
Parenting, Media, and Everything In Between

Parents' Ultimate Guide to Parental Controls

Do you need parental controls? What are the options? Do they really work? Here's everything you need to know about the wide array of parental control solutions, from OS settings to monitoring apps to network hardware. By [Caroline Knorr](#) 2/27/2019

Topics: [Cellphone Parenting](#), [Privacy and Internet Safety](#), [Social Media](#)

[Ver en español](#)



Even if you've talked to your kids about [screen-time limits](#) and [responsible online behavior](#), it's still really tough to manage what they do when you're not there (and even when you are). Parental controls can support you in [your efforts to keep your kids' internet experiences safe, fun, and productive](#). They work best when used openly and honestly in partnership with your kids -- not as a [stealth spying method](#).

Figuring out what kind of parental control is best is entirely based on your own family's needs. Some families can get by with simple, free browser settings to filter inappropriate content. Some families need help clamping down

on screen time. Some folks are cool with spot-checks on their kids' devices. Wherever you are in your search, this guide can help you make sense of the wide array of options for managing your family's devices. Find the answers to parents' most frequently asked questions about parental controls.

[What are the best parental controls for blocking websites?](#)

[What are the best parental controls for blocking websites and filtering content?](#)

[What are the best parental controls for setting limits and monitoring kids?](#)

[What are the best parental controls for kids' phones?](#)

[What are the best parental controls for tracking location?](#)

[What are the best network parental controls?](#)

[What are the best parental control options for iOS phones and tablets?](#)

[What are the best parental control options for Android devices?](#)

[Can I set parental controls in specific apps, such as Snapchat?](#)

[Do I need to worry about my kid disabling parental controls?](#)

[Will my kid know that I'm using parental controls?](#)

What are the best parental controls if I want to:

Block websites. If you just want to limit what your kids can search for, your best option is to enable Google SafeSearch in whichever browser or browsers you use. First, you need to make sure your browsers use Google as their default search engine, and then you need to turn on SafeSearch. This is a good precaution to take as soon as your kids start going online and you want to make sure they don't accidentally stumble across something yucky.

[Here's how to enable SafeSearch.](#)

Block websites and filter content. If you want to prevent access to specific websites and limit your kid's exposure to inappropriate content such as mature games or [porn](#), you can use the parental controls that are built into your device's operating system. Every major operating system -- Microsoft's Windows, Apple's Mac OS, Google Chrome, and Amazon Fire -- offers settings to keep kids from accessing stuff you don't want them to see. To get the benefits, you need to use the most updated version of the operating system, and each user has to log in under his or her profile. The settings apply globally to everything the computer accesses. Each works differently and has its own pros and cons. This is the best solution if your kids are younger and are primarily using a home device. Check out each one's features: [Microsoft](#), [Apple](#), [Google](#), [Amazon](#).

Block websites, filter content, impose time limits, see what my kids are doing. A full-featured, third-party parental control service such as Qustodio or [NetNanny](#) will give you a lot of control over all of your kid's devices (the ones they use at home as well as their phones). These can be pricey (especially if you have several kids to monitor), but the cost includes constant device monitoring, offering you visibility into how kids are using their devices. These parental controls can only keep track of accounts that they know your kid is using, and for some apps, you'll need your kid's password in order to monitor activity. If your kid creates a brand-new profile on Instagram using a friend's computer without telling you, for example, the parental controls won't cover that account.

Monitor my kid's phone. To keep tabs on your tween or teen's phone, your best bet is to download an app such as [Bark](#), KidBridge (formerly TeenSafe), or WebWatcher, which monitor text messages, social networks, emails, and other mobile functions. These are especially helpful if you're concerned about potentially risky conversations or

iffy topics your kid might be engaging in. Bark, for example, notifies you when it detects "alert" words, such as "drugs." To monitor social media, you'll need your kid's account information, including passwords.

Track my kid's location. You can use GPS trackers such as [Find My Friends](#), FamiSafe, and AT&T's SmartLimits apps to stay abreast of your kid's whereabouts. Your kid's phone needs to be on for these to work, though.

Manage all devices on the network, limit screen time, filter content, turn off Wi-Fi. There are both hardware and software solutions to control your home network and your home Wi-Fi. To name a few popular ones: [OpenDNS](#) is a download that works with your existing router (the device that brings the internet into your home) to filter internet content. [Circle Home](#) is a device that pairs with your existing router and offers management features such as the ability to pause access to the internet, create time limits, and add content filters. (Some new Netgear routers are also bundling Circle's features.) Some internet service providers such as Comcast and Verizon offer parental control features that apply to all devices on the network. Network solutions can work for families with kids of different ages; however, mucking around in your network and Wi-Fi settings can be challenging, and the controls don't apply when kids are on a different network.

What are the best parental control options for iOS phones and tablets?

If you have an iPhone or iPad, Apple's [Screen Time](#) settings let you manage nearly every aspect of your kid's iOS device, including how much time kids spend in individual apps and games and what they download. You can even turn the phone off for specified periods, such as bedtime. There are two ways to enable Screen Time, either by setting it up on your kid's device and password-protecting the settings or by setting up Family Sharing and managing the features from your phone.

What are the best parental control options for Android devices?

Android devices vary a lot in what they offer, so check your device's settings to see what options you have. If your kid is under 13, you can download [Google's Family Link](#) to track and control online activity, including text messaging and social media, using your own phone. You can also use Android's Digital Wellbeing settings, which are built into the latest version of the OS. These can help kids become more mindful of the time they're spending online -- and hopefully help them cut down. You'll want to help your kid enable the settings that will be most useful on the road to self-regulation.

Can I set parental controls in specific apps, such as Snapchat?

In addition to blocking specific people, most apps let you disable features that could pose some risks for kids. For example, you may be able to turn off chatting, restrict conversation to friends only, and hide your profile so that it won't show up in search results. Some apps go a step further by letting users [control their own use of the app](#). TikTok's [Digital Wellbeing features](#) help curb time spent on the app and limit inappropriate videos. YouTube lets you set a reminder to take a break. To find out if your kids' favorite apps offer any types of restrictions, go to the app's settings section (usually represented by the gear icon). Unless an app offers passcode-protection for its settings (and most don't), your kid can easily reverse them.

Do I need to worry about my kid disabling parental controls?

Yes, kids can undo parental controls. In fact, the directions on how to get around them are easily available on the internet. Depending on your software, you may get a notification that the parental control was breached -- or not. Kids can figure out all sorts of ingenious methods to keep doing what they want to be doing -- talking to friends, staying up late playing Fortnite, and watching videos you don't want them to see. If you notice something fishy such as a steep drop-off in your parental control notifications, Wi-Fi or data activity after you've turned off the network, or anything else that indicates the parental control isn't working the way it's supposed to, your kid may have figured out how to get around it. It could be for another reason, though, since parental controls can be affected by system updates, power outages, and other technical issues.

Will my kid know that I'm using parental controls?

It really depends on the type of controls you install and the devices you have. Some parental controls can be installed without your kids knowing, but Common Sense Media doesn't recommend it (unless you have a really serious issue with your kid and you need to monitor discreetly). In fact, be cautious with companies that promise covert monitoring, as they tend to prey on parents' fears. Parental control companies that encourage open dialogue will most likely be more helpful anyway, because at some point you'll need to discuss what you find. And that's a lot easier to do if your kid already knows you're monitoring them. If you decide to use parental controls, talk to your kids about why you're using them (to help keep them safe) and how your ultimate goal is for them to learn how to interact online responsibly and regulate their own usage independently. Check out our [talking points](#) for building trust with your kid when you're using parental controls.

[About Caroline Knorr](#)

As Common Sense Media's parenting editor, Caroline helps parents make sense of what's going on in their kids' media lives. From games to cell phones to movies and more, if you're wondering "what's the right age for...?"... [Read more](#)

Do you think parental controls provide a false sense of security?

Comments (64)

Adult written by [Rad 2K](#)

November 29, 2018

We use Mobicip Parental control for my 9 and 12 year old kids. Quite happy with the cross platform support they provide for our multiple devices. The fact that they report Youtube videos watched works whether watched in the app or through a browser is amazing.

Adult written by [Photonical](#)

May 20, 2018

I cannot find any movie rating tool on the internet that allows me to obtain faith-based reviews from fellow Christians - nor the ability to filter movies based on faith-based reviews. As an example, see my review on Deadpool 2. I really wish your site would allow users like myself to add faith-based commentary (whether

Christian, Jewish, Muslim, other) on the movie, and allow me to filter movies based on these ratings and comments. Thank you.

Parent written by [Kristi M.](#)

May 16, 2018

This article was very helpful in teaching me the difference between parental controls, operating system and browser controls, 3rd party filtering/monitoring, etc. Is there any way this information could be found under "Parent Concerns/Internet Safety"? I spent 30+ minutes on the site reading and clicking through to find these specific topics. Parents are desperate for this information as the first steps in protecting our kids. I'm also so glad that I learned that I can change the internet search engine on the ipad to a kid friendly one! Thank you!

Adult written by [Bryan W.](#)

May 14, 2018

LockItTight is an cool parental monitoring software. You install the app on the computers and phones and get reports for all devices online . The zone alert feature is especially useful.

Parent of a 2 and 13 year old written by [Muni](#)

April 9, 2018

Best thing to do is to set clear rules. Teens think they don't need monitoring when in reality it's safer us parents know whats going on. Following rules is important and that's why our family has set parental control rules for each age. Young teens will use the walled garden until 16 unless supervised. Blocking social media etc. If you feel you need parental controls then search your options.

Parent written by [Jordan C.](#)

April 2, 2018

I discovered one of my children doing things that I found rather disappointing, so I decided to research into internet and online security as well as monitoring programs for my children. I discovered OpenDNS and Qustodio, I was initially satisfied with both programs, as I expected, as these are paid services. I was satisfied until I came across some very disturbing realities from both of them, even with such secure programs I discovered SMS messages along with chat groups asking my children to join unknown and insecure groups on applications like Facebook Messenger and some other messaging apps. Not only did these programs fail to prevent such communication or at the very least notify me, I noticed that use of these programs caused my Data rates to soar, so not only am I paying for unreliable programs now these very programs are costing more money than originally intended. After having these programs for 4 months and discovering that my Data rates rose, my children became targets of predators, then when I thought it couldn't get any worse my child's laptop became infected with Malware which these programs both guarantee to protect against. In short, I warn all parents reading to be extremely careful in which services you invest in before getting them.

Adult written by [Monica W.](#)

February 16, 2018

Google's parental controls no longer work, which is a super bummer since that's why we got a chromebook. Thankfully hubby found Koalasafe. Having a teen who is easily distracted and needs to get online to do homework

is a recipe for disaster. (I have no affiliation with the company, just putting it out there to help other parents.) Being able to set different restrictions, turn off immediately, block websites are all super easy from any internet enabled device.

Parent written by [Tasha B.](#)

November 22, 2017

I recently started using Safe Lagoon parenting solutions and the price is good, the features are amazing. We replaced 3 other apps and settings with this 1 app. It gives us control of what the kids do online and we can see texts. They have different levels of protection.

Kid, 9 years old October 21, 2017

I think parental controls are good for younger kids. But older kids over 8 should not have parental controls. I tested ones myself, and find them very limiting. I think that parental controls are not very good.

Parent written by [Traditionalvalues](#)

October 29, 2017

It's good that you are taking the time to express your views at such a young age. Keep up the good work. Hopefully your parents can find the right controls that work well for you and them. Best of luck to you.

Teen, 13 years old written by [rockette](#)

September 23, 2017

As someone on the younger side, who grew up around constantly changing technology, I think severe parental controls is just a glorified excuse to be a helicopter parent. I get it, you want your kids to be safe, but it's *so easy* to break through most of these parental blocks. And please don't use that as an excuse to amp up your security. Trust me, no matter how your kids respond to controls, they're probably pissed. Maybe a little upset, maybe a lot, if their over the age of 10, they probably feel out-of-the-loop and like their life relies on yours. It's a great way to teach dependence. Yes, dependence, not independence. Kids become so dependent on their parents providing walled gardens of PBS and YoutubeKids that they become sheltered and their technological world depends on these built-in controls. That is, until the kid realizes they're smarter than these pre-made controls. Then, parents are the angry ones. Parents trying to control what websites they go on (props to all the websites that SEND OUT WEEKLY INTERNET HISTORY EMAILS), and it turns into a more controlling situation than say... when you were a kid. These parents that don't allow their kids to explore online, virtually experiencing things that many people around the globe will never have the privilege to. These are the same parents that parade around with their kid like they're a trophy, not letting them out of your sight until they move. And even then, those are parents obsessed with calling on the phone. Disagree with me? That's your problem. If this is how I see it, and frankly how half my grade sees it, your kids might see it the same way. I'm learning programming, unbeknownst to my family, and what I can do with a computer is pretty cool, compared to most. This is where I talk about how easy it is to bypass controls. Even if you don't know anything about computers, all it takes is a simple search into google "parental controls bypass" where you can search for a host, enter a url, and behold: the sacred, banned website. Seriously though, the more control parents put on their lives, the more kids want to break out of it.

Teen, 16 years old written by [DR11037](#)

April 30, 2018

Agreed, I'm 16 and my parents still use parental controls. They always say that if I make good choices and get homework done and have all A's and B's they'll unblock it, but I always screw up. It makes me angry that I have to be restricted from things when all of my friends have the freedom to browse the internet, even my phone is blocked. I have no games, social media, access to the App Store, or internet. Like hello I'm gonna be an adult in two next December so quit babying me I'm not two. I used to have a way to bypass parental controls on my Mac but my mom blocked that as well. If I try to do it my laptop will shut down and won't reboot until my mom puts in her password. To all you parents out there good luck trying to block your children from the internet because we will always find a way to bypass it since we are the new era that was born into technology so we have more knowledge than you do unless you work with technology for a living then we don't but all we have to do is look it up on the internet and then bam we're free from our restraints.

Adult written by [Dan G.](#)

May 15, 2017

With my 10-year-old I started using OpenDNS and an additional parental control. There are dozens of such programs. I use Time Boss Pro. It has many features - forced breaks, time limitation of websites, control from my Android mobile...

Adult written by [Shredderhead](#)

February 16, 2017

After trying several parenting controls on my kids smartphones, including "Limitly" listed above, which looked amazing but it did not function properly, I finally found an app called "DinnerTime" that I absolutely love. It gives you control of what they can access and when. I also use Mobicip to control what topics they can look up in their search engines. Total cost for both of these apps is approximately \$45/year. My kids are 12 & 14 and just got smart phones, and they have adjusted nicely to these controls.

Parent written by [Robert W.](#)

May 13, 2017

I just joined Common Sense Media a few minutes ago because I'm a father looking for a program to put on my 16 year old daughter's android phone. I find that most are just garbage. I need to be able to control who she calls and texts, as well as who call and text her. In addition I need to be able to set usage and time limits for the above as well as any and/or all internet (social media) activity. As her responsibility and trust levels increase, I'd like to be able to remove or adjust those restrictions. This is all very new to me. Without going into details, she was placed in my custody last Sunday by the State of Georgia Dept. of Family and Children's Services, because of severe abuse in her home that she never informed me of. Sorry for the rant, but I wanted to qualify why I have to be so strict at the moment. I also need to be able to control this from my android and PC. ANY guidance will be greatly appreciated as I just don't know where else to look. I'm fairly new to the internet. Katz

Adult written by [Galaxia](#)

May 29, 2018

I recommend you have a look at securekids.es for android. You can set time limits to all apps or just a few. There won't be any calls going in or out from numbers you haven't allowed. You can control it via web

browser from your mobile or computer. Although it is not perfect, I have been using it for quite some time.

Adult written by [Alycia P.](#)

January 2, 2017

These are great parental control tips for Android. While I've used these, sometimes I just want a quick and easy way to set up control, for this I use a free app called Kids Zone Parental Control - <https://goo.gl/5KL2BI>

Parent written by [Hytg F.](#)

December 20, 2016

Can I do anything like this on Linux and already tried openings but my kid could get past it

Adult written by [Angela H.](#)

December 14, 2016

I am a mother of two teenagers and recently I was very concerned about the time they spend online. After I searched online I picked and tried the Surfie app free trial. To my surprise it worked and I think every parent should download an app like that. Its part of our responsibility when we get them phones

Adult written by [Sherry S.](#)

December 14, 2016

We use OpenDNS in the house for PC's and it is great. We use Netsanity on all of our mobile devices and it is great!! Took us awhile to find solutions that actually worked and I think we are finally there.

Adult written by [Harlene G.](#)

November 9, 2016

The Internet has become a source of inspiration and valuable information. Children can find resources for their school projects, assignments, and ideas for science fairs. It's also a place where they can find Do-It-Yourself (DIY) tutorials for decorating their bedrooms, playing musical instruments or no-bake kiddie treats. The Internet can help a child explore a world without boundaries from the comfort of their own homes. However, the Internet also hosts a number of online threats such as cyberbullying, online predators, and inappropriate content. These are just some of the reasons why online safety is important in today's connected world. Parental control is an essential tool which can help parents protect their children from these online dangers. It also helps parents monitor their children's online activity while they're at school or spending time with friends.

<https://momsecure.com/blog/parental-control-why-is-it-necessary-in-digit...>

Parent written by [IMJohn](#)

October 21, 2016

For our child safety, we are using TiSPY - child monitoring software. After using dozens of parental control software, I felt that there is no software exist which will give assurance of your child's safety and give features that we need. One day I heard about TiSPY (<https://tispynet.com>) from one of my friend who is also a parent of 2 kids and he is using it to keep an eye on his kid's activities. After all the talk, I did not believe on him because of my past experience but I gave a chance and used TiSPY's 2 days free trial. To be very Frank, I can say that it is the app which

every parent need in these days to keep an eye on their children and save them from unknown dangers like malicious contents, cyber bullying and pornography. I feel completely safe with TiSPY. Now i am relaxed about my kids.

Parent written by [Sarah C.](#)

October 13, 2016

We have been using Netsanity mobile for almost a year now and it is the best parental control that we have found and we have tried them all. I didn't think any worked until we found them. They have so many excellent features and it works well on both of my kids phones and ipads. We used it all summer while away on vacation...even when we were on a cruise! www.Netsanity.net We plan to use controls until our kids are 18 because there is just too much dangerous stuff on the net that they could be exposed to plus with Netsanity we can block individual apps which has been a lifesaver when my kids are overusing Snapchat!

Parent written by [Play O.](#)

September 25, 2016

Besides router settings and the router where it can't be accessed, neither physically or through the interface is worth anything but a false sense of security. Keep the computer in an open area not in their room. If a child can't pay for and be responsible for a smartphone only allow a tracphone for emergency calls. You can secure your router and have WiFi turn off during certain hours. Not all routers give you much in the way of options. Doing anything at the device level will only work with very young children who shouldn't be alone on the digital highway to begin with..

Parent of a 6 year old written by [Nancy A.](#)

September 13, 2016

Thanks for your guide. I have a six-year-old son and I am searching for parenting tips recently. Your article is really helpful. I will share it to my friend. BTW, I read an article before, it also brings some benefits to me. Here I think I can let you know: <https://www.cisdem.com/resource/how-to-prevent-children-from-accessing-a...> Meanwhile, it seems AppCrypt is a great third-party app for parent to limit child to play games on Mac. Thanks a again. Have a nice day!

Adult written by [Ray Turner T.](#)

August 11, 2016

Not to turn into control freak you may use Geo-fencing and Keyword alerts features that <http://familyshield.club> developers created. You are not watching your kid all the time, but you got notifications when your children leave safe zone set by you. Parents got notifications when a word they added to a black list appear in conversation.

Parent of a 10 year old written by [simon11](#)

July 5, 2016

The key to Parental control is being a parent. Software controls are a tool to help. Our family started to use Safe Lagoon (ww.safelagoon.com) with all of the blocking that was covered above as well as a whole lot more - for example in our case we use Whatsapp monitoring, GPS tracking and instagram control. The whole package for the

cost of a visit to Starbucks! Our daughter knows that we use this and is ok with it on her android. Would be great to get this on our home Mac, but it looks like they focus on mobile... worth it.

Adult written by [Sweetcks73](#)

April 22, 2016

I need time of day limitations on my router. I can't install software on any of his devices

Kid, 11 years old March 31, 2016

Look Parents, If You Get All These Third-Party-Blockers And Stuff, We Can Just Open Task Manager And Close Them. We Can Use Built-In Features (And If You're Like Me, Hacking) To Stop Parental Controls! Because Built-In Features Cannot Be Blocked!

Parent written by [bnjmnsmith6](#)

March 29, 2016

Follow-up question: we're all about parental controls in our home and on our devices. However, i do agree that someone always finds a way to out-smart the controls somehow. Like, for example, my nephew found out that if you look up Night Clubs on Apple Maps, you could find inappropriate pictures on them. Anybody find out how to block Apple maps? Or maybe just monitor what he searches without giving him the option to delete the history?

Kid, 11 years old March 31, 2016

You Can't Block Apple Maps Because It's Built-In!

Teen, 14 years old written by [Beeblebrox](#)

March 27, 2016

Just a note to all parents, be careful when installing SMS trackers, keyloggers and monitoring programs, as many of them, especially keyloggers, are often designed for hackers to log passwords etc. The download of such programs is illegal in certain countries (I.e. Germany).

Adult written by [petrinab](#)

February 27, 2016

This is a great article, I love all the informative information. I have tried a few different parental control apps which I did not find to be very beneficial to me. I finally found a wonderful parental control app that does everything I need and is very user-friendly. I now use Familoop Safeguard for Android (<https://www.familoop.com>) I manage all my protection settings and feature restriction right from my Android device - I only need Internet connection to get my restrictions applied on all my devices that my son has access to. It's great because it filters web pages, blocks apps, collects information about visited and blocked websites for my review. I highly recommend this parental control app!

Adult written by [rasirud](#)

February 17, 2016

I'm using Best free keylogger of bestxsoftware to watch my kid's internet activities. I think it's very necessary thing using it.

Adult written by [sarah_jayne](#)

February 11, 2016

I'm a teenager (aged 18) and I've always had NetNanny on my phone and laptop. I feel much safer online because of this. I know this is a surprising view because most teens absolutely hate this sort of software, but I can't see any argument at all against being protected in this way.

Teen, 13 years old written by [Prefer Anonymity](#)

December 25, 2015

As a soon-to-be 14 year-old teen I feel like I should provide some input on this issue. My parents have always been conscious about my sites and programs I download and install, and have imposed Parental Controls, NetNanny, and the like on my various devices that I have had over the years. I have extremely mixed feelings regarding restricting child access to the web or OS, among others. Parental Controls not fail-proof, and take little skill to bypass or remove. Even applying a password to a child's account is ineffective (ex: Linux boot stick, simply replace the sethc.exe file with cmd). However, especially for preteens, restrictions significantly improve computer skills. I actually have my parent's restrictions to thank for teaching me to hack, rebuild/repair machines, and code. For example, when I was 11, in order to bypass the password to my account I coded an .exe that replaced the magnifier to display a list of my most-used programs and games- this opened a new world of programming to me. There is no way restrictions will effectively block access to porn sites or social media, short of disabling your internet service at regular periods (this is counterproductive tho), and exposure to such things WILL HAPPEN. I am not condoning letting kids have free reign; give them something else to do besides being on Instagram or Facebook; open a new world for them by exposing them to coding and computer science. The RaspBerry Pi is a great option for kids who are becoming introduced to the world of computers. I hope my feedback impacts your decisions on restricting your child's computer use.

Adult written by [tamaras2](#)

November 22, 2015

I have some concerns about my 6- year old Nabi. My husband has set it up to where it is "kid friendly" and sites such as YouTube could not be visited okay. Somehow porn was still accessed, even in the Kids YouTube app? All parental controls were set accordingly so how can this still happen? You would think that your child's "Nabi" is considered safe to use due to the limitation software installed on a child device. I watch him like a hawk now when he is on our devices. I do not want to completely ban him from his Nabi. I am also very paranoid because I do not want my son exposed to gay porn. Are there other software that can be downloaded? I hope support from this group can put my mind at ease.

Teen, 14 years old written by [Beeblebrox](#)

March 27, 2016

Why gay porn in particular? I think that the only way you can really impose good parental control is to actively impose your own controls, (i.e. blocking surviving websites) rather than relying on built-in safety controls, as the built in one's don't block some sites that you may consider age-innapropriate.

Adult written by [charlene02](#)

March 1, 2016

wow... as a fellow parent I'm also concerned about exposing my kids to porn and indecent images online. I personally use Allosecure, and it completely gives me peace of mind. This software covers everything I possibly wanted!! Here's the website: <http://allosecure.com/parental-control.php>. I hope it helps you as much as it helped me!

Adult written by [natahorchata](#)

August 3, 2015

I'm using this application and functionality that blocks mobile phone, you can also set a schedule for the release, for example, block whatsapp your children when they are at school. Safe Kids parental control ;)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=parental.control.safekids>

Adult written by [tecnik](#)

August 1, 2015

@2many2please I know this seem a little too late. But I think you might be interested in looking at this router:

<http://www.pcwrt.com>

Adult written by [neilf](#)

July 21, 2015

In addition if your teen has Administrator rights in Windows so you should to install the additional parental control program, for example K9 or Time Boss Pro. There are dozens of such programs (with many features - forced breaks, time limitation of internet sites...) in the net

Adult written by [DarenGoff](#)

June 6, 2015

Go With parental eyes Apps like <http://www.schoola2z.com/>

Adult written by [2many2please](#)

February 6, 2015

Hey! Great info from all. Tell me - if I do a router/network version of parental control - can I limit access to the internet with different times for different users? With an 18 yr old, 14 yr old and 9 year old, the needs are very different for all. Also can I limit access to certain sites/pages for my daughter, but still allow her to access internet for homework purposes?? Would love some clarification on this.

Parent written by [Play O.](#)

September 25, 2016

You can do this. Depending on your networking knowledge, it isn't always simple. You need a router that allows you to control the WiFi access by the MAC address. Keep in mind savvy kids can spoof MAC addresses. There are routers that can do that but the ones people get from the cable company don't have much settings.

Also if the kids can access the WiFi settings then it is useless. There are programs like Wireshark that track all network activity but they are really hard to use without a networking background.

Adult written by [nightyl](#)

October 14, 2014

"Aobo Mac keylogger is invisible parental control software for Mac. It logs keystrokes, websites, chats and takes screenshots. It offers three day free trial. Just have a try. http://download.cnet.com/Aobo-Keylogger-Standard/3000-2162_4-10911381.html Micro Keylogger is the best Windows parental control software: <http://www.remotespy.co/pc-keylogger.html>"

Teen, 13 years old written by [Yvonne Harper Crana](#)

September 12, 2014

It's rather interesting how secure parents think their controls are. My parents never put controls on computers, so I have been able to use computers freely and learn with them. A lot of my friends had controls on their computers/tablets/phones. So I started seeing what can bypass/break them. I have 4 preloaded USBs: 2 for windows, 2 for Mac, full of stuff to disable controls. Often the easiest solution is to just run a Tail live cd via USB. Many apps can be disabled or deleted on phones/tablets. Nexus settings are really annoying though. The funny thing is I'm actual making them more secure. I give them pgp for their email so not even the government can see their secure communications and they can be authenticated ei. No one can impersonate them. Anyway, I strongly suggest you don't put controls because they can always be broken (and it encourages people to teach them about computers). If you put controls on computers, it just makes it take more time. You could put a keylogger but first you'd have to jailbreak their phone. And it wouldn't stop them, it would just log it. Also, all teens will watch porn at least once whether or not you want them. It's honestly not the worst thing in the world. Your stigmas involving sex just make it seem shameful.

Adult written by [DavidtheParent](#)

July 25, 2014

Seems like there was some problem in my past comment, here comes the parental review website I put together Parental Control Software Review Thanks once again Caroline for a great guide!
<http://www.parentalcontrolnow.com>

Parent written by [LinVA](#)

March 1, 2014

What about an iPod? I've figured out how to set up the Restrictions (under Settings-General) to limit content. But I see no way to limit hours, like I can do on the Windows 8 computer. I've looked at apps but none of them seem to have time limits for iPods or iPads. Also, the passcode on Restrictions is a basic 4-number system--seems way too easy. It would be so helpful if Apple let you set up these kinds of restrictions at the iCloud level for a certain device.

Adult written by [Johnb](#)

February 17, 2014

For my younger kids (under 10) I care about content filtering (I'm using KIDOZ on PC and my Android Mobile). But for my oldest daughter I find myself worry more about cyber bullying... and here I find no helpful tools :-)

Parent of a 8, 11, and 14 year old written by [thelittlebird](#)

February 16, 2014

We control access to the web at night by having our wifi turn off at a certain time. Late night phone and text access is controlled through setting restricted times on our Verizon website. We can't really control what she does during the day but we can make sure she's not on the web or phone all night! This will be great to have in place as our 2 younger girls start testing boundaries and have phones of their own.

Parent of a 12 and 15 year old written by [denejean](#)

February 14, 2014

We have added Parent Kit to our smart phones - this is an app that allows up to shut down game play, access to the web, etc on a schedule, and as a consequence to poor behavior. We have LOVED having this feature. We can still get hold of our kids as needed, but they aren't playing games when they are supposed to be doing homework!

Adult written by [Christer6](#)

February 14, 2014

I am concerned about who they are talking to over the internet. Although I told them they could not talk to strangers and don't give out any personal information including their name. I would love to see what they are doing and what sites they are signing up for besides going through their history. I also make them give me all their passwords and they are suppose to ask before signing up which they do (so far.)

Adult written by [crashtx1](#)

February 14, 2014

Parental controls always fall short and can always be beaten. I have spent to much time trying to filter things out it's hard to know if it was/is worth it. Kids work together to beat the system, so they continually pass around the names of photo, blog, and movie sites that are not on the "bad" lists that filters use. This means we have to state vigilant and try to keep up, but as soon as you block one another pops up. I've also seen kids pass around VPN programs on a thumb drive, just pop it in the computer and it can bypass all your filters.

Adult written by [claeton](#)

February 14, 2014

Home Networking offers another powerful solution: limiting at what time of day the children's devices can access the internet. Turning off internet access from 10pm-7a, ensures that children are not using social media or interacting with their peers when they should be sleeping. It also prevents inappropriate online behavior to occur unobserved late at night when there is no parental supervision.

Parent of a 7 year old written by [dbowker3d](#)

February 13, 2014

Good topic and nicely spelled out, but the one HUGE red flag that stood out right away was the line about browser restrictions that: "Older kids -- especially very determined ones -- can easily defeat browser restrictions either by figuring out your password or simply downloading a new browser." That should NOT be the case- at all. Each user in a family should have a separate Login, and no kid/teen should have user privileges set up so that they can just install whatever they want. Make sure that when the machine goes idle or on screensaver it Locks that user and

requires a password so a teen can't just jump onto a Parent session. If a one's password is so easy that your teen can guess it you have much bigger problems than your son checking out porn. And of course SO many users out there DO have very easy to defeat passwords, and thus that's why we have a massive amount of fraud and identity theft. So please, everyone start by securing your own credentials first, and then move on to secure your kids access. And BTW, on any newer Windows OS, (Windows 7 and especially 8) the Parent Controls are very secure, and can easily be set so as to not allow a new browser to be downloaded and installed. Having control over what software gets installed should be the first thing that is set. If anything just for virus and malware security, as frankly most kids are not NEARLY as "savvy" as they think they are. Thanks again for the article!

Teen, 14 years old written by [Beeblebrox](#)

March 27, 2016

However, speaking from personal experience, Windows 7 machines (not sure about 8, 8.1 and 10) are notoriously easy to hack into, given about 10 minutes. I personally am savvy when it comes to tech, so if I anything to go by, all Parnell controls are quite useless Sorry if I seem a bit up my own behind.

Parent of a 15 year old written by [Caroline Knorr](#)

February 14, 2014

Excellent point about creating different user accounts and locking the machine on idle.

Parent written by [LinVA](#)

February 13, 2014

Thanks for addressing this topic. We got a new computer with Windows 8 on it, and I was disappointed that I had to set up even the basic parental controls online. The online Microsoft site wanted all kinds of details like my birthdate and my children's, and then needed a separate e-mail address for me and for my child's account. Crazy-- the whole point is that I don't want my child to have an e-mail account yet. But once I got it set up, I did like the fact that it imposes both what is calls time limits and curfews, which are times when the child account can or can't be logged into plus a running total limit on number of hours per day.

Parent written by [LinVA](#)

March 1, 2014

Yes, that's what I'm doing with the e-mail account in my child's name, too. I didn't know about the way the profile follows each person in Windows 8 and will seriously considering changing all our available devices to Windows 8 just for that reason. It's a great improvement.

Parent of a 7 year old written by [dbowker3d](#)

February 13, 2014

Having a separate email for your child doesn't actually have to mean they themselves have access to it. For younger kids it's more like a placeholder account. I set this system up for our 7 year old son (again to filter content, and allow him to safely viewer Lego Youtube videos, for instance, and to have the time limits set up). But of course "his" email is only accessed by me. But the additional thing that is really nice, is that all the devices in the house are now Windows 8, and his profile thus follows to each device and tracks "screen" time to ALL of them. So if the limit is 30 minutes per day (or more for an older child) they can't just move from PC to

another as the time is tied to the Profile, not the individual machine. And then again, it's also nice because it limits any software being installed accidentally, and on the plus side for him he feels like he has his own space on the computer, with his own wallpaper etc.

Parent of a 7, 9, and 11 year old written by [Mflixx](#)

February 13, 2014

We use Webtitan for a DNS filter; it's very affordable and is a great alternative to open DNS. However, DNS filters may not work well in blocking image searches so we use K9. It's image search filter seems to be pretty ironclad so it makes a great 1-2 punch.

Adult written by [AnnE 2](#)

October 29, 2014

Most of the free spyware applications are packed with viruses. They are unsafe to use. However, there is a certain reliable program I came across last week that lets you access to track kid's messages easily. You may look up at smstrackers.com and read full information.

Parent written by [LinVA](#)

February 13, 2014

I like the idea of a router filter and I'll look at this one, too.