



Dr. Novick's Top 10 Tips about Texting, social media, and Middle School Kids
(In no particular order)

1. Parents own the cell phone.
2. Being up-front about expectations and rules for cell phones is important. Create a "contract" that can be re-negotiated any time.
3. The cell phone is not a "diary" – meaning it's not private. Everything on-line can be seen by others at some point. Students should not have an expectation of privacy when it comes to their cell phones.
4. Monitor your child on-line. Check your child's texts and let them know you are doing it as part of the contract you establish. It should be understood that you own the phone and you can check it at any time. You aren't trying to "catch" your child doing something wrong, but help them think before they text or post. You don't need to check every day and you can pull back little by little as your child gets older.
5. Set up social media accounts of your own so you can follow your child on those platforms. Know your child's passwords. If your child thinks you will see their posts, they may think twice before posting something. Encourage your child to ask themselves: Is this something my mom/dad/grandparent would be okay seeing?
6. Use a 24-hour rule – encourage children to wait 24 hours before responding on text or social media when they are upset.
7. Texting is not talking. Talking is talking!
8. No devices (even quick peeks) during meals, or in the front passenger seat of your car. Model this for your children.
9. Don't allow cell phones in the bedroom at night. Students are on their devices longer and later than you think. Charge all your devices in a central area over night, such as the kitchen.
10. Remind your child that anything done on-line can have unforeseen consequences (i.e., when applying to college.)