

APPLE vs. ANDROID

Apple has built in some parental controls in the actual iOS phones system (i.e. ability to set restrictions on what apps can be downloaded or what websites can be visited, settings passcodes to prevent kids from circumventing restrictions you set, syncing your phone and your children's iPhones/Apple devices together by putting them on the same Apple account, keeping track of child's location, etc.). Basically, Apple gives you boxed control over your Apple devices with your Apple account.

Android does not have those built in features, so some people feel it's harder for parents to monitor their teens Android devices; however, you can upload apps to your child's Android device to make it more secure and to let you have control over the device like an Apple device would, you just have to download them. The recommendations I have seen have all recommended downloading a monitoring device such as Disney Circle or Mobicip, as we discussed in the training. But specifically, I saw strong recommendations for the use of Net Nanny, Norton Family Premier and Kaspersky Safe Kids. *Tom's Guide* recommends these for the level of control they provide to parents of kids with Android devices and says that each product "offer different levels of control, but for the most part you can expect to impose time limits (including a curfew when it's time for your child to go to bed), block individual callers and texters, quickly revise app usage and — most important — get reports on how your child is using the phone."

In addition, Google has also recently introduced *Family Link* which gives parents more control over their child's Android devices – screen time, time of day controls, and apps downloads. However, I did a bit of research on this on their website and found there seemed to be some really good pros, but also some cons that concerned me as well. Just make sure you read the fine print, you can see the Parental Disclosure here: <https://families.google.com/familylink/privacy/notice/>. I've created a few slides about this in the presentation I just included, but here are some direct quotes from the website regarding just a few things that stood out to me in reading the disclosure:

"YOUR CHILD'S GOOGLE ACCOUNT

Keep in mind that your child's Google Account will be like your own and offers access to many of Google's products and services, including general audience services that you may use yourself, such as Chrome, Search, Gmail, Google Play, Hangouts, and Google Assistant. Most of these products and services have not been designed or tailored for children, and your child may use them to communicate with others or to find content that you consider inappropriate.

Your child will be able to use their account to do things like:

- *Access and search the internet;*
- *Send and receive emails, chat messages, video and voice calls;*
- *Subject to the Google Play approval settings for their account, purchase and download apps and games, music, movies, books, and other content available on Google Play, as well as make in-app purchases;*
- *Create, view, share, and receive content, including photos, videos, audio, notes, presentations, documents, and more; and*
- *Track health and fitness details such as activity level, heart rate, blood pressure or nutrition in Google Fit.*

FAMILY LINK - TOOLS FOR PARENTS:

After you create your child's account, you can use Family Link to help you do things like:

- Approve your child's downloads and purchases from Google Play and limit the visibility of content in the Google Play Store based on maturity ratings;
- Manage settings such as SafeSearch for Google Search;
- Review your child's app permissions on Android, such as microphone, camera, location, and contacts access;
- Change the content filtering setting and turn search on or off in the YouTube Kids app;
- Reset your child's Google Account password;
- Set screen time limits on your child's Android devices;
- See the location of your child's Android device;
- Manage the activity settings for your child's Google Account; and
- Allow a second family member to exercise the same controls you have over your child's account.

These tools can help you set digital ground rules for your family. Some Family Link settings are modifiable on the web, but you'll need the Family Link app to access the full set of tools. For example, you must download the Family Link app to use features for your child's Android device like screen time limits or app activity. Please keep in mind these tools have limitations and will not always work. For example, you won't be able to see your child's device location in the Family Link app, unless the device is on, connected to the internet, and recently active. Additionally, filters like SafeSearch are not perfect, so explicit, graphic, or other content you may not want your child to see makes it through sometimes...

WHEN YOUR CHILD TURNS 13: *When your child turns 13 (or the minimum age required for the creation of a Google Account absent parental consent in your country), they are eligible to manage their account on their own. If your child chooses to manage their Google Account, you will no longer have access to, or be able to exercise control over, it with Family Link. Before your child becomes eligible to manage their own Google Account, we will notify you and your child."*

Overall, I think just like with any use of internet or anytime you give a child/youth an electronic device, there are pros and cons to this. I do know it's relatively new, so I'm sure the longer it's around the more reviews we'll be able to get on *Family Link*, but I just wanted to let you know it's an option for Android users.

ALSO, something to note that I know I didn't mention in the training and should have, is that many cell phone providers have their own suit of parental controls that can be helpful, specifically I've been told that Verizon's controls are pretty strong.

Ultimately here's my opinion. Regardless if you have Apple devices or Androids, at Street Hope we recommend using a monitoring app with your control settings. If you're an Apple user, set your secure settings on your child's devices via Apple account + use a monitoring app. If you're an Android user, use a monitoring app and then use your discretion on whether or not you want to try the new Google *Family Link*.

Here's the thing, I saw this statement in an article today and I couldn't say it better myself so I'm just going to share it with you directly:

*"There are lots of different technical tools available out there to help keep your kids safe online... **But none of these are really enough to help keep your child safe.***

... the key isn't mastering a set of complicated technical tools. (In fact, most are very easy to set up, so don't let a lack of technical ability hold you back). It also doesn't mean you have to master the latest internet fad every time one pops up – believe us, you will never keep up!

*The far more important, but also far more difficult task, is to have **frequent, open and honest discussions with your children about their lives**. Remember, internet companies, social media networks, gaming providers, and everyone else in the online space may be able to help you set content limits, but they don't necessarily have your child's best interests at heart.*

***The very best person to keep your child safe online is YOU.** Talking about how to stay safe on the internet is an excellent conduit to build a trusting and positive relationship with your child.” – VPNMentor.com*

Open lines of communication are key. Be honest with your child from the moment you give them an electronic device and set rules and boundaries from that moment on, whatever they are.

Some effective rules I know several parents are using:

- “This is my phone/electronic device and I allow you to use it, so because of that, I can check it or ask you to see it whenever I want”
- No use of technology in the bedroom, devices can only be used in open family spaces (i.e. the living room). That goes for cellphones, computers and even video games.
- Teens who are allowed to have social media must allow parents to have access to their username/password
- No playing live games with other online users (i.e. Playing Xbox Live with random players, Minecraft, etc.)
- “If someone ever sends you something inappropriate (i.e. requesting/sending nude photos, saying something sexual, bullying), bring it to me immediately. I’m on your side. Even if you’re not innocent in the matter, we will work through this together.”