



Tech Wise Family – Blocking Access

Recognize Points of Access

There are a variety of locations in your home where your kids can access pornography - most of them found online. The obvious culprit is going to be a mobile device. Having a game plan for when your kids receive their first device should be well thought out. Remember, the most common point of entry for first time porn exposure is through mobile devices. So knowing how they will be used before they are ever in your kid's possession is important.

If your kids already have a device then be sure to use the parental controls on the device. Also, limit the number of apps they can have on the device at one time. This better helps you (and them) manage what is coming and going. You might also consider removing the browser, social media channels, and YouTube from the phone till you feel they are ready.

Encourage your kids to be open and honest with you about what apps they use on their phones or tablets. For some families, a "no secret password" policy works, where family members either forego the use of passwords on their devices or share their passwords with you, the parent.

Set Parental Controls

This is one of the best things you can do for almost every tool your child has access to that also has access to the internet. Specifically, you might want to consider Netflix, Hulu, and other similar accounts. These services have filters or kid-friendly channels that you can utilize so be sure to do your research. Hulu has parental controls, so does Netflix, Amazon, and Sling. Take the extra time to set up filters and controls to keep your family safe. You will be happy you did so.



Enter Their World

Be sure you set aside time to experience first hand what it is your child is watching and hearing. Sometime this means sitting down and playing a video game with them. Other times it's allowing them to have control of the music played to and from school, sports practices and games, or while doing errands. It can even be having them create a playlist of their favorite music or some of their favorite TV shows or movies. This will give you a front row seat into what they are engaging and give you an idea of how it might be speaking to them.

Pay Attention To Ratings

Movies are the most notorious culprits for ratings but did you know music and video games also have rating systems? Be smart about what music and which games you let your children play. For music use the "parental advisory label program". For video games use the ESRB rating system ("E for Everyone," "T for Teen," etc.), but be sure to use it wisely. Even a good rating on music or a teen rating on a game may not be suitable for teens in your home. Remember you're the parent!

Utilize Filters and Apps

There are some great new filters for the home that help you manually control content on each of the devices connected to your internet. One of those is Circle by Disney. This device connects to your router and allows you to filter content on every device connected through WiFi. This will also allow for time limits on certain apps, such as social media, YouTube, and Minecraft.

Another filter is Koala safe. This device allows you to establish a child-safe WiFi network. When your child's friends come over they can use the child-safe WiFi password to connect. The filters and limits previously established on this child-safe network will be applied to the friend's device or phone as well.

There are many others and finding the one that works best for you and your family will be important. But don't do it before it's too late.

Also, from time to time, take an inventory of which apps your family members have downloaded, what they seem to spend the most time on, and what the purpose or content of the app entails. If necessary, use a service like OurPact, which allows you to set time limits, block calls from strangers, and more.