

IT'S OKAY TO BE A "KNOWSY" PARENT

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A 13 y/o child was on Facebook and looking at his text messages on his phone. Definitely a common scenario in almost every American home! But then something happened that caused the 13 y/o great concern. The mother began to look on the child's Facebook page and then began to look at the child's textbook messages. The 13 y/o looked at his mother and exclaimed in horror, "Mom, why are you being so nosy?" With a small smile on her face, she looked at the child and said, "I'm not being nosy. I'm being knowsy."

Without a doubt, the child didn't appreciate the humor in the situation but fortunately the mother realized the seriousness of the situation. In this fast paced, technology driven society, any parent should be "knowsy" about everything that involves their child. There was a time when there was a delay between a child's curiosity and their finding out a response to their inquisitiveness. In today's society, there is but a millisecond between curiosity and the answer. Parents need to know what their children know.

Many parents ask the question, "How do I know?" Below are some suggestions for where to start to be a "knowsy" parent:

- 1) Know your child's friends
- 2) Know the parents of your child's friends
- 3) Know who your child communicates with on Facebook and other social networking sites
- 4) Know what your child is sending on their phone via text messages and pictures
- 5) Know what is important to your child – what activities, what small seemingly insignificant thing that would make the world of difference for them

- 6) Know that your child needs you to spend time with them to show that you love and care for them

It used to be easier to protect our children simply by locking doors and telling them not to talk to strangers and run away if they are afraid of someone. Now, they have at their fingertips contact with strangers of many varieties including the ever popular "friend of a friend" on Facebook and pop-up ads that they can't seem to escape. The days of the "boogie man" have been replaced with the friend with prescription pills that convinces your child that they have to try them because everyone is "doing it". The message that "marijuana is marijuana" is still being constantly fed to children who don't realize that what was marijuana years ago is now a much more potent and dangerous substance.

Certainly there are plenty of reasons why we need to be "knowsy". Today's children have many more stressors at much earlier ages before they are developmentally able to deal with them. When your child wants to know why you are being "knowsy", let him or her know that you care and want to protect them to the best of your ability.

For more information, go to www.lisd.net/choices or Partnership for a Drug Free America.