

1. READ YOUR KID' TEXT MESSAGES AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS.

If your kids know you read the messages it might deter them from writing something inappropriate.

2. STICK TO POSTING FAMILY PICTURES ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

There is a lot of competition between peers and who is hanging out together. Posting "friend" pictures adds to the competition and creates jealousy and hard feelings between peers.

3. COLLECT ALL PHONES, IPODS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS AT 7:00PM.

Especially if the slumber party is at your house! Two common times for preteens and teens to send hurtful messages to each other are: At night when they are alone in their own space and when they are in groups with peers.

Scenario 1:

The slumber party is at your house and the girls are gossiping about a girl who is not there. Someone says, "That's why I didn't invite her. Send her a mean text! She deserves it." So one of the girls sends a text to the girl who is not there, "You think you are so cool. Nobody likes you! That's why you weren't invited."

Scenario 2:

You are alone in your room. You start thinking about an incident with a friend and you get mad all over again. You know your parents don't have time to check your text messages. You know you can delete them anyway. So you decide to send a mean text to your friend. "I'm still mad at you and everyone at our lunch table is mad at you. Sit somewhere else tomorrow. We don't want you to eat with us."

Social media and electronics lend themselves to drama, if that is how kids decide to use them. Kids today don't have to have the courage to say it. They simply type a message and push send. It's so easy to type something mean.