

Why should I monitor my child's activity?

First and foremost, to make sure that your child is safe.

Scenario: You learn that your child has been posting selfies online of cutting their own arms or legs. Maybe you had no idea that they were experiencing any such inner turmoil. Would knowledge that this was happening give you cause to have a compassionate and understanding conversation about it?

Sound too fantastic? It's not. In the US, 1 in 200 girls reported regular self-harm (including cutting or anorexia) and 70% of teens engaging in self-injury behavior have made at least one suicide attempt.

Secondly, think of guiding your child toward a more positive digital citizenship as having a long-term objective.

Scenario: Imagine that your child was cyberbullying someone at school. Never harming them physically, but let's say that your child posted altered photos of the other kid in demeaning ways or insulted them on social media because of their appearance, race, or disability. Now, imagine that your child applies for a scholarship to their dream college. To help the decision process, the school researches your child online. Discovery of a negative digital presence may sway their decision toward denial.

Sound too fantastic? It's not. In fact, many kids are learning this lesson the hard way. Harvard actually rescinded the admission of 10 students solely based on their earlier obscene posts on Facebook. Other schools are following suit. The reason is that one's online presence, or digital citizenship, is a snapshot of who they are, where their priorities lie, their emotional maturity, and how their presence will impact other students.

Isn't that invasive?

If having your child's best interest at heart is invasive, then perhaps. But, keep in mind that monitoring your child's online activity isn't the same thing as sifting through all of their emails or stalking their friends on social media. Try not to think of it in terms of reading their diaries or sifting through their pockets. Instead, think of it as knowing for sure that they're wearing a seatbelt, that they are avoiding dangerous situations, that they are stable and happy.

What Securly does is provide you additional insight into your child's online life, which in turn provides you insight into their emotional well-being. All we want is what you want: to make sure kids are safe, happy, and healthy. Securly is providing parents a new tool with which to better ensure better digital citizens.

Will my child be upset if they learn they are being monitored?

Possibly. In the same way, a child might be upset that they have to call home if they want to stay at a friend's house. At the same time, if a child knows that their online activity can be monitored, they might choose to avoid topics or websites altogether that might get them in trouble.

On the other side of that, knowing that your child is researching, say, types of suicide gives you cause to step in and be the parent that they need. Keeping an eye on your kids is not the same as keeping tabs on them. You're not hiring a detective to follow them around and take photos from behind bushes. You're taking an overview of their online activity for a simple reason: to be sure that your kids are safe and making good choices.

So, while they may feel like they're being spied on, deep down kids know that you are simply looking out for them.