

Who Controls Your Teen?

Who controls your teen? As our children grow into their pre-teen and teens, we would like to think they are mature enough to be in control of their own lives and make wise decisions. Are they?

How does a teen think? Can you remember now wanting to be told what to do? Wanting to be like everybody else. Of course, not all teens give in to peer pressure and wear baggy low slung pants or have orange hair. Almost every teen wants to express themselves in some way. Thinking they are taking control of their own lives, they simply become one of the crowd.

One thing they don't want is for Mom and Dad to control their lives. They want to do their own thing. Have their own space. Have their own website. Take charge of who they want to be.

In not following the rules of Internet Safety, teens are allowing someone else to control their lives. Someone they don't even know. They become a puppet on a string.

At 13 they don't understand the consequences of what can happen by not following these rules. Many teens will do whatever they want no matter what parents say if they have the opportunity. This includes using the Internet when they are given strict orders not to! Consequently more and more parents are forced to take computer privileges away from their teens.

So what can we do about this? You may be the only one who can solve this problem, but as you work on how to approach your teen consider these thoughts:

- Teens think giving them a list of things NOT to do on the Internet is just a parent's way of telling them what to do.
- The rules of Internet Safety are for every Internet user not just for teens. Parents must follow these rules, too. Help your teen to understand that.
- Driving a car means having to obey traffic laws. Excessive speed can kill. Going through a stop sign can kill. Reckless driving cannot only take the life of the driver but others, too.
- Posting personal pictures, revealing personal information on a website or instant messaging areas of the Internet can kill. Predators spend their time looking for their next victims in these areas. It is a playground for them.

Learn all you can and keep your teen safe. Help them to stay in control.