

# Common Sense on Creating Media

## What is digital creation?

Digital creation is when kids use technology like computers or cell phones to express their creativity. They can film videos and post them online or use software programs to create music. Kids can also create a blog or a photo album and share it with friends and family.

## What should parents know about digital creation?

Like everything else in our kids' digital lives, when they use these new tools they have new responsibilities. We want kids to create and share their music, movies, words, and images. We also want to be sure that they understand that whatever they send into the digital world should be seen or sent by anyone. Even if kids think that what they post is private, it may not be.

The moment people share their creations, they lose control over them. Other people could comment on their work or even take a part of it and use it for themselves.

Another thing to watch out for is what kids show in their digital creations. Videos of fights, sexy pictures, and hateful or mean speech are common. Kids sometimes act silly or do things that are dangerous just to get attention.

## What can parents do?

- » **Choose tools that are okay for their age.** There are great programs for elementary kids that they can use to draw, make birthday cards, create digibooks, and more.
- » **Give them technology that is okay for their age.** Do fifth graders need phones that let them make movies and post them online? Does that new laptop have a camera in it? Make sure the level of the tool is appropriate for the user.
- » **Know how programs work.** You don't have to know how to make a video or create music, but you do need to know enough to have the talk with kids about using programs in the right way.
- » **Make sure your kids have permission to post the work of someone else.** Without this permission, it is called plagiarism. The idea is to create their own.
- » **Talk about what is okay.** Once you give your children the tools, teach them. Remind kids that once something is posted, anyone can see it and share it. People can even re-use it or comment on it. So it should be something that anyone everywhere can see.
- » **Don't let a lack of money stop your child from being creative with digital tools.** There are lots of free creativity tools on the Internet that let kids write music, make cartoons, create games, and more.
- » **Help your child to be part of this community.** It is a very big digital world, and it has many possibilities. Help them make the right choices.
- » **Lead kids toward sites and activities that fit their interests and your values as a family.**

