

Remember

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Kids today have grown up using digital devices and computers to communicate – they're comfortable with them and sometimes prefer them.

The key to learning how and when to use electronic communications is not to denigrate how kids use digital devices, but to emphasize that there are times and situations when it's best not to type, but to talk.



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TIPS ABOUT TEXTING A Guide for Parents and Kids



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Texting isn't the same as talking

Most adults intuitively understand that there may be times or situations when it's more appropriate to have a face-to-face or phone conversation, but kids can have a tough time with this idea. They've grown up with electronics and often prefer that type of communication.

It's important, though, for kids to be aware of the issues surrounding texting, and for them to learn to control their technologies – not for these devices to control *them*.

Avoiding problems with Texting

Avoiding problems with texting is really about common sense, not so much about understanding technology.

If you don't know as much as your child about texting and cell phones, don't worry about it!

Almost half of teen girls tell us in research that they delete things off their phones before their parents check the device. Remember to *talk* to your kids, because it's almost impossible to know otherwise what kids are up to on mobile devices.

Consider the age of your child when considering if, or when, to permit texting privileges. Texting is a very powerful technology to give to young children and teens. Children can have a cell phone without texting abilities; just call your cell phone provider to turn these off on your child's phone.

Texting is convenient and it's easy for it to become a habit. Every now and then, ask yourself: would it be better to talk in this situation? It can be difficult to "read" emotions in a text, and that can make it easy to be misunderstood.

It is easy to say something in texting that you would not have the courage to say to a person's face. Sometimes, this means that it's better left unsaid.

Don't go to your cell phone when you're upset, frustrated, or angry. You may text something you'll regret later.

Don't ever let anyone pressure or force you into texting something. If someone has to pressure you into texting something, it's probably not a good idea to go along with it.

Today's kids are used to being in touch 24/7. Being out of touch (putting away that cell phone) may actually make them *anxious* because they are so accustomed to that constant flow of information. Talk about this with your kids. Point out that the anxiety will always win, unless they decide to control the technology and not to let it control them.

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