

# PARENTS' GUIDE TO SMART PHONE SAFETY

## SMART OR SCARY?

Smartphones are essentially little computers, so you might be a little worried when handing one over to your child. Take some time to understand the risks and implement a few safeguards so that you can help your child use smartphones safely.



About 1 in 4 teens report owning a smartphone.

Lenhart, Amanda.  
Teens, Smartphones & Texting.  
Pew Internet & American Life Project,  
March 19, 2012.

## THE RISKS

### ▪ CYBERBULLYING

With the constant connectivity of smartphones, your child may be more susceptible to cyberbullying or have more opportunities to cyberbully others.

### ▪ GEOLOCATION

A GPS-enabled smartphone can reveal your child's location through online posts and uploaded photos.

### ▪ INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With smartphones, your child has mobile access to content you may consider inappropriate, such as pornography or violent videos.

### ▪ SEXTING

Your child may use the Internet and social apps to send, receive, or forward revealing photos.

### ▪ VIRUSES & MALWARE

Just like a computer, a smartphone is vulnerable to security attacks if your child accesses unsecured websites and apps.

## 5 WAYS TO BE SMARTER THAN THE SMARTPHONE!

### 1. Be a parent and a resource.

Establish clear guidelines, including time limits and consequences for inappropriate behavior, but be open so your child will come to you with any problems.

### 2. Set up password protection.

This will keep everyone but you and your child from accessing personal information stored on the phone.

### 3. Update the operating system.

New versions often contain important security fixes.

### 4. Approve apps before they are downloaded.

Make sure you understand their capabilities and approve their content.

### 5. Understand location services.

GPS features are useful when using maps, but you'll want to disable location-tagging when your child posts anything online.

For more resources visit [NetSmartz.org/TipSheets](http://NetSmartz.org/TipSheets)

Copyright © 2012 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.

**NetSmartz Workshop**

A PROGRAM OF THE  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN®