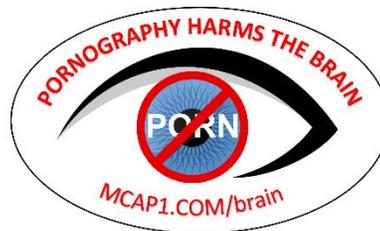


Making a Difference

Newsletter for
Maryland Coalition Against
Pornography, Inc.



MCAP Hotline: 301-439-8475

www.mcap1.com or en Espanol: www.mcap1.com/Espanol.

TOGETHER WE CARE

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Back to School Advice

We are hearing that the average age of exposure to porn now is **age 8**. *Let that sink in!* Have you had conversations with your younger (and older) kids? To offer some resources to help with navigating the online hazards and worries, we offer advice in these articles that can be read more fully online. MCAP continues to URGE thoughtful conversations with youth about the dangers of porn, to build resilience. Check out tools found on our web site, <http://www.mcap1.com/StartTheConversation>, which is updated as new aids emerge.

You are not alone! And if you use Facebook and would find interactive discussions of tech-related parenting helpful, have a look at the postings and comments about specific challenges in the FB group, [Parenting in a Tech World](#). Parents are asking questions and bringing up problematic scenarios, and getting empathetic advice from others who have been there and done that.

This web site objectively compiles over 200 hours of research that evaluated parental control applications, reviewing how the services operate: <https://www.consumersadvocate.org/parental-control-apps>

Good advice includes:

- Talk to your kids about the monitoring app before installing it.
- Make adjustments to the app as your kids grow older.
- Remember, your child should have some privacy.
- Use the free trial periods to see which app works best for you.

Children are getting online at a younger age each year. Teaching children how to responsibly use online resources and social media will help them develop a healthy relationship with the digital world. They'll be able to self-regulate the amount of time they spend on their devices, create healthy social relationships, and learn to identify and avoid risky online behaviors.

As students are packing their backpacks and heading back to class, check out these helpful tips for online safety and the best recommendations for educational laptops that are sure to be a hit with children as they head back to school. It's time to get back in the habit of setting healthy boundaries and learning about digital dangers.



School - it's a lot to navigate, for parents, teachers AND students!

[Ultimate Back to School Guide](#) – a web page from the Bark app makers featuring a Back to School “Online Safety Tune-up”

1. Set parental controls to limit distractions, and [Barkomatic](#) is one suggestion.
2. Find out how kids use [Google Docs](#) as a de facto communication and social media hub for cyberbullying.
3. Create a [technology contract](#). [Editorial note: a book with much more about this, available from the public library or can be purchased online, is *[iRules: What Every Tech-Healthy Family Needs to Know About Selfies, Sexting, Gaming, and Growing Up](#)* by Janelle Hofmann.]
4. Make use of apps to [connect with other parents](#).
5. Make time for real conversations. Starter ideas from Bark [here](#).
6. Encourage [healthy digital habits](#).
7. Consider hosting a [tech night](#). Bark lists free videos, downloadable PDFs, and more.
8. Get [support for teaching kids with special needs](#) from the Council for Exceptional Children.
9. Take a crash course in [Chromebooks](#) – see Bark’s Guide to Settings.
10. Learn more about your kid’s [school-issued tech](#), like email and cloud storage. See Bark’s guides for Web Browsing, Gmail, Google Drive, Microsoft Outlook, and OneDrive,

And to make homework time a little bit easier, check out this assemblage of some of the best free [learning resources](#) to help your kids get the most out of their school work.

Newly Announced Safety Measures to Protect Children on Social Media and Technology Platforms are a Step in the Right Direction

MCAP applauds recent actions taken by technology giants, including Apple, TikTok and Instagram, to initiate safety and privacy measures for children. Specifically, Apple plans to match photos on iPhones and uploaded iCloud accounts to a database of child sexual abuse images, and alert authorities as needed. Users under 18 using TikTok will now have direct messaging disabled by default, and new Instagram accounts created by kids under 16 will default to private, blocking interactions with some adults on its platform BUT - age verification issues remain. Consider signing this [petition, please!](#)

How Porn Can Get Into School (from author Kristin Jenson):

- Smartphones. Kids bring them to school and may share XXX videos on the bus or playground.
- School computers. Even innocent searches for images can bring up pornography.
- Library databases can link kids to pornographic books.
- Slang terms about sex or porn may spark curiosity and often lead to online searches and pornography.
- Sexualized conversations or behaviors acted out by children who have viewed pornography or been sexually abused, can stimulate interest on the part of other kids.

In one incident, for example, a third-grade girl overheard a classmate say that her father made her watch videos of naked people. The mother of the third-grader who overheard this comment says: “Because we had discussed the dangers of pornography at home, she knew how to react. She told her teacher, and the school responded by addressing the needs of the student and putting a stop to the father’s abuse.”

Think Before You Share

Be mindful of the information you share about your children as they return to school. A popular social media photo trend with kids could make them easy targets for predators. On Aug. 8, the McHenry County Sheriff's Office in [Woodstock](#), Illinois, shared an image of Deputy Sherriff Tim Creighton exemplifying a common online theme in which parents post images of their children posing with a sign to celebrate the first day of a new school year.



Tip: parents and youth should avoid sharing these: school name, age, teacher's name and grade, identifying features (height, weight, etc.), overly personal information (think items related to passwords or security question answers, etc.) This information can all be used by predators, scammers, and other predators looking to endanger your child, family, or finances. No matter your privacy settings or friends list, it's best to keep personal information on the internet to the bare minimum.

[Hulu Parental Controls: WARNING! 4 Alarming Loopholes](#)

Hulu is a streaming service that focuses mostly on currently airing TV series, though it has some movies as well. The company also produces a lot of original content, including "The Handmaid's Tale" and other sexually explicit shows. So will Hulu's parental control features help kids safely use the service without stumbling into inappropriate content? Yes and no. Hulu has a Kids profile option that limits viewing to kid-appropriate shows. But there are several flaws in Hulu's parental controls that make it a less safe streaming option for families than services with more rigorous parental controls, like Netflix or Disney+. Click on the link above for the entire article.



Due to members of our MCAP Board moving away or passing, MCAP has lost critical mass, and very much needs an infusion of new helpers. Unless we get volunteers by February, the board will be down to two or three members and we run the risk of stopping this important work. For example, we could use help with our newsletter - content gathering, composition, editing and formatting. Would you believe I (Peggy) have been editor for 30 years? Help also would be appreciated with video-recording, event planning, grant-writing and social media strategizing/implementation. We need to move further into the 21st century! 😊 Please be in touch, if you can help, at mcapinc@mcap1.com.

ACTION BOX

- [+] Please volunteer! More children are suffering with mental anxiety for numerous reasons and this work is critical to protect them! Email us at mcapinc@mcap1.com on where you can help!
- [+] Sign the petition: [Pr*tect Children Not Porn](#)
- [+] Call on social media to [#LetParentsProtect](#)

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Maryland Coalition Against Pornography