

Overview

Mobile phones now include many features of online access, so most of the same cautions you should take with Internet access should also apply. Mobile phones also carry the potential problem of “sexting” – the sending of sexual images via mobile phone cameras. Fortunately, all major mobile phone providers in the United States offer parental controls, though features vary and there is usually a small monthly fee in addition to the charges to the phone itself. Some phones such as Firefly and Kajeet are specifically designed for children, and offer much tighter controls and are especially good for younger children. Monitoring of mobile calls and messages is a controversial area of online safety, as this involves privacy concerns but may be necessary in some circumstances. Mobile phone providers have chosen to not offer monitoring capabilities, which they have left to software companies. Unless you want to monitor text messages and e-mail sent via mobile phone, there really is little reason to buy additional software, since mobile providers typically offer the most popular features. Price is based on the cost of subscription, which in many cases will vary with providers depending on which plan you buy.

We Recommend:

- Ages up to 7:** Mobile phones are generally not appropriate for children in this age group.
- Ages 8 to 10:** Mobile phones designed for children, such as Kajeet or Firefly.
- Ages 11 to 13:** Phone with a contact white list, GPS locator. Block sending photos, Internet access and texting.
- Ages 14 to 17:** Phone with a GPS locator and purchase restrictions. Consider monitoring if appropriate.

Important Features

- ✓ **Block Internet.** Ability to block all Internet access.
- ✓ **Block Sending Photos.** Ability to block the taking of photos or the sending of photos.
- ✓ **Contact White List.** Ability to restrict contacts to a list of approved phone numbers.
- ✓ **Filtered Internet.** Internet filtering of mobile web browsers.
- ✓ **GPS Locator.** Ability to see via a web browser where a mobile phone is located.
- ✓ **GPS Zoning.** Ability to be alerted when a child’s phone leaves a predetermined geographic area.
- ✓ **Monitor Text Messages.** Ability to read text messages that have been sent or received.
- ✓ **Purchase Restrictions.** Ability to limit types of purchases through the phone, such as ringtones.
- ✓ **Time Management.** Ability to limit the times the phone may be used.

| Product | Average Reviews (w/ links) | Cost (USD) | Block Web | Block Sending Photos | Block Text | Contact White List | Contact Black List | Filtered Internet | GPS Locator | GPS Zone | Monitor Call Logs | Monitor Phone Calls | Monitor Texts | Purchase Restrict | Time Mgmt | Usage Allowance | Mobile OS |
|--|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| Mobile Phone Providers with Parental Controls | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AT&T | | + \$4.95/mo | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Texts Only | |
| Firefly | | Varies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | NA | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | |
| iPhone | | Varies | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | |
| Kajeet | Reviews | Varies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Sprint | | +\$5.00/mo | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | |
| T-Mobile | | Varies | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Verizon | | + \$5-15/mo | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Parental Control Software for Mobile Phones | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SMobile | ☆☆☆☆½ | +\$29.95/yr | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | Win; sym; Blk |
| Mobile Sentry | ☆☆☆☆ | +£5.99 UK | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Symbian |
| MobiCIP | ☆☆☆☆ | +\$14.98/yr | iPhone | iPhone | iPhone | No | No | Yes | iPhone | No | iPhone | No | No | iPhone | No | No | iPhone |
| MyKidsSafe | Review | +\$5.99/mo | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Win; sym; Blk |
| MobileWatchDog | | +\$9.95/mo | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | Win; sym; Blk |
| Net Nanny Mobile | | +\$29.95/yr | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | Win; sym; Blk |
| Safe Eyes Mobile | Review | +\$19.95 | iPhone | iPhone | iPhone | No | No | Yes | iPhone | No | iPhone | No | No | iPhone | No | No | iPhone |