

BrightCanary 



THE PEACEFUL PARENT
LISA SMITH • PARENT COACH



Raising Kids in the **Age of Screens**

The conversations that keep
kids safe online and make your
relationship stronger.

Most parents are waiting for a crisis before having the conversation.

Bullying. Self-image. Stranger danger. AI. These conversations can feel scary, awkward, or premature, especially when your child seems fine. The reality is that having those conversations early on helps prepare and equip your child — before something goes wrong.

There's often a significant gap between what kids tell their parents and what's actually happening on their devices. A teen might say, "I don't talk to strangers" — while regularly chatting with people they've never met on Discord or Roblox. They might insist they "barely use" social media, when in reality, they're online for hours a day.

It's not that they're lying. Kids compartmentalize. They don't always connect what they're doing online with the risks parents are worried about. And they won't connect those dots until a parent helps them.

That's what this guide is for: to give you the words to help them.

"The conversations that feel too early are almost never too early. In peaceful parenting, we talk about connection before correction — and the same is true for the digital world. Don't wait until something goes wrong to open the door. Open it now, while they still want to walk through it with you"

- **Lisa Smith**, the Peaceful Parent

The 5 Conversations Every Parent Needs to Have

1 Social media & self image

Algorithms are designed to show kids content that triggers big emotions, like comparison and insecurity. Most kids don't realize this is happening or how it impacts their feelings.

"Have you ever seen something on your feed that made you feel bad about yourself? What happened?"

3 AI chatbots & emotions

Three in four teens use AI for companionship, but many chatbots fail to respond appropriately to red flags like self-harm or depression. AI shouldn't be used as a replacement for friendship.

"A lot of kids are talking to AI chatbots now, even about personal stuff. What do you think about that?"

5 Monitoring & privacy

Kids should understand why things like parental controls and privacy settings are important, and why parents should be involved, too.

"I want to talk about how I keep you safe online. I want to hear your thoughts about it, too."

2 Online strangers & grooming

Grooming often starts with someone who feels like a friend. Kids need to know what the process looks like before they're in it.

"If someone you only know online started asking you really personal questions, what would you do?"

4 Drugs, scams & risky content

Drug dealers use platforms like Snapchat and Instagram to sell illicit substances. Sextortion and AI deepfakes can impact kids of all ages. Kids need to know what these approaches look like.

"Have you ever seen something online that made you feel uncomfortable? What did you do about it?"



Parent Tip

Before you dive into any of these conversations, take a breath and check your energy. If you come in with fear or urgency, your kid's nervous system is going to go straight into defense mode — and the conversation is over before it starts. Lead with curiosity instead.

Try: "I've been thinking about this stuff and I'd love to know what YOU think..." You're not interrogating them. You're inviting them. That's the difference between a kid who shuts down and a kid who talks.

Conversation Starters by Age

Save these prompts to spark new conversations with your child as they grow more mature. Remember: lead with curiosity, not solely concern.

Tweens (10–12):

- “Do your friends use social media? What do they mostly post about?”
- Have you ever seen something online that made you feel left out?”
- “What would you do if someone online started asking personal questions?”
- “Do you know what to do if you see something that makes you feel uncomfortable?”
- “Do your friends use AI apps? What kinds of things do they ask it?”

Middle Schoolers (13–14):

- “Have you ever posted something online and then regretted it? What happened?”
- “Do you think social media makes people feel better or worse about themselves?”
- “What’s the difference between talking to someone you know in real life vs. online?”
- “If a friend was being bullied online, what would you tell them to do?”
- “If someone asked you for your password or where you live, what would you do?”

Teens (15+):

- “Do you think your social media algorithm shapes what you believe? How?”
- “Is there anything you’ve seen online that changed how you feel about yourself?”
- “If AI gave you advice that felt wrong, what would you do?”
- “What do you think the biggest risks are online right now for people your age?”
- “Do you ever feel like you need to take a break from screens?”

The Trust Talk: How to talk to your kid about parental monitoring

Content filters, parent-managed accounts, and monitoring apps like [BrightCanary](#) can all help keep your child safe online — but a lot of parents worry about trust. It's important to explain what you're doing, why it matters, and what kind of information you'll have access to. The goal isn't surveillance — it's connection.

What to say

"Sometimes, you might see things online that you don't know how to handle. My job is to protect you."

"BrightCanary alerts me if something concerning comes up. It's not about reading your every message."

"The risks are real: drugs, scammers, people who aren't who they say they are. This is how I stay involved."

"As you show me you can handle things responsibly, I'll give you more privacy."

What to avoid

"I don't trust you, so I'm monitoring your phone."

"I'm going to read all your texts whenever I want."

"I want to know every single thing you're doing."

"These are my rules and that's that."

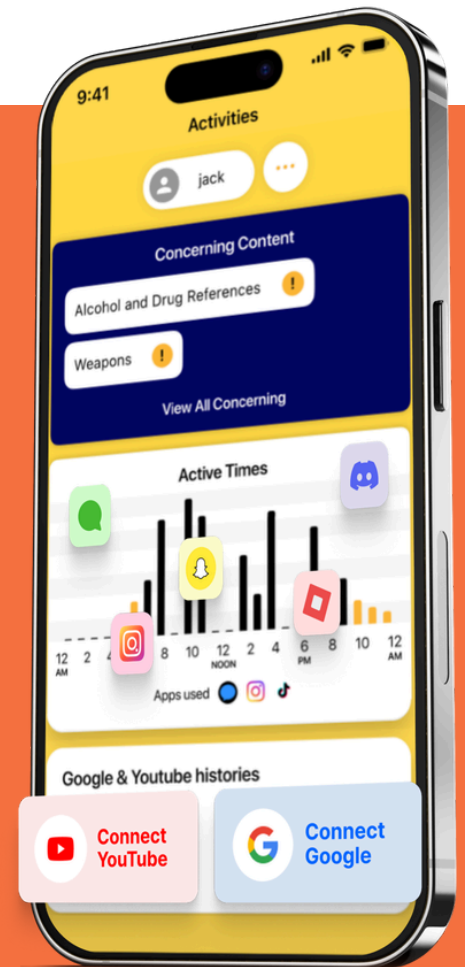
Talking about BrightCanary

Thousands of parents trust BrightCanary to help keep their kids safe online. The app monitors your child's activity across every app on iOS. Here's how to talk about it with your child:

"I use BrightCanary to stay aware of what's happening on your iPhone/iPad/Apple Watch. I'm not trying to get in your business. I'm trying to make sure you're safe."

"BrightCanary helps me stay aware without being in your face constantly. Let me show you how I use it."

"This app alerts me if something concerning pops up. I'm not going to read everything."



Save 20% on BrightCanary's Text Message Plus annual plan.

Use code
PARENTS20!

Our Family Digital Agreement

Fill this in together. Revisit it every six months or so.

We agree on these rules for device use:

Screen-free times in our home (such as dinner or 1 hour before bed): _____

The following places are screen-free zones (bedrooms, classrooms): _____

Where we charge our devices at night: _____

I will not share my device and passwords with anyone outside my family. _____

I will not use my device to threaten, embarrass, or upset another person, and I will not send or share any photos or videos that will make someone feel bad or uncomfortable. _____

We agree on these rules for social media and apps:

I will ask permission before buying apps or making in-app purchases. My parent must approve any apps I install, even if they are free. _____

I will keep my online accounts private and will not accept friend or message requests from people I don't know. _____

My parents have talked to me about sharing personal information, and I will not share my personal information with anyone. _____

I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true, and I will consider the source of information carefully. _____

If using my device or being online is making me unhappy or it's hard to stop, I will talk to a family member immediately. _____

We agree about monitoring:

I understand that my parent will use parental controls or a monitoring app such as BrightCanary, and this is a condition of me using my device. _____

I will not interfere with parental control settings or monitoring apps on my accounts. If I do, I will forfeit my right to have access to the device for ___ days/weeks. _____

If something goes wrong online:

I will tell a parent immediately, even if it's embarrassing. _____

I won't delete messages or evidence before talking to a parent. _____

I know that I will not be punished for coming forward. _____

Signatures:

Parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

Child: _____

Date: _____

"I tell parents: you can't guide your kid through a world you know nothing about. And right now, a huge part of their world lives on a screen. BrightCanary doesn't replace the conversations every parent needs to have with their kid – it gives you the information to walk into those conversations with confidence instead of fear."

- **Lisa Smith**, the Peaceful Parent

Most parental controls and monitoring apps don't give parents enough visibility on iOS. BrightCanary makes it easy to keep your child safe and on track across every app.

- AI-powered summaries of your child's online activity
- Real-time alerts when something concerning happens
- Emotional insights informed by APA guidelines
- Monitor messages, social media, search, and more

Download [BrightCanary](#) and start your free trial!

About BrightCanary

Created by parents, BrightCanary is an award-winning child safety app for iOS that helps parents keep their kids safe across every app they use. The app monitors activity across text messages, Google, YouTube, social media, and more.

About Lisa Smith



Lisa Smith is a master certified parenting coach, host of the Real World Peaceful Parenting podcast, and founder of The Hive – a coaching community for parents of strong-willed kids. Known for combining deep empathy with practical, real-world tools, Lisa helps parents move from yelling and punishment to calm, confident connection – even in their most chaotic family moments.

Lisa believes that lasting change is possible for every family. Her work centers on one core idea: that the parent-child relationship is the foundation of everything – and that when parents feel supported and equipped, kids thrive. Learn more at ThePeacefulParent.com

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