

Protecting Children in Mobile Environments

CTIA–The Wireless Association® recognizes that children are often the first and most enthusiastic adopters of innovative mobile technologies. While wireless technology offers children infinite benefits such as safety and mLearning solutions, parents, educators and policymakers are concerned that children may use their mobile devices and services in an inappropriate or irresponsible manner.

In light of the challenges of protecting kids in open online and mobile environments, the wireless industry continues to respond with effective, innovative solutions that give parents choice and control over the mobile content and services their children are using. By equipping parents and educators with the tools and resources they need to help educate kids make smart choices when using their wireless devices and services, CTIA and the wireless industry are empowering our next generation wireless users.

Specifically, CTIA and the wireless industry have:

1. Provided **content management tools** (i.e. built-in to a device or service or downloadable from a manufacturer, service provider or third party) and **services** (e.g. limits on text and picture messages, Internet access, pre-approved outbound and inbound calls) so parents can choose how their children use their wireless products and services.
2. Established **voluntary industry guidelines and best practices** for content classification and Internet access, location-based services, mobile financial services and common short codes to enhance consumer protection and security by helping customers make informed decisions about mobile content.
3. Developed the “**Be Smart. Be Fair. Be Safe: Responsible Wireless Use**” campaign to help parents, educators and policymakers teach kids about responsible mobile behavior, driving and eco-friendly initiatives. The cornerstone of the campaign is its website (www.besmartwireless.com), where parents can find a list of CTIA members and the parental features and filters they offer; a glossary of key terms; a checklist with tips of what to do when your child has a wireless device; and an example of family rules.
4. Participated in **the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications & Information Administration’s (NTIA) Online Safety & Technology Working Group** which published the *Youth Safety on a Living Internet* report.
5. Supported the federal **Adolescent Web Awareness Requires Education (AWARE) Act** – H.R. 3630; S.1047 – which promotes online safety education through government grants to educational agencies, nonprofit organizations and schools to carry out Internet safety awareness and cybercrime prevention programs. We encourage policymakers to take steps to ensure kids are prepared for the increasingly high-tech and mobile future by:
 1. Encouraging **schools to review and update existing technology policies** to integrate mobile technologies and educational applications;
 2. **Supporting educators who use mobile devices** as an additional platform for communicating with their students by allowing them to use educational funds for distributing assignments and other content directly to mobile devices; incorporating mobile “voting” and response activities in the classroom; and developing audio recordings, videocasts, podcasts or similar tools to assist homebound and ill students;
 3. Working with librarians and teachers to utilize handheld devices and digital downloads to **expanding the reach of school libraries**; and
 4. **Modifying the E-Rate, Lifeline, Link-Up and state-based universal service programs** can help maximize opportunities for wireless broadband and mobile applications that otherwise fit within the scope of these programs.

For more information, please visit: http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/policy_topics