



# Cell Phones & Parental Controls:

*Protect Your Children*



**Diocese of Manchester**



# The Challenge: Today's Sexualized Culture

In the past, churches, religious institutions, schools, and even the entertainment industry complemented the role of parents and families by delivering consistent messages about integrity and responsibility. Over time, however, many of these structures within our culture have challenged parents' values and beliefs. Increasingly, the entertainment industry and many educational institutions are at odds with parents who embrace scriptural truths.

Multiplying these parental challenges is the development of new and advanced technologies, which, along with providing many benefits, increase exponentially the potential threats faced by our children. Widespread access to the Internet and new delivery devices (cell phones, iPods, PlayStations, Wii gaming systems, etc.) provide numerous channels for delivery of pornography, sexualized messages, and sexual solicitations to millions of men, women, and children. Each day in our nation, young people are victimized by those who seek to steal their innocence and corrupt their minds.

**We believe every child and grandchild you know and love will be impacted, directly or indirectly, by sexually explicit content delivered over the Internet by computers and wireless technologies.**

Young people and children are often more technology literate than their parents and grandparents, and they are properly inquisitive about sexual matters. Pornographers recognize this combination and are continually on the offensive, determined to seduce and ensnare those not seeking pornography. Through page-jacking, pornographers have learned how to redirect innocent children from good Internet sites to pornographic websites. Research has revealed that 90% of young people's first exposure to pornography on the Internet is unintentional; the second exposure rarely is.

In addition, each child will have peers accessing pornographic Internet content through a wireless device. Those peers will be powerfully influenced by this addictive material and will talk about what they have seen. They will offer access to that same material when your child is most vulnerable.

The challenge each devout parent must face is this: every child, including those close to you, will be impacted by pornographic content through wireless technology. **Three strong entities have come together to help.** The Religious Alliance Against Pornography, the National Coalition for the Protection of Children & Families and the national *iCare* movement of women and their friends are working jointly to help parents understand and deal effectively with this challenge.

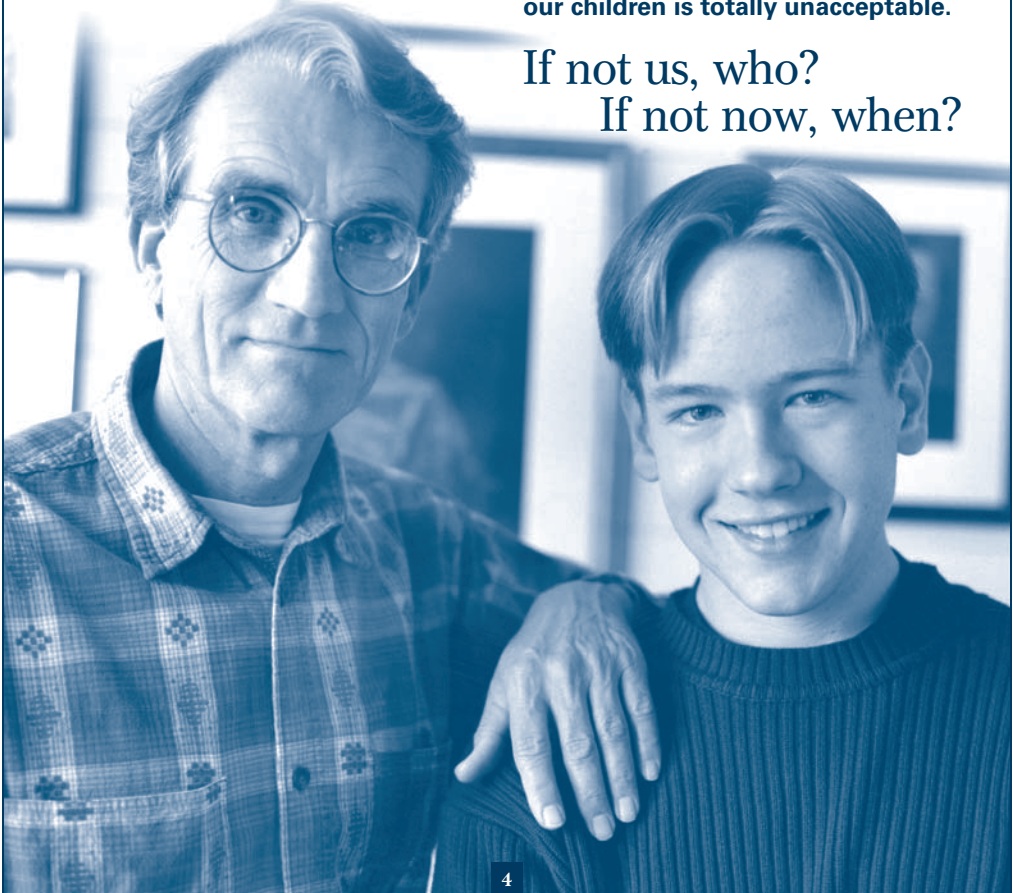


# The Solution: Educated and Engaged Parents


**There is only one ultimate solution for our families.** It is not through technology. It is dedicated and focused parents (or other caring adults) consistently giving themselves in wholesome and growing relationships with their children and young people. **In the midst of these healthy relationships, the solution is parents helping their children develop an inner moral and spiritual compass through God's grace and truth.** This alone could enable those young people to say "no" when confronted by sexually explicit material, not just now but for a lifetime.

**There is only one long-term solution for our nation.** The sexualizing of America will get much worse before it gets better unless God intervenes *through His people*. It is time for us to protect ourselves and our families by consistent dedication, determination, and commitment to win this battle for each other and the country. Failure is the inevitable outcome unless God's people humble themselves, seek His grace and strength, and believe God is able and will act to transform our lives and the culture. We must then take the necessary steps to learn the facts and help our children want to and know how to protect themselves. **To not protect our children is totally unacceptable.**

If not us, who?  
If not now, when?



## The Resource: *iCare...about protecting children*



There is help available through the growing national women's movement *iCare...about protecting children*. *iCare* celebrates advances in technology, but understands the critical importance of educating church/religious leaders, congregations and parents about this potential threat. The Religious Alliance and the National Coalition invite you to do four things:

- 1 Become educated about the new technology and its capabilities through the *iCare* website at [www.icarecoalition.org](http://www.icarecoalition.org).
- 2 Engage in open and consistent discussions with your family and young persons about their "moral and spiritual compass" and safe use practices (*see Safe Use Agreement*).
- 3 Be proactive to maximize the benefits of this technology and minimize the risks by joining *iCare* at [www.icarecoalition.org](http://www.icarecoalition.org).
- 4 Multiply yourself by sharing your knowledge with others individually, in small groups and through **the viral use of e-mail**.

New technology brings new challenges. This resource booklet is intended to help Christian leaders and parents make wise choices: as they purchase and set-up their family's and children's cell phone equipment; as they provide continuing guidance for their young people through a "safe use agreement;" and as they prepare for the long haul and commit themselves to an ongoing educational process that enables them to truly partner with their young people into adulthood.

# Protecting Your Family At The Time of Purchase

Given the many options available, purchasing mobile phones for yourself and your family can be a daunting endeavor. The following script is designed to make the process a bit easier by providing examples of questions to ask regarding the wireless provider's "parental controls" and assist you in your evaluation of the product.

## 1 Internet Accessibility

- Can this device be connected to the Internet?
- Can this connection be turned on and off, and if so, how?
- What is the additional cost of Internet access?
- How can I block connections to social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook, Xanga, etc.?

## 2 Internet Filtering/Monitoring

- Are there appropriate parental controls to filter, block and/or monitor Internet access? If so, how can they be installed?
- How can I prevent these controls from being circumvented?

## 3 Forms of Communication

- Can this device send and receive e-mails, text messages and instant messages?
- Can the device produce, receive and distribute pictures or video footage? Can this capability be turned on and off, and if so, how?

## 4 Usage Controls

- How can I limit the times of day and length of time the device can be used?
- How can I limit the contact list for both incoming and outgoing calls?

## 5 Sexually Explicit Content

- Can the device be used to obtain sexually explicit content through a connection to the Internet, a memory stick, a connection to other wireless devices, e-mails or in any other manner? How can I disengage/monitor this capability?

## 6 Final Question

- Will you help me set up these parental controls and understand how to keep them effective in the future?



# Safe Use Agreement: Protecting Your Family on a Continuing Basis

**This model safe use agreement between parents and children provides guidelines for discussion and a basis for developing specific understanding and agreement.**

Because we agree my cell phone is a **privilege I have earned**, I will agree to the terms of its future use. I realize a cell phone has extensive capabilities for communication and even education. I also recognize it brings risks. You, as my parent(s), have trusted me with this device and I understand **I need to use it responsibly** so its use brings no harm to me, any member of our family or any of my friends.

I agree to the following principles in the use of my cell phone and other wireless technology (i.e., laptop, iPod, PlayStation, Wii, etc):

- 1** I will not share any personal information, including my date of birth, address, phone number or specifics about what school or church I attend. I recognize that sharing such information could lead to harm if it gets in the hands of someone who intends to hurt me. I fully recognize the threat this is to my safety.
- 2** In all my communication through the cell phone, I will be respectful of others and will never threaten or bully anyone. My communication will always be truthful, encouraging and helpful.
- 3** I will never use vulgar or sexually explicit language, and if someone begins using such language with me, I will immediately hang up and refuse further communication.
- 4** I recognize there is no such thing as real privacy when using my cell phone, especially when connected to the Internet. I understand any content I post about myself or anyone else on the Internet can be distributed across the world without my knowledge or permission. Even if I intend such communication to be private, I have no guarantee that will be the case.
- 5** I understand that while I am communicating with persons whom I don't know, they are able to deceive me and may not be truthful about who they are and their intentions. I recognize it is impossible for me to really know that anyone I'm communicating with over the Internet is really who he/she says they are.
- 6** I will not post information on any of the social networking websites such as MySpace, YouTube, Facebook or Zanga without first discussing it with you and getting your permission. I recognize that information shared on these websites is available to millions of people whom I do not know, some of whom intend to do great harm to children and youth. I realize there is a risk.
- 7** In the use of my cell phone, I will be completely open with you in terms of how I am using it, what I am communicating and what others are communicating to me.
- 8** I have earned your trust by obeying you as my parent(s) and I have every intention of continuing to do so. I willingly enter into this covenant agreement to be held accountable to you. By faithfully following these principles, we have agreed I will continue to enjoy the privilege of using my cell phone and/or other wireless devices.

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Parent(s) Signature(s)

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Young Person Signature

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Date

# Protecting Your Family Over The Long Haul

All of us need continuing education if we are going to stay current with our young people and this generation. The following resources will help you stay informed about advances in technology and their impact on your families.

## A. Religious Alliance Against Pornography

The Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP) was formed in 1986 as a broad, interfaith effort to alert, educate and mobilize all people of faith and good will to combat pornography. The organization represents a constituency of over one hundred million from all major faith groups, including many Protestant denominations, Orthodox, Anglican, Roman Catholics, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jewish and Muslim religions.

RAAP is committed to using its corporate influence on matters of legal and public policy when appropriate. For example, after two years of relentless activity to persuade executives at AT&T and General Motors that their involvement in distributing pornography was a violation of public trust, the companies divested themselves from their pornography business and have made significant progress toward being family-friendly.

Members of the Religious Alliance are partnering with the National Coalition and *iCare* to educate their people and offer practical ways for people of faith to protect themselves from pornography, with special emphasis on children and young people, and to develop thoughtful arguments for disarming the messages of the sexualized culture.

## B. Educational Booklet Series



The National Coalition recently released an exciting booklet series entitled *What Every Parent Needs to Know About*.

The messages of our sexualized culture are delivered to youth in new and unprecedented ways, which can often be overwhelming. But despite the challenge, parents can and must become educated and diligent in talking with their kids about sex and leading them to lives of sexual health and discipline.

Helping parents become educated, informed and thus better equipped is both the message and mission of this new booklet series.

Consider adding this vital *What Every Parent Needs to Know About* booklet series to your parenting toolbox.

The National Coalition is currently offering the boxed set for \$10 plus shipping! Visit [www.nationalcoalition.org](http://www.nationalcoalition.org) or call **(513) 521-6227** to order today!

## C. *iCare...about protecting children* Prayer and Action Movement

We don't need to stay the course alone. A team is growing. Get involved with the National Coalition's *iCare...about protecting children* movement. *iCare* calls and mobilizes women and their friends to pray for the protection of their children, families and marriages. Through a twice monthly electronic communication, *iCare* educates people on the inherent dangers of wireless technology, provides suggested prayers for each month, and offers specific help to ensure your child's safety when using their mobile device. To receive ongoing updates regarding this issue, please join *iCare* free of charge at [www.icarecoalition.org](http://www.icarecoalition.org).



# Meetings with the Five Major Wireless Providers

During recent months, members of the Religious Alliance, National Coalition and the *iCare...about protecting children* movement have met by conference call or face to face with the CEOs and/or their representatives from the five major wireless companies: Alltel, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon. Our purposes were to accurately understand the “parental controls” available and each company’s process of educating parents at the time of purchasing cell phones for their family members. Our hope was to accurately inform our constituents and the nation, and to encourage and support these companies’ resolve and commitment to protect families, children and young people specifically from sexually explicit material.

Through these meetings, the Religious Alliance/National Coalition/*iCare* have begun an open and continuing relationship with official representatives of each company. Our strong impression is that the wireless industry as a whole and these wireless providers individually are seeking to protect children from the significant threats they face as they enjoy the benefits of wireless technology.

We believe and they believe that the educational process must become more effective. While everyone agrees more must be done to guard our youth from predators and pornographers, these wireless providers deserve genuine credit for their commitment and the significant resources they are investing to develop parental controls that are increasingly effective, accessible and affordable.

## The two areas where all agree additional progress is necessary are:

- 1 continuing development of more effective technological solutions with the simplification of parental implementation of those controls; and
- 2 providing more thorough, effective and consistent parental education at the time of purchase.

You can help your family and others by becoming more educated, by joining *iCare*, and by your knowledgeable interaction with young people and with salespersons at the time of purchase.

For a more detailed outline of each wireless carrier’s parental control features, please see pages 10-11.



CARRIER	AT&T	Alltel
WEB ADDRESS	<p><b>Smart Limits:</b> <a href="http://www.att.com/gen/sites/smartlimits?pid=8934">http://www.att.com/gen/sites/smartlimits?pid=8934</a></p> <p><b>MediaNet:</b> <a href="http://www.wireless.att.com/learn/articles-resources/parental-controls/media-net.jsp">http://www.wireless.att.com/learn/articles-resources/parental-controls/media-net.jsp</a></p>	<a href="http://www.alltel.com">http://www.alltel.com</a>
PARENTAL CONTROL PROGRAM	Smart Limits for Wireless™ and MEdia™ Net Parental Controls	Access through “My Account”
KEY FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Time of day restrictions</li> <li>■ Download limits</li> <li>■ Text messaging limits</li> <li>■ Allow/block phone numbers</li> <li>■ Ability to turn on content filter and purchase blocker</li> <li>■ <b>Content filtering</b></li> </ul> <p>Parents can set Content Filters to “On” or “Off.” “On” restricts access to sites with mature content on MEdia™ Net (like chat and date sites) and shuts off access to the broader mobile Web via the search function. “Off” has no restrictions and all content is visible and accessible. The default is set to “Off.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Purchase blocker</b></li> </ul> <p>Parents can set Purchase Blocker to “On” or “Off.” “On” prevents your children from purchasing premium content, including ringtones, downloads, games and graphics. “Off” allows all purchases. The default is set to “Off.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Filter changes in real time</li> <li>■ Age-appropriate filtering</li> <li>■ Filter applies to web addresses, chat rooms, and most downloadable content</li> </ul>
COST OF CONTROLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ \$4.99 per month for all features bundled together</li> <li>■ Content filters and purchase blocker features also available standalone at no charge</li> </ul>	■ Free
FILTER / COST	■ Filter provided at no additional cost	■ Filter is optional and provided at no additional cost
RATING SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Filter On: only allows content suitable for all ages</li> <li>■ Filter Off: no restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Filter On: Level 1 includes all ages, Level 2 includes those 13+, Level 3 includes those 17+</li> <li>■ Filter Off: no restrictions</li> </ul>
CAMERA	■ Camera capture feature cannot be turned off	■ Camera capture feature cannot be turned off
INTERNET	■ No switch available to turn Internet on/off	■ Internet can be turned off through customer service assistance

<b>CARRIER</b>	<b>Verizon</b>	<b>Sprint</b>	<b>T-Mobile</b>
<b>WEB ADDRESS</b>	<a href="http://www.vzw.com/parentalcontrols">http://www.vzw.com/parentalcontrols</a>	<a href="http://www.nextel.com/en/services/safety_security">http://www.nextel.com/en/services/safety_security</a>	<a href="http://support.t-mobile.com/knowledge/root/public/tm23350.htm?">http://support.t-mobile.com/knowledge/root/public/tm23350.htm?</a>
<b>PARENTAL CONTROL PROGRAM</b>	Content Filters/Usage Controls	Parental Control/Web Access	Webguard
<b>KEY FEATURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Usage Controls Allows parents to set time restrictions, allow/block phone numbers, and set usage allowance</li> <li>■ Content filtering Allows parents to set age appropriate content filters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Restrict internet access</li> <li>■ Block/allow incoming text messages</li> <li>■ Block/allow content purchases</li> <li>■ Handset-based features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restrict incoming/outgoing voice calls and text messages to pre-approved phone book contacts</li> <li>- Allow/disallow web browser functionality (not available on all phones)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Content filtering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Restricts access to adult-themed (18 or over) sites</li> <li>■ Automatically comes as part of all prepaid and KidConnect rate plans</li> <li>■ Not optional and cannot be removed from KidConnect plan</li> <li>■ Family Allowance Plan can add Webguard</li> <li>■ Can opt into Webguard via mobile device, but cannot opt out via mobile devices</li> </ul>
<b>COST OF CONTROLS</b>	■ \$4.99 per month per line	■ Free	■ Free
<b>FILTER / COST</b>	■ Filter provided at no additional cost	■ Filter provided at no additional cost	■ Filter provided at no additional cost and is optional
<b>RATING SYSTEM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Filter On: C7+, T13+, YA17+</li> <li>■ Filter Off: no restrictions (default setting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Filter On: websites within walled garden follow MMA and CTIA guidelines (no "R" rated content offered)</li> <li>■ Filter Off: no restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Filter On: only allows predetermined safe content</li> <li>■ Filter Off: no restrictions</li> </ul>
<b>CAMERA</b>	■ Camera capture feature cannot be turned off	■ Some handsets allow camera capture feature to be turned on/off	■ Camera capture feature cannot be turned off
<b>INTERNET</b>	■ Switch available to turn Internet on/off	■ Switch available to turn Internet on/off	■ Switch available to turn Internet on/off



*Diocese of Manchester*

**NATIONAL COALITION**  
FOR THE PROTECTION OF  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office for Ministerial Conduct  
PO Box 310  
Manchester, NH 03105-0310  
(603) 669-3100  
[www.catholicnh.org/child-safety](http://www.catholicnh.org/child-safety)