

MAKE HOUSEHOLD MEDIA RULES

MediaSmarts' research has shown that kids with household rules about Internet use are less likely to do things like post their contact information, visit gambling sites, seek out online pornography and talk to strangers online. Having a family agreement or set of rules for using the Internet is also a great way for parents and kids to work together on how to be safe, wise and responsible online.

Your household rules should:

- Communicate your values
- Give your children a chance to earn your trust
- Help your children become more independent
- Explain how to do something
- Be the beginning of a conversation, not the end.

With younger children, it makes sense for you to set the rules and explain them. Rules for younger children should be specific, like "Ask me before you download anything."

As kids get older and explore more of the online world, you can discuss new rules together. Rules for teens should focus on goals, like "Take good care of your device: only download apps you think are safe, and let me know if you're not sure."

Teens still can't always apply broad ideas to specific situations, so rules have to be more specific than "be careful online."

MAKING RULES

Think about what your kids do online, and then think of five rules that it makes sense for them to follow.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now go back through your list.

Do the rules match the age of your children?

Do the rules have the qualities in the list above?

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