



Monthly Parenting Tip from the ACFC

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Essential Strategies for Internet Safety-Part 2

FREE LIFE-CHANGING ONLINE PARENTING COURSES

In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. With this self-study course, you have the option of when to participate based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

Choose from four available courses:

- **Active Parenting: First Five Years:** For parents of children from birth to age 5
- **Active Parenting 4th ED:** For parents of children ages 5 to 12
- **Active Parenting of Teens:** For parents of preteens and teens
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:** For divorced and divorcing parents

Continue your experience as an "active" parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfccares.com) for more information and to start your

4. Teach Digital Responsibility

Active Parenting encourages focusing on **life skills and critical thinking**, not imposing control or restrictions. This philosophy is especially useful in the digital age. While it's tempting to blame smartphones for all teen stress, the Active Parenting perspective urges families to look at the bigger picture. Smartphones offer **both risks and benefits**—access to information, learning tools, and connection. The goal is to **teach safe, responsible use** rather than eliminating technology. Active Parenting encourages empowerment over fear. Alarmist messaging about the dangers of the internet can deter teens from discussing issues openly. Instead, approach digital safety the same way you would teach your teen to drive—calmly, gradually, and with skill-building in mind.

Educate your child about:

- **Privacy & Digital Footprint:** What to share, with whom, and understanding the permanent nature of information put out on the internet.
- **Safety Skills:** Recognizing unsafe spaces, handling cyberbullying or online conflict, choosing apps/content that are age-appropriate, and knowing when to ask for help.
- **Critical Thinking:** Not everything online is true or healthy—how do we evaluate content and creators?
- **Balance:** Pair screen time with sleep, movement, hobbies, and face-to-face fun.

When parents act as guides—not gatekeepers—teens learn to self-regulate. Encourage kids to think critically about what they share and with whom and remind them that their digital footprint lasts.

5. Model Healthy Digital Behavior

Kids and teens absorb far more from what we *do* than what we *say*. When parents model healthy digital habits, kids are more likely to mirror that behavior. Practice the habits you want to see:

- Create **non-phone zones** during meals and family time.
- Show balanced use of screens—not constant checking.
- Choose rest or face-to-face connection over scrolling.
- Put people before phones during conversation.

Modeling these behaviors communicates that technology serves life—it doesn't *define* life.

6. Be an Engaged and Present Parent

Be an **active mentor**:

- **Explore together:** Ask your child to show you their favorite apps, games, and websites. Shared exploration builds awareness and open communication.
- **Ask open-ended questions, don't interrogate:** Curiosity invites conversation. Ask what they like about a platform, what they worry about, and how they deal with conflict online. The aim is not surveillance; it's **support and guidance**.

Especially with teens, involvement means listening without judgment. That strengthens trust and helps them come to you when issues arise.

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the **ACFC website**, click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.