

Monitoring Kids' Activities and Well-Being

Skills to keep kids safe and prevent addiction and antisocial behavior



Monitoring means knowing where your children are, who they are with, what they are doing, when will they be home, and whether there will be alcohol or drugs at the activity. Monitoring is also being aware of their emotional state. It is an essential parenting skill to protect kids from using harmful substances or participating in harmful behavior.

Monitoring children and teens is essential because the risk-taking part of a teen's brain develops very early in life, and the good judgment, impulse-control part of the brain doesn't finish developing until the early 20s. Because parents have the legal and moral responsibility to protect their children from harm, they have the inherent right to monitor their children's activities, rooms, possessions, and online and phone activity—regardless of how loudly teens push back.

Monitor these 7 things

1. Friends
2. Activities
3. Emotional well-being
4. Substance use
5. Online use
6. Risk for sexual abuse
7. Bullying

Use these skills

- Trust but verify
- Use the 5 Ws
- Make sure activities are alcohol- and drug-free
- Set a curfew
- Practice the 5 Cs often with your child
- Involve friends' parents
- Have pleasant personal chats; ask if they are happy
- Teach about boundaries and consent

THE 5 Ws OF MONITORING:

1. **Where** are you going?
2. **Who** are you going with?
3. **What** will you be doing?
4. **When** will you return?
5. **Will** there be alcohol or drugs there?