

Here are a few things you can do to help protect your children:

- Approve every app on your kid's phone
- Check privacy settings
- Talk with your kids about phone use, apps, and social media
- Find out what apps are popular in your area, different apps catch on in different areas.
- For parents who have very young kids with cell phones, there are accountability software and apps that can be used and set up on their phones to help protect them.
- Talk with your kids and tell them the importance of not giving someone else such as a stranger or someone they THINK they may know, their own address and personal information. (Do your children really know that person they are befriending on social media? Is your child showing signs of being bullied or bullying others after using their cell phones or at any time.)
- Parents should be aware that kids may be able to get around parental settings by accessing Public WIFI
- These are only a few, there are many others and we will try to add some helpful links below to help you learn more.

Programs for Parents

Phone Sheriff

[PhoneSheriff](#) puts parents in control of [children's phones](#), from texts and internet use to calls. They can block numbers, set time restrictions on phone use or individual apps, monitor texts and set custom alerts. PhoneSheriff also comes with real-time location tracking capabilities, so you can know where your children are all times (as long as they have their phone with them), and it's available for Android devices.

Teen Safe

[TeenSafe](#) lets parents monitor activity on Android or iPhone devices. They'll see who kids are communicating with and what they are saying—TeenSafe even lets parents access deleted messages, so teens can't easily hide conversations. The app also includes functions for reviewing web history and tracking the location of the phone, among other functions and safeguards.

Secure Teen

[SecureTeen](#) lets parents guard kids of all ages from online dangers by blocking inappropriate content, blocking apps they don't want teens using, viewing reports of internet activity and all chat and SMS messages, and tracking a teen's location via GPS on his or her phone. The chat and SMS message function on this app is great, because it means parents can see communications via various platforms, making it harder for teens to hide information.

Footprints

Ever wish you could know where your child is, all the time? Using GPS in real time, the "Find My Kids" [Footprint app](#) helps you keep track of and automatically locate where your child goes with his phone. If he's traveling alone, you can confirm that he arrived at a specific destination, or if he's meeting up with friends, they can confirm each other's locations. Location info is never shared with anyone else beyond those who have permission to see it, and data is saved for later review. *(Free to download, service requires a monthly fee; [IOS](#))*

Bark

This incredible digital safety app has saved lives. Really. [Bark](#) monitors [text messages](#), YouTube, emails, and 24 different social networks for potential safety concerns, so parents can save time and gain peace of mind. It can even proactively alert you to issues like sexting, cyberbullying and depression thanks to algorithms that constantly analyze words showing up on your child's phone. But in addition to alerting parents, Bark also provides recommended actions on how to deal with it and has in turn saved 33 lives by alerting parents of their child's potential suicide intentions. *([Free trial available but requires a monthly fee](#); IOS, Android, Amazon)*

Family Tracker

Don't just track the kids; track the whereabouts of the entire family! This app keeps tabs on anyone you like, but only if the other person accepts the one-time tracking request. The app uses a built-in messaging system, separate from standard text messaging, that allows you to contact family members and receive notifications that they read your messages. You even have the capability to get your kid's attention by setting the device to "play a loud, annoying siren." For each device you wish to track, you'll need to buy the app separately. (\$5.99; [IOS](#) and [Android](#))

iCam

This app, which has been featured on *Today*, CNN, and *Good Morning America*, allows you to watch live video feeds from any room in your home with a mobile device. To be monitored, each room needs to have constantly running computers with webcams and the app's compatible software installed. The app developer's website has full instructions (skjm.com/icam/support.php) and a very short list of cameras that are not supported. You can make a donation via in-app purchasing to help reduce the company's server costs. (\$4.99; [IOS](#), [Android](#))

Alarm.com

Get real security with a complete system that includes mobile monitoring. Arm/disarm the system remotely, turn light sources on/off,

and watch live and recorded video through installed cameras. Parents can get alerts about a variety of household happenings – when the children get home from school, when someone is poking around the medicine or liquor cabinet, or when someone has changed the thermostat or left the garage door open. A subscription is required for a specific [Alarm.com](https://www.alarm.com) home monitoring service and the app works only with certain hardware. *(Free to download, services requires subscription; [IOS](#), [Android](#))*

SecuraFone

There are apps that locate your children, but how about one that tells you how fast they're driving? This app can do so by using the smartphone's built-in GPS. Plus, the SecuraFences feature sends notifications if your child goes beyond a designated geographic area. Parents can view 90 days' worth of map data using what the [company website](#) calls a "breadcrumb trail" and access reports that include addresses and a history of all the alerts sent by the app. All this is done in the background of your smartphone via GPS. *(Free to download, services requires subscription; [IOS](#), [Android](#))*

Mobicip

With [Mobicip](#), you can control all the filters and monitoring settings on your child's phone from your own phone or the online parent portal. When your child tries to visit a blocked site, open a restricted app or search for filtered

content, they see a message from Mobicip letting them know they can't access it. A similar message shows when they try to use their phone outside the time limits you set for them.

Mobicip has preset filters for blocking webpages and content that fall under specific categories such as pornography, online gaming or violence. It can also block individual apps – for example, it can prevent your child from accessing Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp and several other social media platforms. If Mobicip doesn't have a filter for an app you want to block, you can search for it in the program and add it to the block list.

If you allow your child to use chat and instant message programs, Mobicip captures both sides of their conversations as well as the contact information for whoever they're talking to. This lets you know exactly who they interact with and what they talk about. You can set Mobicip to alert you if your child or the person they're chatting with types or sends messages with keywords and phrases like, "home alone" or "don't tell." In addition, you can set the program to notify you if your child tries to share personal information, including full names, birthdates and phone numbers.

Mobicip's biggest drawback is it only alerts you through the parent portal or by email, not by text message, when your child attempts to access blocked content or uses inappropriate keywords in live chats and texts.

Pros:

- Includes 30 filter categories plus additional app filters
- Doesn't require you to root or jailbreak devices
- Has a minimum of five user licenses

Cons:

- Doesn't send text alerts
- Can't instantly lock phone when inappropriate keywords are used
- Doesn't include surround recording

Qustodio

Though [Qustodio](#) isn't the cheapest program we reviewed, for the number of tools and monitoring features you get, it's an overall good value. The program has filter categories that let you block your child from visiting websites with inappropriate content, including pornography, online gaming and drugs. However, during our testing, we found that Qustodio's filters work better on computers than cell phones. The software's time controls also work on mobile devices, so you can limit when your child can use their phone or tablet and how long they can access the internet on them.

Further, you can choose to either shut down internet access or fully lock their cell phone once their time is up.

When installed on your child's phone, Qustodio lets you peek at their contact list so you know who they communicate with. On both computers and mobile devices, Qustodio monitors conversations your child has through chat apps and via text messages. You can set the program to alert you if your child types or receives a message with red-flag words such as "don't tell" or "what's your phone number." And while Qustodio doesn't have a keylogger to capture every keystroke your child makes, it saves transcripts of conversations your child has over text and chat.

Qustodio's best feature is its panic button. This lets your child quickly alert you if they are scared, in danger or lost. The app sends you an email alert with your child's location so you can get to them or send help fast.

However, Qustodio is missing several monitoring features. It doesn't log screenshots or record the photos and videos your child views and takes with their phone or tablet.

Pros:

- Is a good value
- Includes a panic button
- Works without jailbreaking or rooting

Cons:

- Internet filters don't work well on mobile devices
- Doesn't include keylogging
- Can't capture screenshots of what your child views

Mobile App Blocking - Norton Family

[Norton Family](#) is really easy to use, and we were impressed with how well it blocks apps. Once it's installed on your child's mobile device, you can see every application installed on it from the parent profile. To block an app, you simply click on its icon on your end. After you do, your child will see a notice on their device if they try to use the app letting them know it is restricted.

This cell phone monitoring program is also good at blocking content that falls under categories like pornography and drugs, and it alerts you when your child tries to view something inappropriate. In addition, you can use Norton Family to set when and for how long your child can be online. When their time is up, you can choose for the program to either disable the internet or lockdown the entire device. If you add an app's website to

Norton's blocklist, your child can't reach the program through an internet browser either.

During testing, we noticed devices with Norton Family installed ran much slower than when other monitoring apps were installed. This means the program uses a lot of the device's resources, which can affect how well allowed apps, including video and gaming programs, work on your child's phone.

Pros:

- Can block all installed apps
- Includes time controls
- Allows you to lock down the device

Cons:

- Causes slowdown on the monitored phone
- Can't capture screenshots
- Doesn't log keystrokes

Tracking & Notification - Surfie

One of [Surfie's](#) best features is it texts you alerts about your child's online activity. This isn't a common feature, which is why it is a good choice for monitoring your child's cell phone activity. Surfie also gives you access to your child's contact list so you know who they interact with. And you can block content, gaming apps and instant messaging programs.

Surfie has a keyword and phrase alert, which is a great tool for stopping cyberbullies and other predators. When your child sends or receives messages with tagged words, including "don't tell" and "you're dumb," it

sends you a text with the contact information for the person your child was communicating with. You can use the program to lock your child's device or block the messaging app until you can chat with your child.

This monitoring program includes time controls and provides very detailed reports about what your child does online. Reports include information about which websites your child visits, apps they use and words they search for as well as how long they spend in each application. Surfie doesn't track incoming or outgoing calls, but it captures text messages.

Pro:

- Sends text alerts

Con:

- Doesn't track calls

Profanity Masking - Net Nanny

[Net Nanny](#) doesn't have a lot of features for cell phone tracking – it's better as a computer monitoring program. However, its cell phone monitoring program includes profanity masking. This tool smudges out or replaces swear words in messages and online content so your child can't see or read them. And it doesn't let your child type profanity either.

We're also impressed with Net Nanny's pornography blockers. Not only does it deny your child access to X-rated websites, but it also checks the pictures and ads on safe sites. If something displayed in a rotating ad isn't appropriate for your child, Net Nanny blocks the website until that ad or image is pulled from the rotation.

Beyond blocking content, Net Nanny doesn't have a lot of features. It doesn't capture text or chat messages or block apps. You also can't access your child's contact list or track where their phone is. Net Nanny provides some summary reports, but they aren't as detailed as those in other cell phone monitoring programs.

Pro:

- Masks profanity

Con:

- Doesn't let you access contact lists