

Parental control options though cell phone carrier.

AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and T-Mobile all offer parental controls that include the ability to:

- block picture messaging
- block unknown phone numbers
- limit what time your kids can text or call
- filter web browsing, and
- use GPS tracking to keep tabs on their physical location

AT&T

Their main parental control program is called **Smart Limits** . It's offered at \$4.99 a month and it lets parents limit the time of day their child's cell phone can be used, the number of texts per billing cycle, the amount of web browsing, and the dollar amounts for download purchases. It also allows parents to block inappropriate web content and specific numbers so that their children can't text or call a particular number.

They also offer a service called **Data Blocker** , which is free. Data Blocker allows parents to block picture and video messaging from their children's phones. Other than talking to your kids about sexting and why it's dangerous, think of this service as another layer of protection.

The last parental control service they offer is called **FamilyMap** , and it lets parents track their children's phone using the GPS technology. It runs 9.99 a month and is capable of tracking up to two phones. Parents can receive email or text notifications when their children reach a certain area, i.e. school, or basketball practice. Keep in mind that your child must have a phone with GPS capabilities in order for this to work.

Learn more <http://www.att.net/smartcontrols-SmartLimitsForWireless>

Sprint

All of the parental controls that Sprint offers are free and fall under the service titled **Parental Controls**. This service allows parents to block text messages, picture messages and calls from specific numbers or unknown numbers. It also lets parents deactivate the camera function on their child's phone, which is another great way to prevent sexting or cyberbullying.

Lastly, Parental Controls allows parents to track their children through the GPS function on their phone. Texts and/or emails will be sent to parents to alert them to their child's location.

Learn more <http://www.sprint.com/landings/family/safety.html>

T-Mobile

T-Mobile offers a service called **FamilyWhere** , which allows parents to track their children through GPS. The phone stores the child's locations for the past seven days and sends parents texts with their child's location. In addition, parents can set up certain times when the phone checks on their child's location and sends the results to the parent's phone or computer.

FamilyWhere costs 9.99 a month and can be used on every phone on your family plan. On top of that, T-Mobile also offers a free **Message Blocking** service that allows parents to block incoming and outgoing text messages and picture messages from certain numbers, as well as blocking email and instant messaging chat messages. They also have a free feature called **Web Guard**, which can filter inappropriate content from phones. It blocks all 18 and over content on the children's phones, and it can stop children from searching for and viewing restricted content on web-enabled phones.

Family Allowances lets parents limit the number of minutes, texts, and data their children can use on their phone. An alert will be sent to the child and parent's phone when they are reaching their limit. The service also allows parents to control when their children can text and/or make calls from their phone. In addition, parents can designate "always allowed" numbers and "never allowed" numbers. The Family Allowances service costs 4.99 a month.

The newest service T-Mobile offers is called **DriveSmart**. It's a T-Mobile specific application that can be downloaded from the Android Market. The free version limits calls, texts, and application use when the phone is in a moving vehicle, however the application must be opened and set up every time the user starts driving. For automatic driving detection and access to parental controls you need to upgrade to DriveSmart Plus which costs 4.99 a month and covers up to 10 lines.

Learn more <http://family.t-mobile.com/safety-and-security>

Verizon

Verizon offers three parental control services. The first is called **Usage Controls** and runs for 4.99 a month per line. It allows parents to set limits on minutes, messages, data usage, and purchases of VZ branded content, such as games and applications. Usage Controls will also allow parents to set limits on cell phone usage during certain times of day or days of the week. Lastly, it allows parents to block unwanted calls, text, picture and video messages from certain contacts or set up designated trusted contacts, which are always allowed to communicate. This is a great way to gain control of your child's cell phone usage or the charges on your phone bill.

The second service they offer is called **Family Locator** and it runs for 9.99 a month per phone you wish to locate. As you can guess, this is used to track the GPS feature on your child's phone. Family Locator sends parents alerts when their children arrive or leave a designated area that the parents define such as home, school, or soccer practice. The information can be sent to a cell phone or computer, and alerts can be customized to be sent every hour with the child's location.

The last service they offer is called **Content Filters** and it's free. This service allows parents to filter web content on their child's phone. There are four categories, 7+, 13+, 17+ and no filter. This gives parents the option to filter based on their child's age.

Learn more https://wbillpay.verizonwireless.com/vzw/nos/uc/uc_overview.jsp