

# **A Grandparents Guide to Keeping Grandchildren Safe Online**

*From the Heart of Laura Leigh, Joyfully Raising Grands Podcast*

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." — Proverbs 22:6

## **Introduction**

Hi there, sweet friends.

If you're raising grandchildren today, you know firsthand that parenting has changed so much from when we raised their parents. One of the biggest changes? The internet.

Our grandkids are growing up in a digital world—it's how they learn, connect, and even entertain themselves. It's a wonderful tool, but it can also be a door to some serious dangers. As grandparents, we're tasked with guiding them safely.

This guide is here to help you understand the digital world, protect your grandchildren online, and even use technology to bond with them in beautiful, meaningful ways.

Remember: You don't have to be a tech expert to keep your grandchildren safe. You just have to be present, involved, and willing to learn alongside them.

# **Top 10 Online Safety Tips for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

## **1. Have Open Conversations**

Kids need to know they can talk to us about anything they see or experience online. Create a judgment-free space. Try asking, “What’s something fun you learned online today?” or “Who did you talk to while gaming?”

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***Laura Leigh’s Tip:** Listening more than we talk can make kids more likely to come to us when something’s wrong.*

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## **2. Set Clear Boundaries**

Establish household rules about when and where devices can be used. Set screen time limits and make bedrooms "device-free" zones at night to encourage healthy habits.

## **3. Use Parental Controls**

Modern devices and apps have parental controls—use them! Set up filters to block harmful content and monitor usage. Your internet provider might also offer free parental controls.

## **4. Teach Personal Information Safety**

Help them understand: if you wouldn’t tell a stranger on the street, don’t share it online. Practice role-playing "what if" situations together.

## **5. Be Cyberbullying Aware**

Watch for signs like sudden mood changes, withdrawal, or secrecy about online activity. Cyberbullying is real, and it hurts.

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***Laura Leigh’s Tip:** Encourage your grandchild to screenshot anything suspicious or mean and bring it to you.*

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## **6. Keep Devices in Common Areas**

Make it a family rule that all device use happens in the living room or kitchen where you can easily supervise.

## **7. Know Their Friends**

Just like you'd want to know who they're hanging out with at school, ask who they're talking to online. Encourage friendships with kids they know in real life.

## **8. Model Good Behavior**

They're watching you. Put your phone down during meals, practice kindness online, and limit your own screen time.

## **9. Keep Software Updated**

Updating devices keeps them protected from viruses and hackers. Enable automatic updates if possible.

## **10. Stay Involved**

Get familiar with the apps, games, and websites your grandkids are using. Better yet—use them together!

## **Enhancing Safe Use of Technology**

### **Create a Family Tech Agreement**

Sit down together and set clear, loving expectations. Include rules like:

- Screen-free dinners
- No posting personal information
- Daily screen time limits

Make sure everyone signs it—even you!

### **Teach Critical Thinking**

Teach them to ask:

- Is this information true?
- Who posted it and why?
- Could it hurt someone?

Help them become smart digital citizens.

### **Use Kid-Friendly Platforms**

There are great safe options like:

- YouTube Kids (with restrictions)
- PBS Kids
- National Geographic Kids

Stick to age-appropriate, moderated apps.

### **Practice "Pause Before You Post"**

Teach them:

- Never post when upset.
- Always think: "Would Grandma be proud of this?"

# **Understanding and Preventing Cyberbullying**

## **Know the Signs**

Cyberbullying can look like:

- Avoiding their devices
- Angry or sad after being online
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits

## **Keep Communication Open**

Let them know they can always come to you, no matter what.

## **Report and Block**

Show them how to block users and report bullying behavior on every platform they use.

## **Save Evidence**

Take screenshots of harmful messages or images. You may need these if you have to involve the school or police.

## **Encourage Kindness**

Teach them "netiquette" and that kindness online is just as important as in person.

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***Laura Leigh's Tip:** Pray with your grandkids for those who are hurting—including bullies.*

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## **Resources for Help**

- **Common Sense Media**
  - Reviews apps, games, and movies for age-appropriateness.
  - [commonsensemedia.org](https://commonsensemedia.org)
- **StopBullying.gov**
  - Government site on how to prevent and handle bullying.
- **NetSmartz**
  - Internet safety education for kids and parents.
  - [missingkids.org/netsmartz](https://missingkids.org/netsmartz)
- **Bark**
  - App that monitors text messages, emails, and social platforms for signs of digital dangers.
- **Your Local Library**
  - Many offer free digital safety classes.
- **Kid-Friendly Bible Apps**
  - "Bible App for Kids"
  - "Superbook Kids Bible"
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
  - Call or text 988 for help in crisis situations.

## **Using Technology to Bond**

### **Video Chat Together**

Use technology to stay connected with distant family and friends.

### **Play Online Games Together**

Family-friendly games like:

- Animal Crossing
- Minecraft (in Creative Mode)
- Mario Kart

### **Share Interests**

Cook a recipe from YouTube together, or explore a virtual museum tour.

### **Create Together**

Make a digital scrapbook of family memories or create a private family blog.

### **Learn Together**

Discover something new side-by-side on Khan Academy or National Geographic Kids.

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***Laura Leigh's Tip:*** Set a "Tech Date" each week—spend 30 minutes online together learning or laughing.

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## **Final Thoughts and Prayer**

Grandparents, you are doing sacred work.

This world—and all its new technology—can feel overwhelming, but remember: your love, wisdom, and faith are greater than any challenge you'll face.

Stay engaged. Stay prayerful. And most importantly, stay connected—both to God and to your grands.

### **Prayer:**

*Lord, we thank You for the blessing of raising these precious grandchildren. Give us wisdom to guide them in this digital world, courage to set boundaries, and hearts full of love to connect with them deeply. Protect their minds and hearts as they grow. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Stay safe, stay blessed, and keep raising those grands with joy.

— Laura Leigh, *Joyfully Raising Grands*

## **Family Technology Agreement Samples**

### **For Younger Children (Ages 5–10)**

#### **Our Family Tech Agreement**

1. I will only use the internet when an adult says it is okay.
2. I will ask before downloading anything.
3. I will never share my real name, address, or phone number online.
4. I will use kind words online, just like in person.
5. I will tell a trusted adult if anything online makes me feel uncomfortable.
6. I will keep devices in the family room or kitchen.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Child)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Grandparent)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **For Pre-Teens and Teens (Ages 11–17)**

### **Our Family Tech Agreement**

1. I understand that privacy online is not guaranteed, and I will share passwords with my grandparent.
2. I will think before I post and protect my digital reputation.
3. I will report bullying or suspicious activity.
4. I will limit screen time to \_\_\_ hours per day.
5. I will not share personal information without permission.
6. I will not use devices after 9 PM without permission.
7. I will be respectful in all my online interactions.
8. I will talk to my grandparent if I have questions or concerns.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Grandchild)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Grandparent)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_