

## SEXTING: WHAT IT IS, HOW TO STOP IT

### The dangers of sexting

Exploring one's sexuality is a natural and normal part of growing up. The real danger of sexting lies in the transmission of these images and videos, for several reasons. The first is a legal issue: sending sexually-explicit depictions of people under 18 is a felony in all 50 states, even if the sender is also the subject. Receiving such media is also illegal. As a result, sexting carries with it the possibility of being charged as a sex-offender or child pornographer. ABC News recently reported on a group of six teenagers who faced felony charges for sharing semi-nude photos of a female classmate.

The more likely pitfall, however, is social. Many sexts will be transmitted beyond the original recipient: forwarded to others, posted on a public forum or social networking site, or even displayed on computers in school. The intent may be malicious - an attempt to humiliate an ex-boyfriend or girlfriend after a break-up, for instance - or it may simply be a case of misplaced trust or bad judgment. Either way, an inherent danger in sexting is that the original sender subjects himself or herself to much wider exposure than intended.

### What parents can do

Because smart phones are so discreet, it can be hard for a parent to prevent children from sexting, but there are a few steps you can take. First, determine if your child truly needs a feature-rich phone. Many low-end models still don't have much functionality beyond sending and receiving phone calls. Even if the phone does have peripherals such as a camera, you don't necessarily have to pay for the data plans that support transmission of pictures and videos. Your child may need a cell phone, to be sure, but does he or she really need all of the extras? Of course, the best way to keep your children from engaging in unwise behavior is to talk to them openly and honestly about it, before it ever happens. You don't want them to learn the hard way about the pitfalls of such behavior. Use these discussion points to talk to your kids about sexting:

**Understand the consequences.** Share with your kids the stories you've read here. Ask them if they know of anybody in their school who has experienced the negative consequences of sexting.

**Know the law.** Specific laws vary from state to state, but sending and receiving sexually illicit photos of minors is illegal everywhere. Make sure your child understands that sexting is against the law.

**Delete sexts immediately.** Your kids may not always be able to control what arrives in their inbox, but they can decide what to do next. No matter how strong the temptation, they should delete any sexts immediately, and tell the sender to stop.

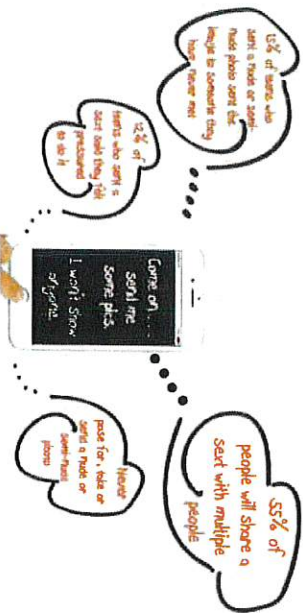
**Be a good friend.** With the rising popularity of sexting, it's likely that one of your child's friends has been the sender or recipient of an explicit message. Encourage your child to share what you've talked about with friends, who may not understand the dangers.

You can also use this discussion as an opportunity to move to a broader conversation about dating and self-respect. Talking with teens about sex is never easy, but it is critical.

<https://www.familyeducation.com/life/sexting>

## SEXTING IS A CRIME

Once a photo is sent or shared you can never get it back



# PARENTING

## IN THE

# DIGITAL AGE



# RISKY APPS COMMONLY USED

## SOCIAL MEDIA APPS



**Instagram**  
13+

Easy to falsify age. Even if your child uses privacy settings their profile is public. Instagram users can get a map of where the photos are taken (this can be turned off and should be).



**Slingshot**  
16+

Send photo or video to get one back on moments-sharing app. Requires people to send a photo or video before they can view another "shot" from one of their contacts and respond to shots with a "react" message



**Snapchat**  
16+

Used to sext because youth feel it is safe. However receivers are able share screenshots with others. Can reveal a user's location (can turn this off with "ghost mode" in settings). Should set privacy settings to "my friends".



**Tinder**  
18+

Dating and hook up app. Probiolocation matching app for risky for kids. Allows you to rate profiles and locate "hook ups" via GPS tracking. Easy for adults to find minors.

## ANONYMOUS APPS



**Ask.fm**

Almost exclusively used by kids. Q&A site to ask anonymous questions. Cyberbullying is common on this app and the app has been associated with a number of suicides since being around.



**Vaulty**

Stores videos and pictures from spying parents. Will snap a picture of the person who tries to access the "vault" with the wrong password. If your child has this app-they are purposely trying to hide things from you!



**Sarahah**

Feedback app (receive from friends and strangers). Can share your profile on any social platform for people to give you feedback on.



**Blendr**

Message, exchange photos and videos & rate the "hotness" of other users. Easy for adults to meet minors, used a lot to sext. 300 million users.



**Yik Yak**

Post "yaks" up to 200 characters long that can be viewed by the 500 "Yakkers" who are closest to the location the person posts from via GPS. Anonymous posts are used to spread rumors, send threats or even encourage someone to kill themselves.

## HIDDEN APPS



**Finstagram**

A Finstagram "Insta" is usually a private second Instagram account to hide social media activity from parents. Only your BF-Fs, your baes, Finsta, and it's chock full of the types of images teens don't want you to see.



**Down**

Formerly called "Bang with Friends". Can indicate if friends are someone you are "down" with to "hook up for sex". Pressures children to engage in sexual behaviors. If children are not classified as "down", can lead to anxiety and poor self-esteem leading them to do things they normally would not do to become "down".



**Whisper**

Confessions App which displays where posts are coming from. Users can send you a private message. Can search for users posting within a mile of your location. Youth share personal vulnerabilities like, "I am bullied at school for being fat" and "I'm so lonely". Used by sexual predators to locate youth & establish relationships.



**Audio Manager**

Appears to be manage music files. Hide other apps, pictures, videos and messages. Press and hold icon to reveal hidden content.



**Kik**  
13+

Easy to falsify age. The term "sext buddy" is being replaced with "Kik buddy". No parental controls=easy for sexual predators to contact.



**Omegle**

Marketed as "talk with strangers". Can have immediate video connection with strangers. Can connect with Facebook.



**Calculator%**  
17+

Looks like calculator app. Used to hide pictures. Can set a decoy password to give to parents that shows appropriate pictures but have a separate password to hide others from parents that are not allowed or inappropriate.



**Calculator<sup>0/100</sup>**

**These are just a few of the ever changing apps.**



**Calculator+**