

Tips for Monitoring and Promoting Positive Youth Online Behavior

This tipsheet shares research, tips, and strategies to help empower parents and caregivers of youth with the skills and knowledge to have conversations with their children about the importance of responsible online behavior, the risks of cyberbullying, and tips for digital safety

What the research says about parental involvement and cyberbullying

In today's digital age, it is essential for parents and guardians to build the necessary skills and knowledge to talk with their children about online behavior and safety. According to the 2021 Youth Behavior Risk Survey (YRBS), [16 percent of high school students](#) reported experiencing a form of online bullying or cyberbullying. In 2022, Pew reported that [nearly half \(46%\) of adolescents aged 13-17 experienced cyberbullying at any point](#), most commonly in the form of offensive name calling. As technology continues to shape the way children interact with the world, equipping parents and guardians with these crucial tools not only encourages safer online environments for youth but can also strengthen the bonds of trust and communication within families.

Parental monitoring refers to [effective monitoring practices parents can use to help their child make healthy decisions and avoid risky behaviors](#), including parents' knowledge of what their children are doing and with whom, boundary setting, and creating open and honest communication between parents and children. Multiple studies have highlighted the benefits of parents being involved in and aware of their children's lives and activities. High parental involvement is related to [fewer youth experiences of cyberbullying](#), both as perpetrators and victims. Additionally, high parental monitoring has also been linked to fewer experiences of [school-based bullying](#), [poor mental health](#), [suicide attempts](#), [drug use](#), and [forced sex](#).

Tips for parents and caregivers

- Set clear expectations with youth about their online digital behavior, and the importance of responsible online conduct. Model these expectations on your own accounts and online activity.
- Help youth understand what counts as cyberbullying and the negative consequences and effects of cyberbullying. Empower children to speak up when they see cyberbullying happening.
- Facilitate open and judgement-free communication with children about their online behavior and activities.
- Have ongoing conversations and check-ins with youth about their internet use and online behaviors.
- Understand what apps and platforms your children are active on. Be curious, but not invasive.

Additional resources

- [What is Cyberbullying](#). This page from StopBullying.gov helps parents, caregivers, and youth understand what types of behaviors and actions constitute cyberbullying, and on what platforms it is most likely to occur. It also provides information on state laws prohibiting cyberbullying and potential legal consequences of cyberbullying.
- [Establishing Rules, Tips for Parents: Talk to Your Child about Appropriate Digital Behavior and Content](#). This page from StopBullying.gov offers some tips and information for parents and caregivers to engage in

effective monitoring of their children's online behavior, as well as suggested strategies to help support children who may witness cyberbullying.

- [Social media and teen mental health: guide for parents & caregivers to support healthy social media use among teens](#). This guide from the Family & Youth Services Bureau helps parents and caregivers explain and model positive online behavior and social media use to youth. It also includes a [discussion guide](#) to help parents facilitate conversations about internet use with teens.
- [Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#). This resource from the U.S Surgeon General provides an overview of research related to youth mental health and social media. It also includes recommendations for parents and caregivers to help protect and support children from the harmful effects of social media.