digital *parenting*
COACH

Parental Controls

Begin as you mean to go. You can introduce parental software controls to a younger child with more ease than to a teenager. Getting your child used to the idea that the tablet goes off, the video goes off, the TV goes off at certain times is extremely attractive. And with parental control software, you can do just that.

Parental controls are usually included in most devices, such as your computer, tablet and smartphone. You need to dive into those settings and dig around to see what features are available to you.

If you are based in Europe, the European Commission maintains a website called SipBench.eu which provides benchmarking analysis of parental control software. The findings are available in several European languages and identify the prices, technical requirements, operating system and age of the children to be protected. It is a handy background resource to get you started with parental controls.

If you know of other parental control software tools that should be added to this list, please write to me at Elizabeth@digitalparentingcoach.com so I can investigate and incorporate them into this resource sheet.

Thank you for being a part of our Digital Parenting Community.

Before signing up for parental control software

- Read this article from Common Sense Media to help you make sense of the different types of parental control systems.

- Confirm that your parental control software will allow you, at the very least, to set screen limits, filter content, block ads, and monitor your child's online activities.

- There is a wide range of parental control tools ranging from full-featured programs to home networking parental control solutions to time-out apps and others. You can read through reviews from PC Magazine or check out best free parental controls from PC Advisor.

- And remember parental controls can work for older children too, provided that you introduce them together as a part of a family media agreement and not as some sort of Secret Undercover Stealth Parent Action.

After signing up for parental control software

- Once you set parental controls, go back from time to time to make sure that they are still in place and that your "genius 7-year old coding champion" has not removed them.

- Check in with your children on a regular basis. Installing software should not remove your communication. Nothing prevents you from asking your child, what are they doing online, where are they going online, what do they enjoy most when online, etc.

- Make sure that your child is learning how to self-regulate and self-control even if you have parental controls in place.

- Understand that parental controls are not infallible and that your child can bypass the controls – and in some cases, quite easily with a simple Google search.

Parental Control Software Programs

Here is a list of classic parental control software with full-featured parental control programs such as:

- security against malware and viruses

- setting screen limits (reducing time spent online)

- content filtering (ability to block inappropriate content)

- blocking ads and/or inappropriate advertising pop-ups

- content reporting (reports on your child's online activities)

Net Nanny is a robust system that allows you to set filters, block pornography, set time limits, mask profanity, monitor social media sites, receive alerts and reports and more. Net Nanny is one of the more expensive and it only allows you to monitor a set number of devices.

Qustodio is another favorite that is full of features: social media monitoring, blocking harmful content, setting time limits, restricting games or apps, location monitoring, emergency alerts, filtering, blocking and monitoring calls & SMS, and more.

SafeEyes is part of McAfee/Intel Security and is a player. Like Net Nanny and Qustodio, SafeEyes also has content controls, program controls, time controls, usage logs, usage alerts and more.

Home Networking Parental Control Tools

If you prefer to use an app or wifi tool, here is a list of home networking parental control tools that cover every device in your home (computer, tablets, smartphones, etc.) over wi-fi. These tools generally have the main features of parental control software but please note that they cover devices **WHILE they are connected to the Internet over a Wi-Fi connection**. Note: if your child is using a smartphone on 3G or 4G, then the usage would not be protected.

Open DNS is the world's leading DNS (domain name system) service and allows you to protect any device that connects to the internet. You have three service options, OpenDNS Family Shield (blocks adult content) for free, Open DNS Home (filtering and identity theft protection or OpenDNS Home VIP.

KoalaSafe creates a new network in your home that is safe for children. Koala Safe blocks sites, sets limits and keeps tabs on your children's devices.

Circle (with Disney) allows you what kind of content your children access and for how long. Read this quick review from Wired to fully understand the features.
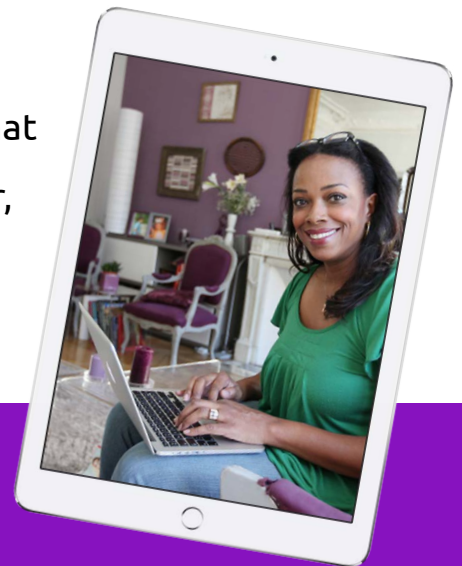
Parental Control Apps

You can also opt for a quick fix, by heading over to the iTunes or Google store and downloading a parental control app.

OurPact is a parental control app and family locator. You can set it up for all the members of your family and you can schedule screen time, or grant and block access at will.

KidsLox is a parental control app available for iOs and Android. You are able to block content, set schedules, daily limits, timers and so forth.

FamilyTime is a parental control app that allows you to manage content and time across several devices.

This list is by no means exhaustive and if you believe that you have a preference for one tool or app over another, head over to The Digital Parenting Community and let other parents know. We are all in this together!

contact information

Send me an email at **Elizabeth@digitalparentingcoach.com.**

Watch my two-minute tutorials on my YouTube channel: **@digiparentcoach.**

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