

Family Life

How to Talk to Your Kids Using Technology



As parents, our job is to be a step ahead of our kids—to know what they are doing and show them how to do it appropriately; to know the limits of kids at different ages and be realistic that despite our kids' mature moments, they are still kids; and to parent online as we do off-line so if they are crossing a line, we can intervene.

Developmental differences factor into our kids' online lives in tangible ways. Just because our kids may look and act maturely, that doesn't absolve us of our license to parent any more than it gives our kids a license to freely use these applications. It's all about development, especially of our kids' brains!

That being said, there are actually many ways we can talk with our kids using technology.

Using Technology to Talk With Our Kids

Technology Uses in Talking With Kids and Teens

E-mail	<p>Advantages: great for letter-like communication, updates, sending pictures, attachments, references, humor, and staying in touch</p> <p>Disadvantages: not great for "instant" communication or for having a significant conversation that is better off-line</p>
	<p>Advantages: updates such as plan changes</p>
Text	<p>Disadvantages: not great if requires immediate reply; not perfect for full, long conversation; may hinder writing and social abilities in teens because of shorthand used</p>
Social networking post	<p>Advantages: great way to stay connected and let kids know you are involved; good for humor and just being involved</p>

Disadvantages: privacy concerns—entire network can view post; not appropriate for private conversation but often used that way

Advantages: allows direct communication

Cell phone call

Disadvantages: limited by cell coverage

Instant messaging

Advantages: instant communications like texting

Disadvantages: must be online and logged on to the service to communicate with the person of interest; not great for full conversation

Advantages: visual conversation in real time; can see body language and facial expressions to gauge emotional responses

Video chat

Disadvantages: connection issues; interference issues if music or other ambient noise on either side; need to be online and logged in

Author

Gwenn Schurgin O’Keeffe, MD, FAAP

Last Updated

10/1/2013

Source

CyberSafe: Protecting and Empowering Kids in the Digital World of Texting, Gaming, and Social Media (Copyright © 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.