages sent to them and to save these types of messages. Teach your child how to block calls/messages from unwanted users and reinforce the importance of talking to a safe adult if in receipt of these types of messages.

**Your child's smartphone and the information it carries may be used in urgent safety-related situations (e.g., if a child goes missing). It is important to know what information and tracking capabilities exist on the phone. As the contract owner of the phone, you are entitled to access information regarding inbound/outbound calls as well as the last known time of use of the device. Some devices also allow you to load apps that can track the location of the phone. A code is required – make sure you know it!**

**Teens will make mistakes. Re-establish the boundaries around responsible phone use and remind your child on a regular basis that s/he can talk to you about any issues s/he may be facing.**

visit [mobility.protectchildren.ca](http://mobility.protectchildren.ca) for more information



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