

BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEDIA

A Parent's Guide
to Media Literacy



NAMLE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION



**TREND
MICRO™**

Where do children get their beliefs? • What messages are they receiving?

When many of today's parents were growing up, they were taught values and beliefs by the people around them. Parents. Teachers. Grandparents. Neighbors. Today, kids learn an incredible amount from the media environment they are growing up in. Media impact our kids' lives today in almost every way. Whether they are interacting with friends on social media, clicking on advertising to see the latest trend, watching their favorite videos on YouTube or reading a book, media influence the way they live their lives and how they see the world.



How do we help our kids create a healthy relationship with media? How do we balance the digital world with the real world experiences we want for our kids? How do we help navigate the information flow and teach them about everything from kindness to credibility? It may seem overwhelming, but what if we simplified it? What if we gave you one tip that could change the way you talk to your kids and alter the way your kids see the world? Just one. Let's try.

TEACH YOUR KIDS TO ASK QUESTIONS



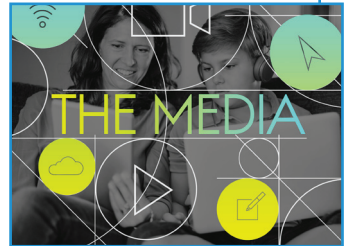
That's it. Teach your kids to ask questions. By teaching them to be critical thinkers and informed skeptics, you will give them the ultimate tool to succeed in the digital world. They will learn how to analyze and evaluate the messages they are receiving. They will grow to be aware of issues like bias and credibility. They will learn empathy and compassion. They will learn to be an active

participant in the world as opposed to being a passive consumer.

At the core of this idea is media literacy. Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication. Media literacy is an essential skill in the 21st century. Media literacy educators along with The National Association for Media Literacy Education suggest asking questions while analyzing media messages. Sample questions include:

Sample Questions When Analyzing Media

- **Why** was this made?
- **Who** made it?
- **What** is missing?
- **How** might different people interpret it?
- **How** do I know this is true?
- **Who** might benefit from this message?
- **Who** might be harmed by this message?



You'd be amazed at how these types of questions open up a world of critical thinking! How do you begin introducing the habit of questioning into your daily life? Again, it's simple. Start introducing the idea of asking questions in normal conversation.

Let's explore some real life examples of conversations that may come up at home.

FAKE NEWS

Your 12 year old daughter has an assignment for science class to explore a current events issue. While searching the web for information, she sees an article about a new form of the flu that doctors are saying is incurable. This makes her nervous and she tells you about it at dinner that night.

Daughter: I read today that there is a new type of flu that has no cure and is expected to infect millions of people.

Mom: Hmm....I'm not sure that is accurate. Where did you read that?

Daughter: It was on the internet. I found it when I was looking up info for homework.

Mom: Whenever I read an article that seems scary like that, I ask myself "how do I know this is true?" Since there is so much information out there, it's always good to question.

Daughter: I just saw it quickly. I didn't really have time to look it up.

Mom: That happens to me sometimes. I don't have time to really dig in. Do you know what site you saw it on? It's always good to find out where the story came from. Before I believe it or share it, I try to find a few more sites that are reporting it. Do you want to look it up with me after dinner? I bet if we did some research we'd understand the issue a bit better.

ADS

Your 7 year old son is watching cartoons after school and sees a commercial for a new toy he absolutely must have. He pauses the TV and comes to get you so you can watch the commercial, too.

Dad: Wow, they sure do make that toy look cool. Do you think it's that cool in real life?

Son: Yes! It's so cool. I really want it! Can I get it??? Please???

Dad: Well, let's think about it. Does the commercial say how much it costs?

Son: No, but I am sure Grandma will buy it for me!

Dad: I'm just thinking about how badly you wanted the new Soaker Surfer Water Gun a few months ago. Remember, when you got it, you didn't think it was even half as cool as it looked on TV? Why do you think that is?

Son: I do remember that. They made it seem like the water would go really, really far but it was kinda lame.

Dad: I know. Commercials are really good at making us want to get things. I always like to ask myself "Is this really going to be as cool as it is on TV?" I don't want the ads to fool me. Maybe next time we go to the toy store we can check it out and see. If you still want it, we can put it on your birthday list.

ORIGINAL CONTENT

Your teenage son and his friends have been working on a short film they want to upload to YouTube. After his friends leave, you ask if you could see what they have been working on because it sounds really cool. He brings his laptop out and screens it for you.



Mom: Wow, that's really great. How long did it take you guys to make that?

Son: We've been working on it all week.

Mom: That's great. How did you decide where to film and who would be in it?

Son: Well, we love the pier and the lighting at sunset is awesome. Some of us just wanted to do the behind the scenes stuff but Nico and I really wanted to be in it.

Mom: What song did you choose?

Son: It's "Afire Love" by Ed Sheeran.

Mom: It's an awesome song. Did you get permission to use it?

Son: We bought it on iTunes.

Mom: Did you know that just buying it doesn't mean you have the rights to use it?

Son: I don't think it's a big deal.

Mom: If someone took a song you worked really hard on and used it without asking, I'd bet you'd be pretty upset. Wouldn't you want them to ask permission? You guys worked so hard on this. You don't want it posted and then taken down, right?

Son: Well, what are my options?

Mom: You could email the record company and ask permission, sometimes they grant rights to their songs. If not, do you want help finding some music you can use? Did you know there are a lot of great sites that offer music specifically for making your own videos? I bet there are great options that would go with your film.

SCAMS

You overhear your 8 year old and 12 year old arguing in the living room. You go in to see what is going on. They are in front of the computer.



Sample Scam Ad



Dad: What are you guys fighting about?

Daughter: He just clicked on an ad for a free Xbox and is entering our home address. I told him it's a scam but he won't believe me.

Son: How do *YOU* know? It doesn't cost anything to try!

Dad: Show me what you guys are talking about. Oh, I see how this could have tricked you. Seems like a great offer, huh?

Son: I just thought it would be cool.

Dad: It would be. Did you know that these types of offers are pretty much always fake?

Son: How do you know?

Dad: Well, I'll ask myself a few questions before clicking. How do I know it's real? Does it seem too good to be true? Where is this offer coming from? That usually helps me think a little before I go further. I also factor in that most sites that want personal information are just trying to gather lots of data to sell to other companies so they can keep sending ads to us. You should always ask yourself "why do they need my information? Are they really going to give me an expensive item like an Xbox just by entering my address or phone number?" It's good practice.

These are just a few examples of how to incorporate questions into the conversation when discussing media and related topics with your children. It is vital for parents to model curiosity and skepticism in their discussions with their children. Teaching the next generation to be critical thinkers allows them to hone this important skill for navigating life in a digital world.

The National Association for Media Literacy Education, its' partners and members have more suggestions and resources to share. Contact us at namle@namle.net.

ABOUT NAMLE

The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) is a professional association for educators, academics, activists, and students with a passion for understanding how the media we use and create affect our lives and the lives of others in our communities and the world. NAMLE organizes a biennial national conference, publishes the Journal for Media Literacy Education and hosts U.S. Media Literacy Week. NAMLE's members and partners are leaders in the media literacy education community who provide their own expertise and resources to classrooms around the country each and every day. For more information about the work of NAMLE, its members and partners, visit www.name.net.

ABOUT TREND MICRO

Trend Micro Incorporated, a global [leader in security software](#), strives to make the world safe for exchanging digital information. In 2008, the Internet Safety for Kids & Families (ISKF) program was founded to help make the internet a great place for young people around the world through its world-wide employee volunteer education program, grants and donations to eligible organizations, and partnerships with those who promote online safety, digital citizenship and media literacy education.

To date, Trend Micro ISKF volunteers and partners are active in over a dozen countries, and have hosted and supported 3000+ events at 10,000+ schools which have positively impacted over 1 million children, parents, and teachers worldwide. For more information, visit internetsafety.trendmicro.com.

