KANTAR

BALANCING SUPERVISION & INDEPENDENCE IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

PERSPECTIVES FROM PARENTS & TEENS

Sponsored by

Google

Contents

This study was commissioned and funded by Google and conducted by Kantar. It explores the current and ideal levels of parental supervision of teen tech use and their digital lives, as well as attitudes and beliefs about teens' right to privacy and the use of supervision tools by parents.

Research was conducted in the United States, Brazil, and Germany. This multi-country approach reveals interesting similarities and differences in the way parents and teens view parental supervision in their respective countries.

Methodology

This study was conducted in two phases, leveraging both qualitative and quantitative methodologies:

Phase I: Qualitative Focus Groups and In-Depth Interviews

Twelve parents participated in the in-depth interviews (IDIs) and 48 teens participated in the qualitative focus groups across the United States (US), Brazil (BR), and Germany (DE). Teens aged 13-17 were paired in friendship groups, where one teen was invited to bring a friend to the focus group.

Total:
n = 12 Parents
n = 48 Teens

Four IDIs with parents of teens aged 13-17 were conducted in each country. Four teen focus groups were conducted in each country, with two friendship pairs per group (or four teens total per group).

🇺🇸 US
4 parents and 16 teens total

🇧🇷 Brazil
4 parents and 16 teens total

🇩🇪 Germany
4 parents and 16 teens total

The focus groups were conducted from April 25-30, 2024 in the US, Brazil, and Germany.

Phase 2: Quantitative Survey

An online quantitative study was conducted across the US, Brazil, and Germany. Approximately 1000 surveys (combined parent and teen responses) were completed in each of the three countries, for a total sample of 3,009 parents and 3,009 teens.

The quantitative survey was fielded among parents and their teens aged 13-17 years old. Both parents and their teens participated in the same survey, where the parent completed the first half and their teen the second.
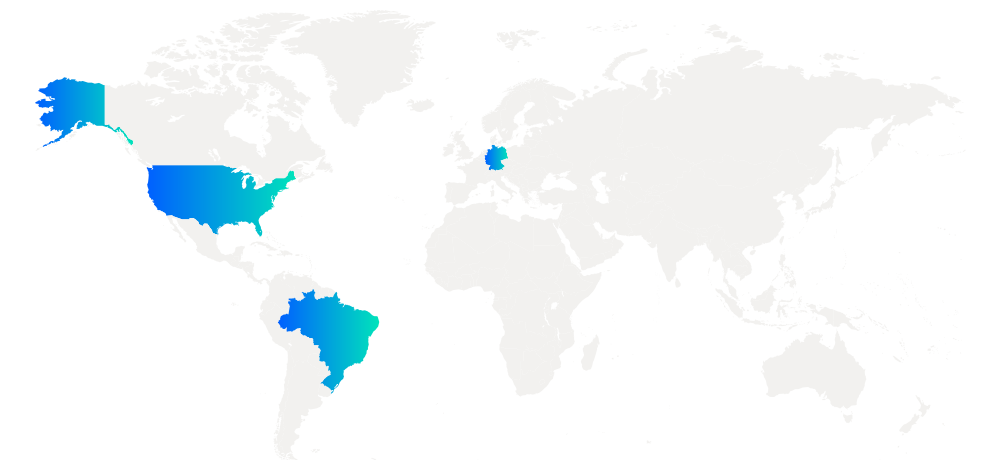
🇺🇸 US
Fielded June 13 - July 11, 2024
n = 1,004

🇧🇷 BR
Fielded June 27 - July 11, 2024
n = 1,000

🇩🇪 DE
Fielded June 27 - July 16, 2024
n = 1,005

Key Learnings

Parents prioritize safety and teaching independence

Parents agree that it is important to teach their teens to be independent, savvy users of digital tech and to remain safe while learning these important lessons. This complex push and pull between independence and oversight is the backdrop against which parental supervision exists.

Attitudes on supervision and privacy vary significantly by country

Parents in the US and Brazil believe that they have a right to supervise their teens' online activity more so than their counterparts in Germany. In contrast, most German parents say that teens have an inherent right to privacy and autonomy in the digital world. Teen attitudes mirror their parents, where US and Brazilian teens tend to agree that parents have a right to supervise their online activities.

Parental concerns are more about external factors than their own teen's behavior

Across all three countries, parental concerns about their teens' online activity are centered on risks or scams related to data security, access to harmful content, and harassment or bad actors. In other words, parents are more concerned about external threats than their teen engaging in inappropriate behavior online.

Supervision helps protect against external threats, but it is not seen as a useful way to foster independence

Parents and teens agree that current supervision tools help protect against harmful content, scams, and bad actors, but they tend to disagree that these same tools are an effective way to help teens learn the skills necessary to become savvy, independent users of technology.

Teens are open to supervision tools that provide tangible benefits

The features parents and teens in the study are most open to trying include emergency alerts, bullying detection, and bad actor encounter detection. In fact, the share of teens who report they are open or very open to their parents using these three features was higher than the share of parents who report the same level of interest in these features across all three countries.

## Age is just one of many factors that influences a parent's decision about supervision

Parents adjust their approach to supervision over time, but age is just one consideration. Rather than a purely age-based approach, parents tailor the degree to which they supervise based on their teens' behavior, family dynamics, performance in school, and perceptions of their teens' peer relationships.

Parents and teens show interest in flexible, collaborative tools

Responses about ideal future monitoring tools suggest that parents and teens agree on key features, but they also want to move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches. Key features include location tracking, blocking harmful content, and restricting interactions with strangers. Beyond that, parents and teens also see the value in more flexible and collaborative ways to help navigate digital life. This includes interest in customizable interfaces, collaborative control shared between parents and teens, gamification to incentivize responsible behavior, and prompts that can spark conversations about online safety.
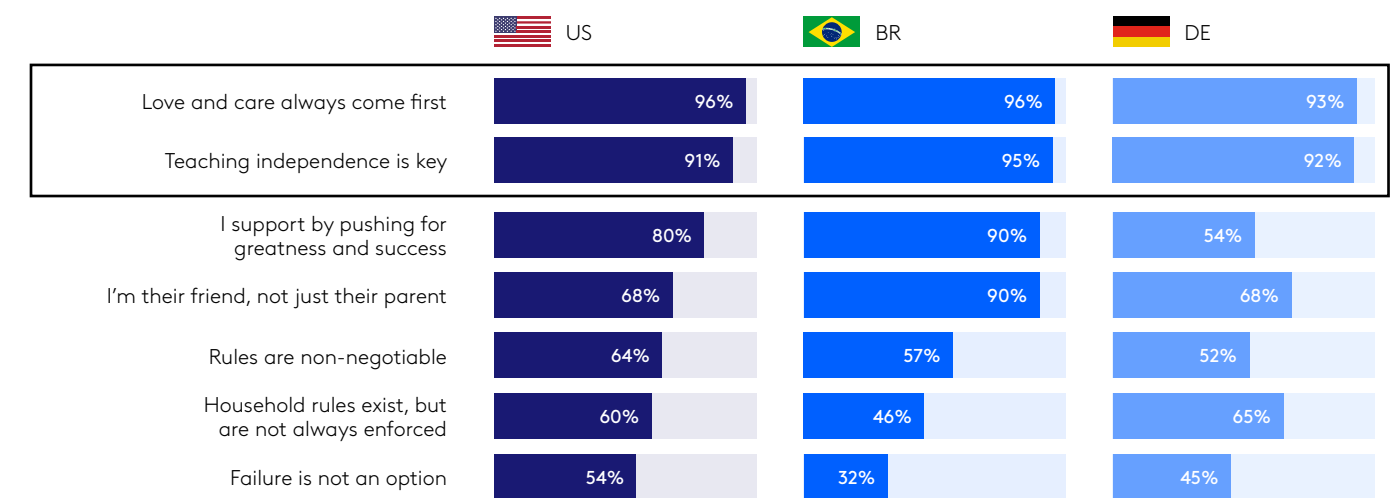
Section 1

The Role of Parents
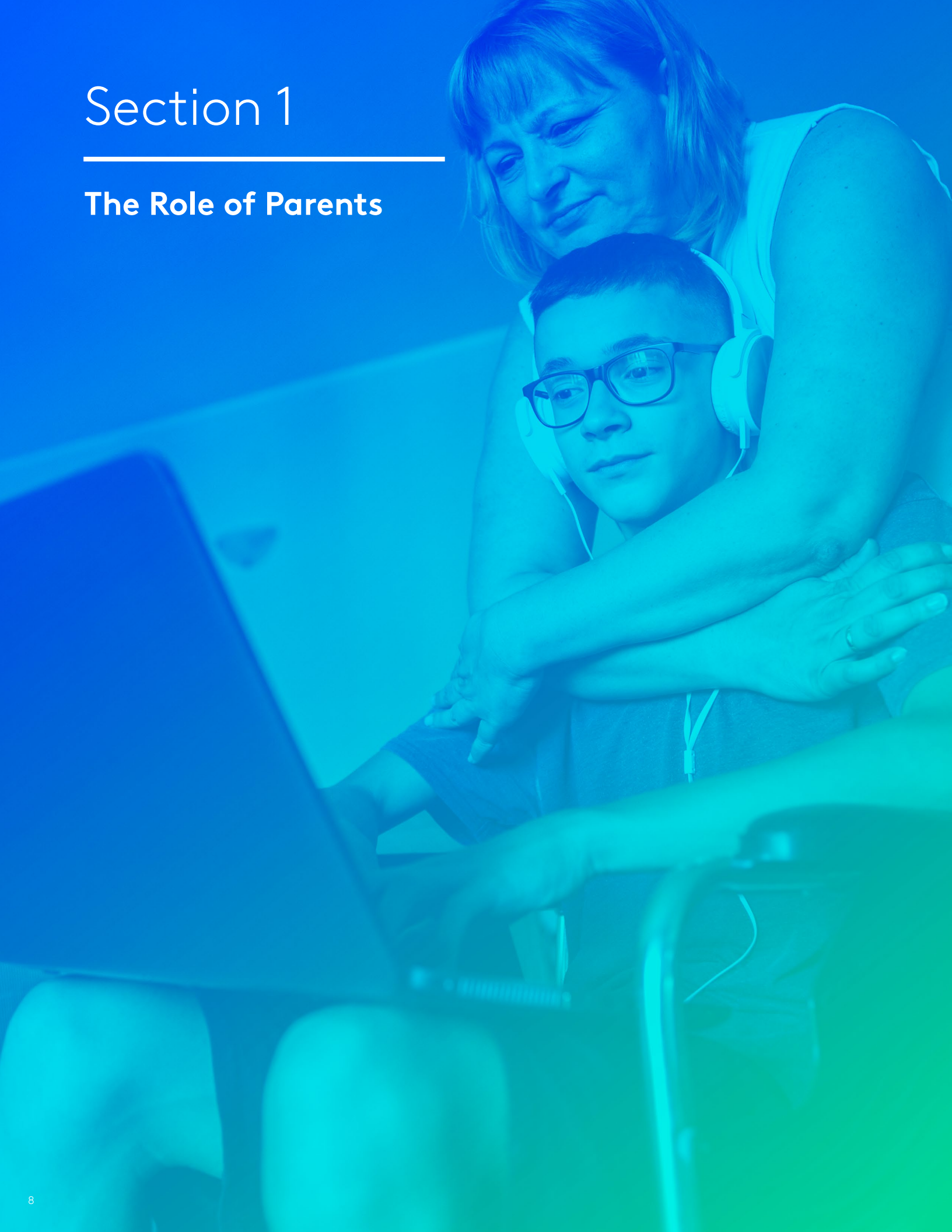
Parenting with Care & Promoting Independence

While there are real differences of opinion on certain aspects of parenting, parents in the US, Brazil, and Germany broadly agree on their top two roles regarding their teens

Across these countries, parents report that they relate most closely to their role in providing love and care and in teaching their teens independence.

This focus on care *and* independence illuminates a significant challenge of modern parenting: helping teens develop independence while protecting them online.

Agreement on Parenting Styles (Top-2-Box: I relate or relate a lot) – Parents

|	US	BR	DE
Love and care always come first	96%	96%	93%
Teaching independence is key	91%	95%	92%
I support by pushing for greatness and success	80%	90%	54%
I'm their friend, not just their parent	68%	90%	68%
Rules are non-negotiable	64%	57%	52%
Household rules exist, but are not always enforced	60%	46%	65%
Failure is not an option	54%	32%	45%

Balancing Independence & Supervision

A key tension of the digital age is parents need to find ways to teach their teens independence, while also ensuring their online safety

For example, this study shows that even as parents want their teens to be self-reliant, the vast majority of parents assert that they have the right to supervise their teens' online activities. Parental attitudes about the right to supervise their teens' online life is most pronounced in the US and Brazil. That said, even in Germany, which emerged as the most privacy-granting country, roughly half of parents insist they have the right to monitor or examine all of their teens' online activities.

**Parents' Right to Supervise Online Activity
(Top-2-Box Agreement: agree strongly or somewhat) – Parents**

I have the right to monitor/examine all of my teen's online activities

| US	BR	DE
83%	85%	49%
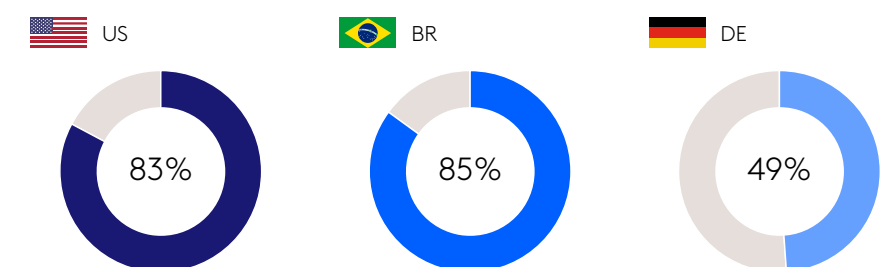
A Parent's Right to Supervise

As one might expect, parents of younger teens report that they have more of a right to supervise online activities than parents of older teens

This attitude holds true across all three countries and across a range of attitudinal questions.

■ **Parents of Younger Teens (13-15-yo)** ■ **Parents of Older Teens (16-17-yo)**

Parents' Right to Supervise Online Activity
(Top-2-Box Agreement: agree strongly or somewhat)

I have the right to monitor/examine all of my teen's online activities

| US	BR	DE
85%	88%	52%
78%	78%	42%
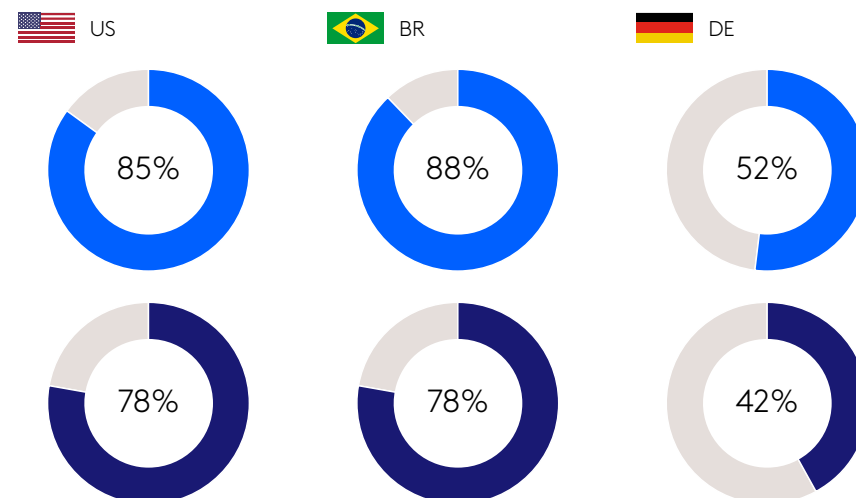
Teens Recognize Their Parent's Right to Supervise

This research shows that teens tend to agree that parents have a right to some degree of online supervision, guidance, and even direct supervision

Like their parents, teens in the US and Brazil are more likely to hold this sentiment than their German counterparts. For example, **81%** of US teens and **74%** of teens in Brazil agree that a "Parent should have some right to monitor/examine any of my online activities whatsoever" compared to **57%** in Germany.

Even though teens acknowledge that parents have this right, it does not mean that they do not value or want privacy. For example, of the **81%** of US teens that agree with this statement, **32%** "strongly agree" while **49%** "somewhat agree," suggesting a degree of ambivalence in this attitude.

Teens' Opinion on Parents' Right to Supervise Online Activity
(Top-2-Box Agreement: agree strongly or somewhat)

US	BR	DE

My parent should have some right to monitor/examine any of my online activities whatsoever

| 81% | 74% | 57% |

My parent should know what I am doing at all times online

| 68% | 65% | 47% |
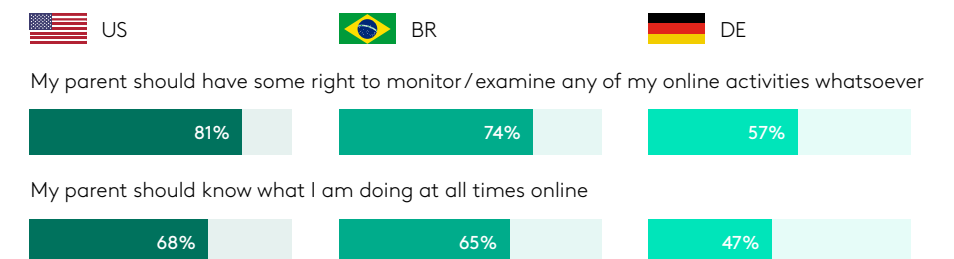
Parental Views on Online Privacy Vary

As parents and teens navigate the push and pull between independence and oversight, it's online privacy that hangs in the balance

American parents are more inclined to view privacy as conditional on whether a teen lives independently or remains in the family home. They believe that teens should earn the right to privacy without supervision, and this applies to both general and online privacy.

In contrast, German parents are the most likely to recognize that teens have an inherent right to privacy and autonomy in the digital world, with **76%** agreeing with the statement that teens "should be able to do whatever they want online, if it's not dangerous or illegal," compared to **64%** in Brazil and **61%** in the US.

**Parents' Opinion on Teens' Right to Privacy
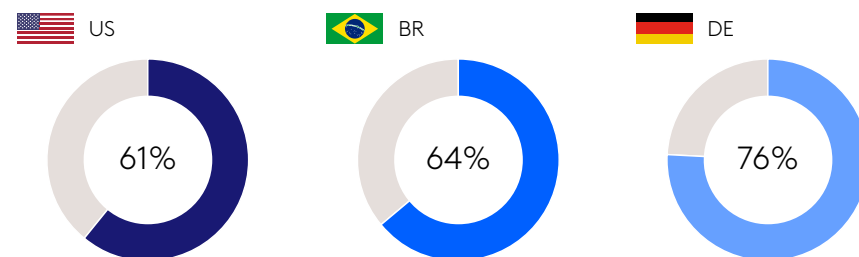(Top-2-Box Agreement: agree strongly or somewhat)**

My teen has no right to privacy as long as they are living at home under my roof

US	BR	DE
51%	35%	32%
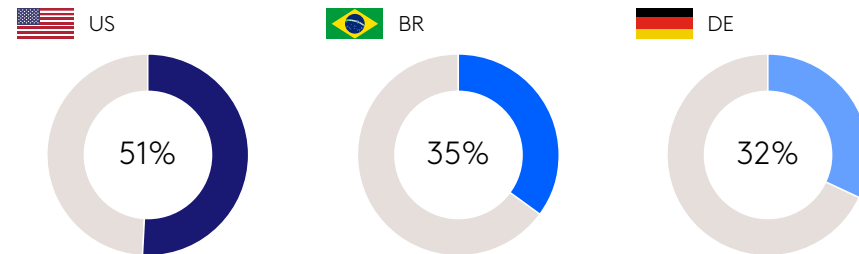
My teen needs to earn their right to having privacy online without monitoring
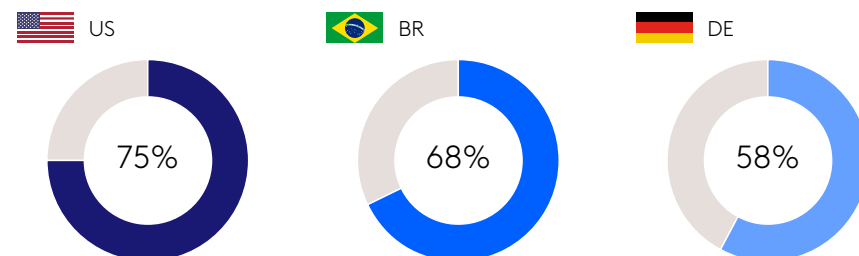
US	BR	DE
75%	68%	58%

My teen should be able to do whatever they want online, if it's not dangerous or illegal

US	BR	DE
61%	64%	76%

Summing it Up

Even though parents in all three countries want to teach their teens independence, attitudes about teens' innate right to privacy and how aggressively to approach online supervision vary by country, suggesting that there is no standard approach to balancing independence and oversight and balancing autonomy and privacy.
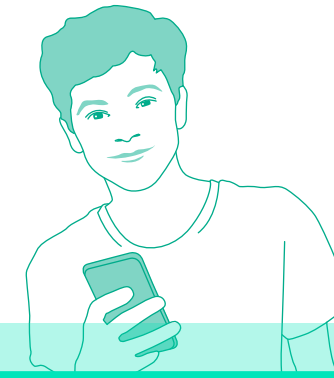
"I understand that my parents have concerns, but it's very uncomfortable for the child. Your entire privacy is basically broken."
Teen, 13-15, Germany

"I give my older daughter privacy. I trust her, but it can be taken away. My 13-year-old doesn't have the same right to privacy, because she showed me she can't handle it."
Father, 38, of 16 and 13-yo daughters, US

Section 2

Concerns in the Digital World

Top Concerns For Parents

Parents want safe, positive online experiences for their teens and express concerns about what their teens might encounter as they navigate life online

Across all three countries, parental concerns about their teens' online activity are centered on risks or scams related to data security, access to harmful content, and harassment or bad actors. Parents are least concerned with their teen engaging in inappropriate behavior online.

" *"My son has trouble making friends. A lot of his friends are made from gaming online, but the internet is not safe. I'm worried he's going to see inappropriate things or meet someone who isn't who they say they are."*
Mother, 51, of 14-yo son, US

" *"The internet can be dangerous. I understand [my parents] need to pay attention to what I see and post."*
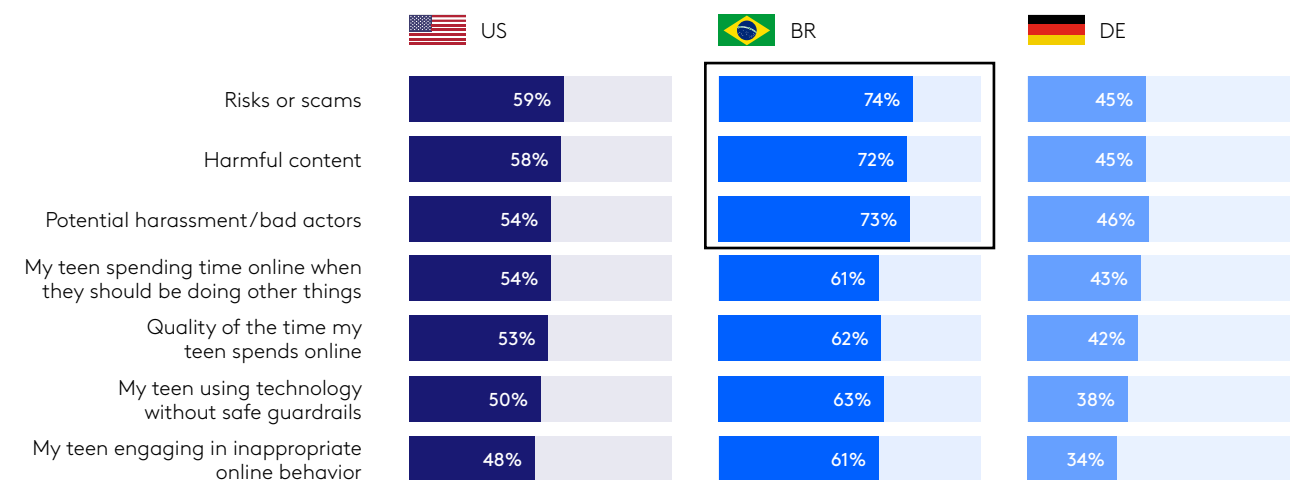**Teen, 16–17, Brazil**

German Parents are Least Concerned

These anxieties run especially high in Brazil, whereas in Germany, parents tend to express the lowest concern about their teens' online activities

For example, parents in Brazil (**74%**) and the US (**59%**) are "extremely or very concerned" that their teens would be open to scams or risks related to personal information (e.g., data breaches) because of their online activity, but only **45%** of German parents agree. Similarly, **72%** of Brazilian parents and **58%** of US parents are "extremely or very concerned" about harmful content, compared to **45%** of German parents.

Parents' Concerns about Teens' Online Activity (Top-2-Box: extremely or very concerned)

	US	BR	DE
Risks or scams	59%	74%	45%
Harmful content	58%	72%	45%
Potential harassment/bad actors	54%	73%	46%
My teen spending time online when they should be doing other things	54%	61%	43%
Quality of the time my teen spends online	53%	62%	42%
My teen using technology without safe guardrails	50%	63%	38%
My teen engaging in inappropriate online behavior	48%	61%	34%

Room for Improvement in Teen Tech Use

**Parents also report mixed feelings about how teens engage with media and technology more broadly**

Fewer than half of parents in the US (**42%**) and Brazil (**47%**), and just over a third in Germany (**31%**), strongly agree that their teen has a healthy relationship with media and technology, while a large share of parents in the US (**48%**), Brazil (**45%**), and Germany (**51%**) agree somewhat with this statement. This split between strongly and somewhat agree suggests ambivalence on the part of parents and a sense that their teens' relationship with technology could be improved. Despite these mixed feelings, it is notable that parental attitudes were more positive than negative, with a much smaller share in all three countries reporting that they somewhat or strongly disagree with the statements about media and tech use.

■ **Agree Strongly**   ■ **Agree Somewhat**   ■ **Disagree (Somewhat or strongly)**

Attitudes on Media and Tech Usage – Parents
Statement wording adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
My teen has a healthy relationship with media and tech

🇺🇸 US	🇧🇷 BR	🇩🇪 DE
42%	47%	31%
48%	45%	51%
10%	8%	18%
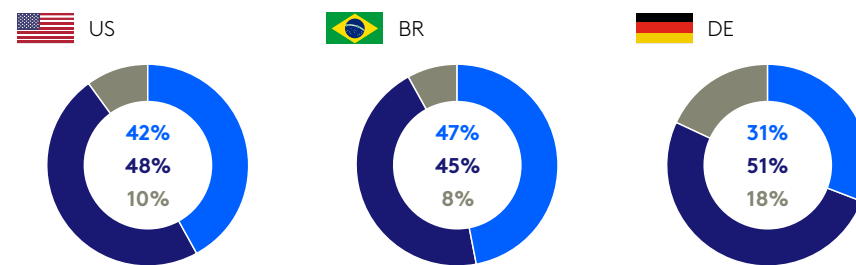
Teens Acknowledge Imperfect Tech Habits

Interestingly, many teens recognize that they could be using technology and consuming media in a healthier way

Mirroring their parents, there is a similar split between strongly and somewhat agree among teens when asked about their relationship with media and tech. This is most pronounced in Germany where **54%** of teens somewhat agree that they have a healthy relationship with media and technology, while **33%** strongly agree.

■ **Agree Strongly**   ■ **Agree Somewhat**   ■ **Disagree (Somewhat or strongly)**

Attitudes on Media and Tech Usage – Teens
*Statement wording adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)*
I have a healthy relationship with media and technology

🇺🇸 US	🇧🇷 BR	🇩🇪 DE
47%	57%	33%
46%	39%	54%
7%	4%	13%
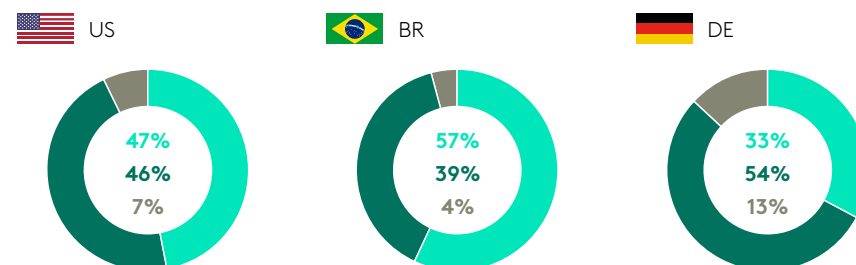
Conversation: The Missing Link?

Despite parents' concerns about online safety and tech use, this study suggests there may be an opportunity for parents to have more discussions with their teens about these topics. Parents in the US and Brazil are more likely to report discussing media and tech use with their teens than their German peers, a sentiment that also came through in qualitative discussions.

Fewer than half of parents agree strongly with the statement, "my teen and I often discuss what they are seeing and doing with media and tech." This is especially true in Germany, where only 25% of parents agree strongly with that statement.
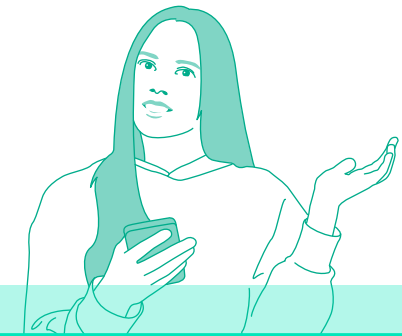
"I've never had any screen time limits nor any conversation about it with my family."
Teen, 16-17, Germany

"I eventually sat my mom down, telling her why and how she could trust me. I made sure she knew that I knew what was right and wrong."
Teen, 16-17, US

"It's important that parents talk to their children. Parents should have a relationship with their children, because if they don't have the freedom to talk to their parents, how do parents expect their children to trust them?"
Teen, 13-15, Brazil

Benefits of Supervision

Parents view supervision as an important tool to protect teens, and teens tend to agree
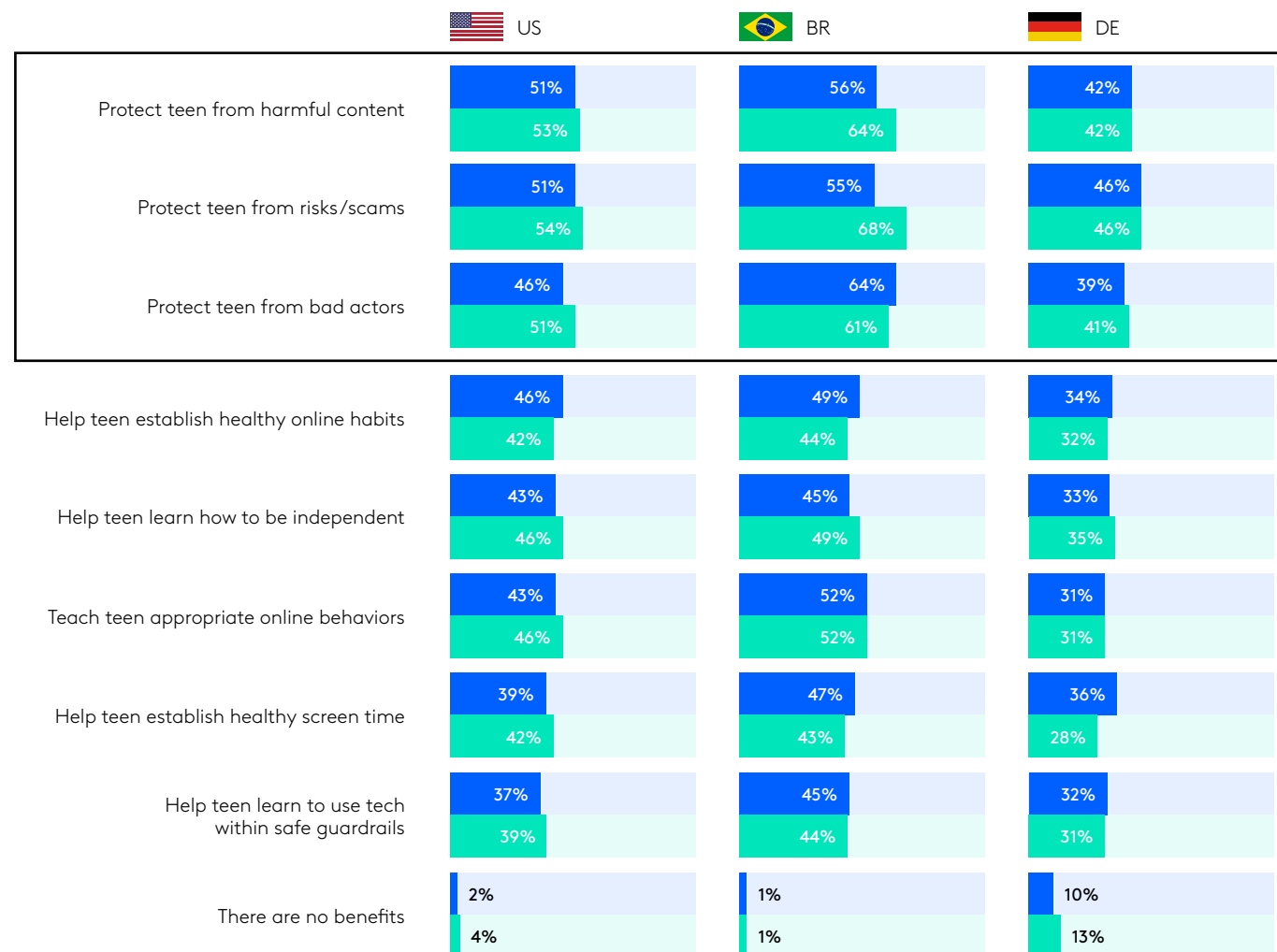
This attitude is held most strongly by Brazilian parents and teens, followed by American parents and teens

Given parents' specific concerns about scams, harmful content, and bad actors – and the general questions they have about teens' relationship with technology – it makes sense that many parents supervise teen internet use. At the same time, parents and teens are less likely to view supervision as an effective way to help teens become savvy, independent users of technology. This is most pronounced in Germany, where only 32% of parents agree that supervision can help teens learn to use tech with safe guardrails, and 10% report there is absolutely no benefit to supervision.

Parents' and Teens' Opinions on the Benefits of Parents Supervising Teens' Online Activity (Select All That Apply)

Legend: ■ Parents ■ Teens

|	US	BR	DE
Protect teen from harmful content	Parents 51% / Teens 53%	Parents 56% / Teens 64%	Parents 42% / Teens 42%
Protect teen from risks/scams	Parents 51% / Teens 54%	Parents 55% / Teens 68%	Parents 46% / Teens 46%
Protect teen from bad actors	Parents 46% / Teens 51%	Parents 64% / Teens 61%	Parents 39% / Teens 41%
Help teen establish healthy online habits	Parents 46% / Teens 42%	Parents 49% / Teens 44%	Parents 34% / Teens 32%
Help teen learn how to be independent	Parents 43% / Teens 46%	Parents 45% / Teens 49%	Parents 33% / Teens 35%
Teach teen appropriate online behaviors	Parents 43% / Teens 46%	Parents 52% / Teens 52%	Parents 31% / Teens 31%
Help teen establish healthy screen time	Parents 39% / Teens 42%	Parents 47% / Teens 43%	Parents 36% / Teens 28%
Help teen learn to use tech within safe guardrails	Parents 37% / Teens 39%	Parents 45% / Teens 44%	Parents 32% / Teens 31%
There are no benefits	Parents 2% / Teens 4%	Parents 1% / Teens 1%	Parents 10% / Teens 13%

Summing it Up

Parents and teens both see supervision as a way to protect against harmful content, scams, and bad actors

Supervision is not seen as a replacement for educating teens on how to be responsible digital citizens, but instead, parents employ it as a way to protect teens in real time.

In other words, it is a way to amplify parental oversight and maintain peace of mind while their teens work through the lessons of online independence and autonomy.
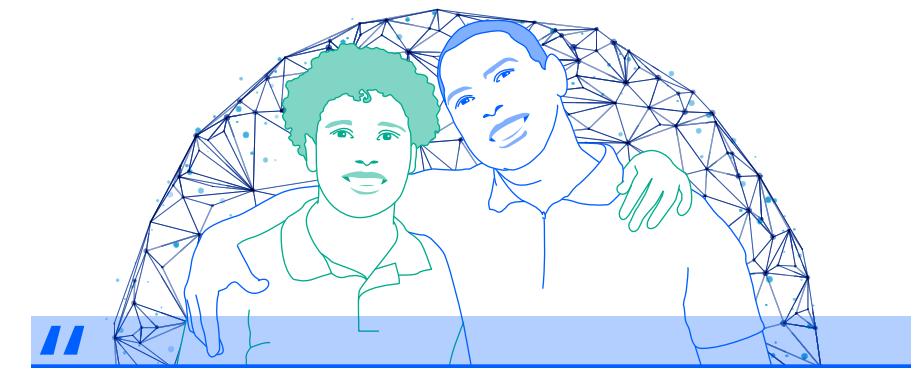
"The internet is in everyone's life. The fact that [my son] is connected at all times and in all environments is out of our control. It's about shaping what I can do to educate him to make the best choices."
Father, 43, of 13 and 16-yo sons, Brazil

Digital Supervision Practices

Multiple Factors Behind Supervision

Faced with concerns about harmful content, harassment, and bad actors, many parents turn to supervision practices
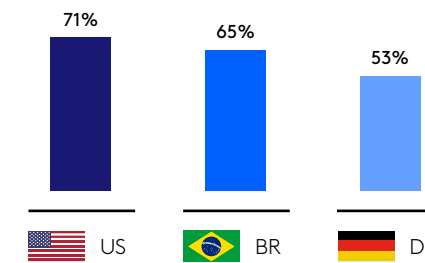
The decision to supervise is not black and white. Instead, it is the result of a calculation made by parents as they weigh factors including age, observed behavior, and how they perceive their teen to be fairing in school and in relationships with peers.

% of Parents Currently Using Any Monitoring Tools, Settings, or Controls

71% US
65% BR
53% DE

The majority of parents in the US (**71%**), Brazil (**65%**), and just over half of German parents (**53%**) report that they currently use some kind of monitoring tool or device.

Age as One of Many Factors

Not surprisingly, parents of younger teens are more likely to use monitoring tools than those with older teens

All parents appear to decrease monitoring for their older teens, but German and Brazilian parents reduce monitoring for their older teens more substantially than American parents, with the share dropping by 20 and 19 percentage points, respectively. In the US, the share of parents monitoring their older teens drops by 12 points.

■ **Parents of Younger Teens (13-15-yo)**   ■ **Parents of Older Teens (16-17-yo)**

% of Parents Currently Using Any Monitoring Tools, Settings, or Controls

US	BR	DE
75%	72%	60%
63%	53%	40%

> "I will get involved if I see an impact on school, grades, or health."
> **Mother, 43, of 13 & 15-yo sons, US**

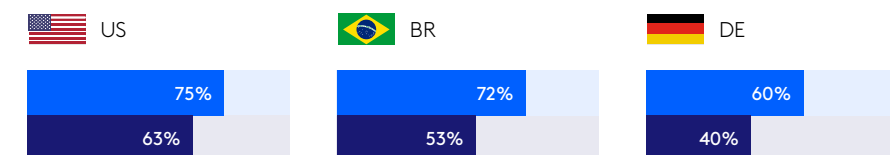> "I used to pay more attention and set time limits for her when she was 10-years-old."
> **Mother, 43, of 14-yo daughter, Germany**

Looking Beyond Age

Perhaps even more important than age, parents look to their teens' individual circumstances as a cue to calibrate and tailor their supervision strategy, ensuring that it fits their teens' needs

Signals such as having a more positive mood or improved grades can trigger less monitoring, while discovering that a teen is the victim (or perpetrator) of cyberbullying or noting negative personality changes can result in stricter monitoring.

Top *Positive* Reasons Would Drive Changes to Supervision Approach:
Would Trigger *Less* Monitoring (Top-2-Box Agreement: agree strongly or somewhat)

🇺🇸 US	🇧🇷 BR	🇩🇪 DE
76% Noticeable positive personality changes in my teen	**86%** Noticeable positive personality changes in my teen	**62%** Noticeable positive personality changes in my teen
74% An improvement in my teen's grades or academic performance	**84%** My teen developing better sleep habits or quality of sleep	**62%** An improvement in my teen's grades or academic performance
74% Noticeable decrease in my teen's screen time use	**83%** My teen taking on new household responsibilities	**61%** Noticeable decrease in my teen's screen time use

"I had bad grades. Then my parents blocked my phone. I started learning, so then they lifted the block." **Teen, 16-17, Germany**

Top *Negative* Reasons Would Drive Changes to Supervision Approach:
Would Trigger *More* Monitoring (Top-2-Box Agreement: agree strongly or somewhat)

🇺🇸 US	🇧🇷 BR	🇩🇪 DE
82% A drop in my teen's grades or academic performance	**89%** Discovering instances of my teen cyber-bullying or harassing others	**63%** Discovering instances of my teen being cyber-bullied/harassed
80% Discovering instances of my teen cyber-bullying or harassing others	**88%** Discovering instances of my teen being cyber-bullied/harassed	**72%** Discovering instances of my teen cyber-bullying or harassing others
80% Discovering instances of my teen being cyber-bullied/harassed	**87%** An incident with my other children or hearing about a bad incident from friends	**69%** Noticeable negative personality changes in my teen

"I imagine [my ideal supervision tool] would be like a game where there are certain stages that my daughter unlocks to gain access to some things. She has the freedom to reach 100% of the tool, because my role as a parent is to be behind the scenes. I think her maturity comes into play." **Mother, 38, of 15-yo daughter, Brazil**

Top Activities Parents Want to be Aware Of

Through supervision, parents hope to gain awareness about how their teens use social media as well as the type of video content they are watching or creating. Parents are less inclined to want to know about educational activities, playing games, and creative activities.

Activities Parents Want to be Most Aware of
**(Ranked in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Position as Activity to be Most Aware of)**

	🇺🇸 US	🇧🇷 BR	🇩🇪 DE
Posting on social media	42%	35%	45%
Watching video content	38%	45%	36%
Live streaming	37%	28%	35%
Creating videos	35%	25%	37%
Scrolling on social media	35%	54%	33%
Connecting with loved ones	26%	33%	26%
Using generative AI	23%	16%	26%
Playing games	23%	23%	26%
Educational activities	22%	28%	21%
Creative activities	18%	13%	15%

Shifting Supervision Strategies

Among parents who no longer monitor their teens using tools, settings, or controls, roughly one-third (**34%** in the US, **39%** in Brazil, **41%** in Germany) report the top reason they stopped is because their teens have proven they can act responsibly online.

Other factors that motivate parents to grant their teens more freedom online are outlined in the data below, and range from proactively taking breaks from tech to demonstrating that they know when to ask their parent(s) for help or advice.

Motivators for Giving Teens More Freedom – Parents (Select All That Apply)

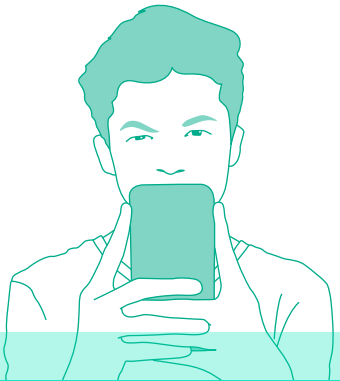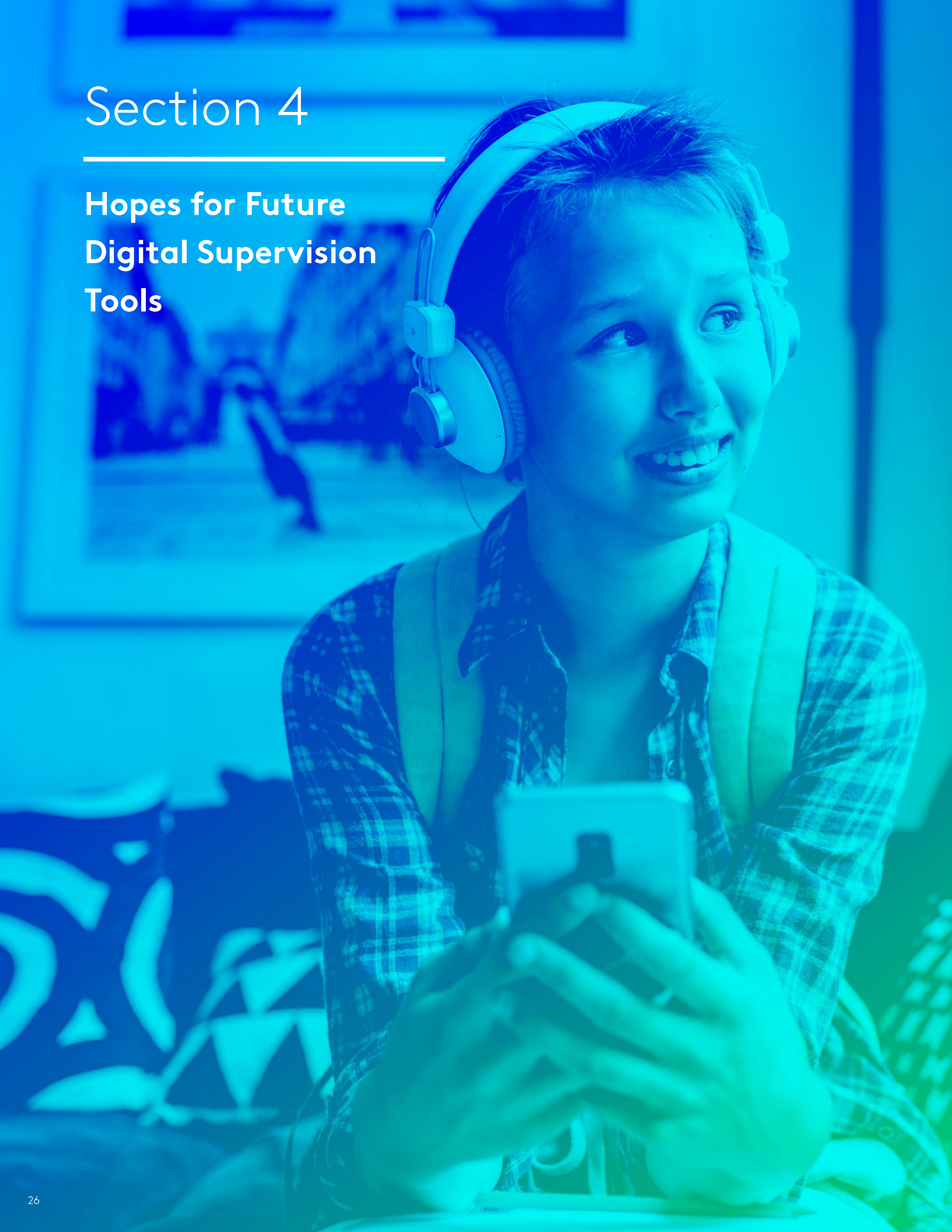|	US	BR	DE
If my teen knows when to take a break without having to be told	55%	57%	50%
If my teen proves they are careful about who they talk to online	55%	57%	49%
If my teen respects the current rules we set about using technology	54%	56%	50%
If my teen proves they know when to ask me for help or advice	53%	55%	52%
If my teen tells me if they see something bad or off-putting online	48%	51%	52%
None of these would motivate me to grant more freedom	5%	4%	5%
Not sure/don't know	2%	2%	4%

Summing it Up

Instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, parents tailor the degree to which they supervise based on their teens' behavior, family dynamics, performance in school, and perceptions of their teens' peer relationships.

Overall, while parents tend to reduce supervision as their teens grow older, they demonstrate a clear willingness to adjust their oversight based on individual circumstances rather than adhering strictly to general age-based guidelines or expectations. They are motivated to reduce supervision when teens demonstrate responsible online behaviors or proactively seek parental guidance about how to use tech safely.
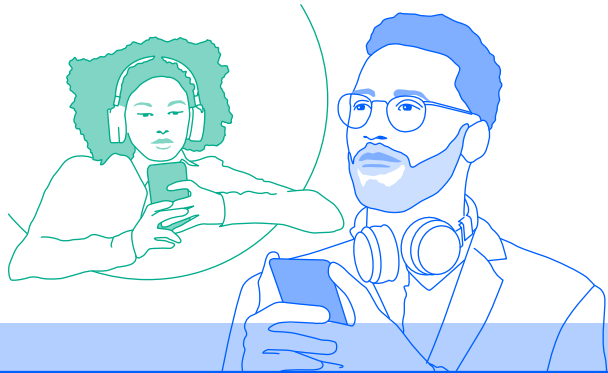
"When my 16-year-old was younger I would monitor closely. I'd receive all her texts and notifications, and the amount of notifications I was getting as a result was overwhelming. She showed me she could be trusted so I stopped." **Father, 38, of 16 and 13-yo daughters, US**

"If your parents are constantly monitoring, you can't really learn from your mistakes. You get upset and probably want to do it again. It's figuring out how you want to be responsible with their guidance and help." **Teen, 16-17, US**

Section 4

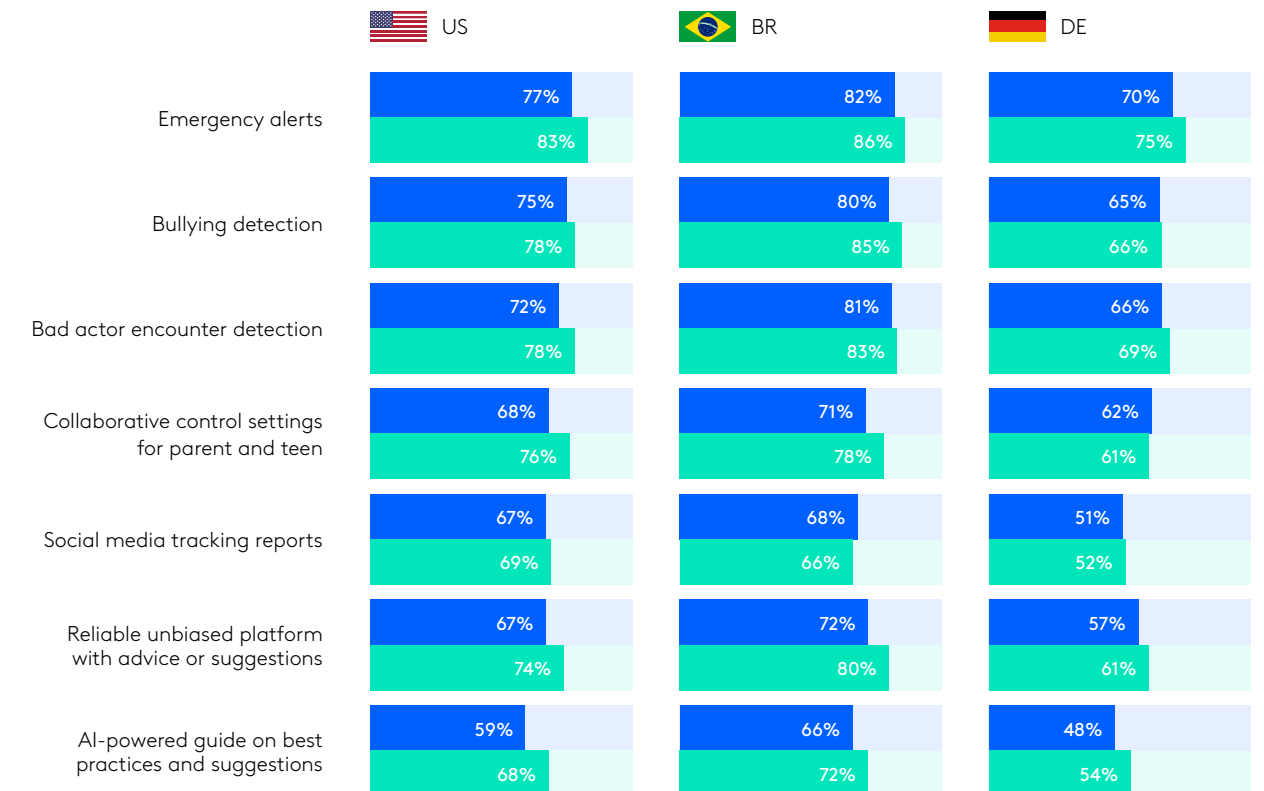## Hopes for Future Digital Supervision Tools

Top Priority Features

Parents and teens are closely aligned on desired supervision features

Parents were asked about the features they would find the most valuable in future supervision systems. Responses suggest that parents prioritize real-time awareness. They also express greater concern about potential threats in the digital environment than about their teens' online behavior. In other words, parents generally trust their teens, even as they have concerns about the influences and actors they might be exposed to online.

■ Parents   ■ Teens

Interest in or Openness to Trying Future Benefits/Tools
(Top-2-Box: extremely or very interested/open)

	🇺🇸 US	🇧🇷 BR	🇩🇪 DE
Emergency alerts	77% / 83%	82% / 86%	70% / 75%
Bullying detection	75% / 78%	80% / 85%	65% / 66%
Bad actor encounter detection	72% / 78%	81% / 83%	66% / 69%
Collaborative control settings for parent and teen	68% / 76%	71% / 78%	62% / 61%
Social media tracking reports	67% / 69%	68% / 66%	51% / 52%
Reliable unbiased platform with advice or suggestions	67% / 74%	72% / 80%	57% / 61%
AI-powered guide on best practices and suggestions	59% / 68%	66% / 72%	48% / 54%

In all three countries the desired features parents rate highest are emergency alerts, bullying detection, and bad actor encounter detection.

Teens view things in much the same way. When asked, "if your parent asked for your input, how open would you be in allowing them to use the following monitoring tools?", teens list the exact same features – emergency alerts, bullying detection, and bad actor encounter detection – at the top. In fact, the share of teens open or very open to their parents using these three features was actually higher than the share of parents interested in these features across all three countries.

Future Tools:
Flexible and Collaborative

Parents and teens want future tools that move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches, and they see the value in more flexible and collaborative ways to help navigate digital life

This includes interest in three key features:

1. Customizable interfaces and prompts that can spark parent-teen conversations

"[I would be interested in an application where] all the features can be either turned on or off. And if there was a tab I could use to chat to my parents, where we could talk about the "on" features that I'm unhappy about. I could use the chat to ask why those features are on and explain my reasons to disable it." **Teen, 13-15, Brazil**

2. Collaborative control shared between parents and teens
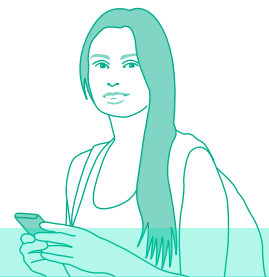
"[I would like to know] when my parents are monitoring. If I get a notification that indicates my parents are now viewing the content I'm viewing." **Teen, 16-17, Brazil**

3. Gamification to incentivize responsible behavior
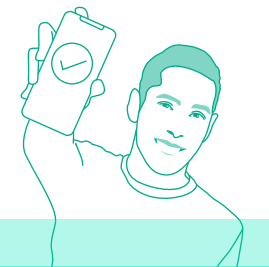
"[I would be interested in] a reward system in a downloaded app, where let's say, I was five minutes under my allotted screen time. I get 'stars' that build up, then the app automatically gives me more privileges whenever I show I've earned it." - **Teen, 16-17, US**

Dynamic Features for Supervision Tools

Finally, parents and teens were asked to prioritize features in their ideal supervision tool
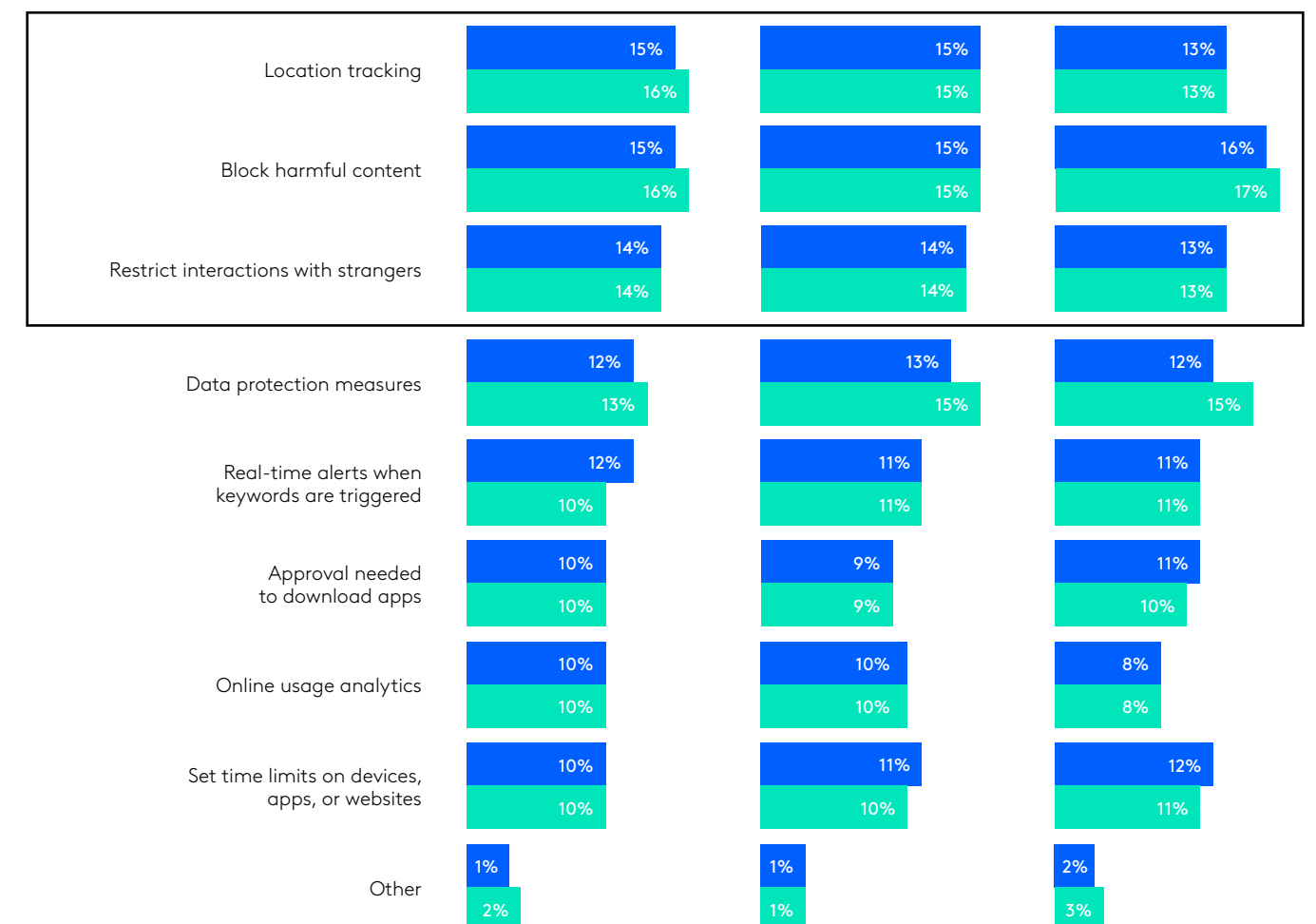
Parents and teens select location tracking, blocking harmful content, and restricting interactions with strangers as the most essential features.

Time limits on content or devices and approval requirements for downloads are rated lower by parents and teens. This prioritization by parents reflects an interest in smart, dynamic monitoring features that allow teens to enjoy the benefits of online life while ensuring their safety and providing parents with peace of mind.
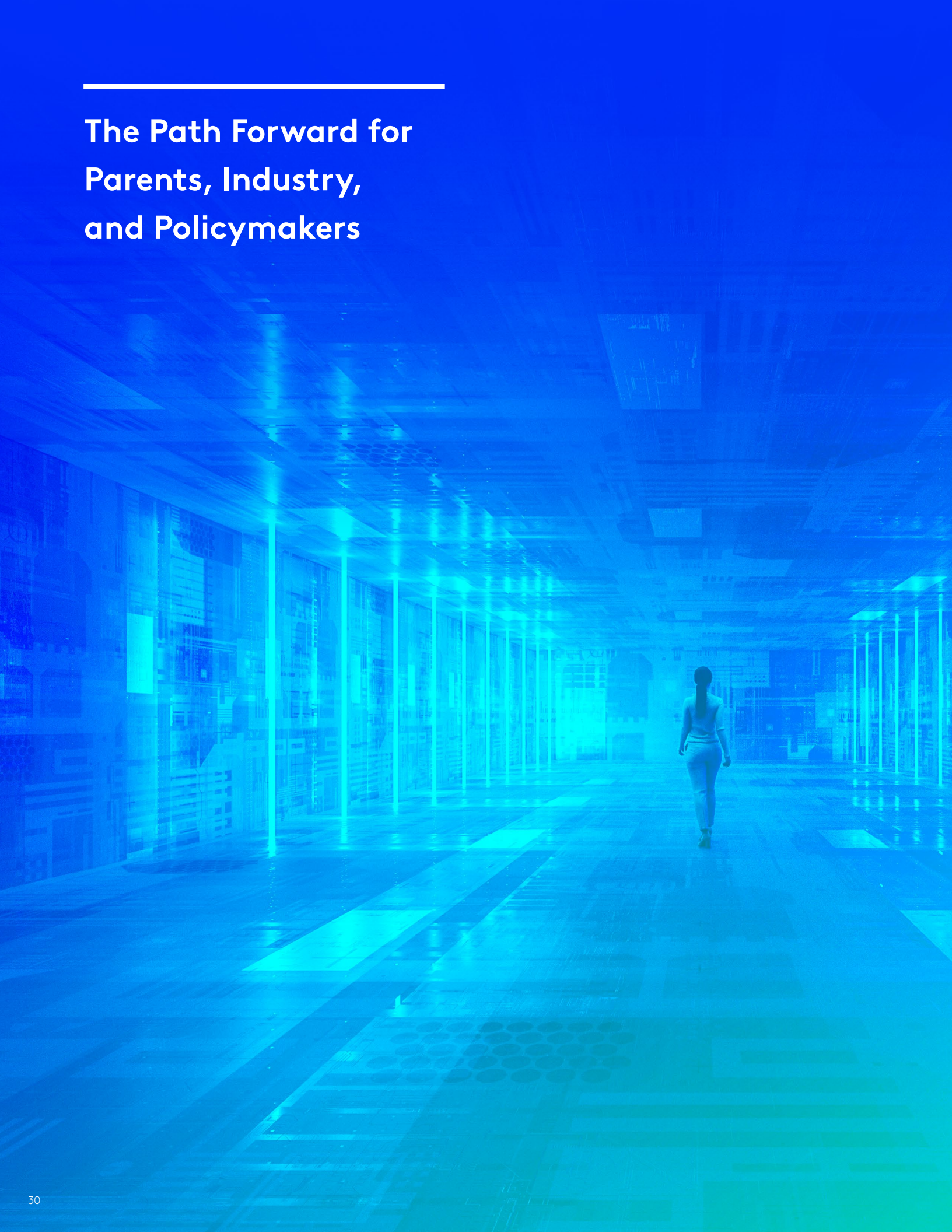
■ Parents   ■ Teens

Parents and Teens Build Your Own Tool Exercise
(Mean score; each feature prioritized out of 100%)

	US	BR	DE
Location tracking	Parents 15% / Teens 16%	Parents 15% / Teens 15%	Parents 13% / Teens 13%
Block harmful content	Parents 15% / Teens 16%	Parents 15% / Teens 15%	Parents 16% / Teens 17%
Restrict interactions with strangers	Parents 14% / Teens 14%	Parents 14% / Teens 14%	Parents 13% / Teens 13%
Data protection measures	Parents 12% / Teens 13%	Parents 13% / Teens 15%	Parents 12% / Teens 15%
Real-time alerts when keywords are triggered	Parents 12% / Teens 10%	Parents 11% / Teens 11%	Parents 11% / Teens 11%
Approval needed to download apps	Parents 10% / Teens 10%	Parents 9% / Teens 9%	Parents 11% / Teens 10%
Online usage analytics	Parents 10% / Teens 10%	Parents 10% / Teens 10%	Parents 8% / Teens 8%
Set time limits on devices, apps, or websites	Parents 10% / Teens 10%	Parents 11% / Teens 10%	Parents 12% / Teens 11%
Other	Parents 1% / Teens 2%	Parents 1% / Teens 1%	Parents 2% / Teens 3%

The Path Forward for Parents, Industry, and Policymakers

There is a complex push and pull between teens and parents regarding supervision.

Parents want their teens to be self-reliant, but they also assert the right to supervise their teens' online activities, which can create a tension between oversight and independence. There are ways to keep teens safe online while also respecting and fostering teen agency. The recommendations below provide a starting point for parents, policymakers, and industry leaders to consider.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to parenting, as every family and teen is different. There is also no one-size-fits-all approach to parental supervision and online monitoring.

Parents should approach supervision with nuance and flexibility, knowing that each teen is different. This starts by assessing what is in the best interest of their child and understanding that as their teen grows and demonstrates responsible online behavior, the approach to supervision will likely change.

Parents should feel empowered to have open, honest conversations about why they supervise and the fact that it comes from a place of care, not control. Teens are more open to some level of supervision than parents may expect, and such discussions could build on this common ground.

There is an opportunity for tech companies to develop more flexible supervision solutions that allow parents to decide based on teen behavior – rather than age – when and what they supervise. This might be a tool that prompts parents to evolve their approach to supervision over time and give teens more privacy and privileges the more responsibly they act. It could also include ways to more easily reinstate supervision if a parent sees lapses in responsibility or other behavioral red flags.

Policymakers have an opportunity to reframe the current dialogue and guidance around online supervision and help parents look beyond age as the primary guide. They can encourage and educate parents about the developmental and behavioral factors that signal a need to adjust their level of supervision.

Tech firms can create tools that adapt to different parenting styles and teen circumstances. For example, dynamic tools might prompt parents to re-evaluate and evolve their approach to supervision over time.

Teens want a seat at the table when it comes to online supervision tools their parents use, and parents want to raise savvy, independent digital citizens.

Parents want to protect, but they also want to encourage learning and autonomy as their teens gain more experience with digital life. They recognize the importance of flexible and collaborative approaches to help their teens safely gain the experience they will need to become responsible digital citizens. As teens mature, shifting from a top-down model of online supervision to more of a partnership will be essential to achieving this goal. Teens want a voice, and collaborative approaches may make them more open to online supervision.

Policymakers and tech companies can help by providing more flexible and collaborative ways for families to navigate digital life. This includes tapping into parents' stated interest in customizable interfaces, collaborative controls (i.e., shared between parents and teens), gamification to incentivize responsible behaviors, and prompts that can spark conversations about online safety. By designing tools in such a way that gives teens a seat at the table, tech companies can balance parents' desire for peace of mind and their desire to responsibly teach toward teen autonomy.
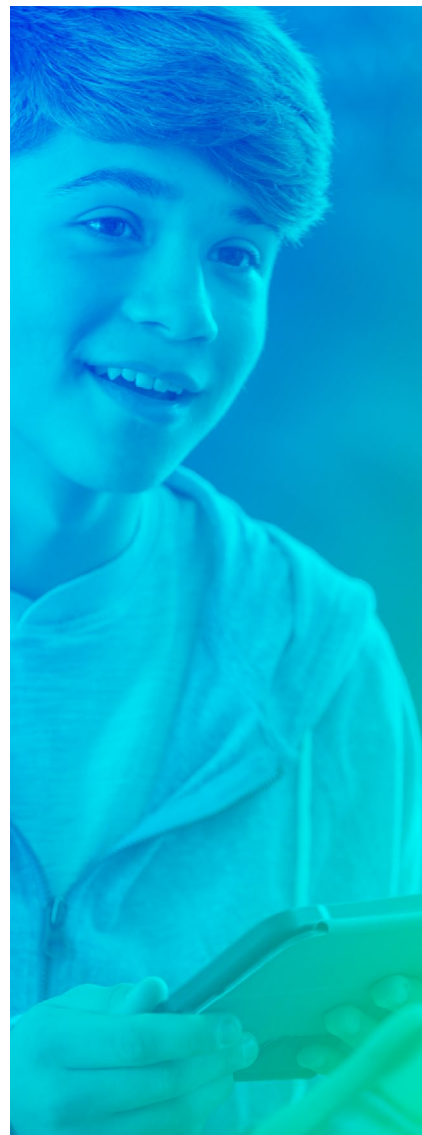
Parental supervision should be complemented by open and ongoing dialogue between parents and teens about how to stay safe online.

Parents and teens would benefit from more frequent and meaningful conversations about family tech use. Teens are curious and express interest in understanding why their parents believe what they do about their tech use. Parents should invest in these kinds of conversations to educate their teens about healthy use and also positively role model what healthy engagement looks like.

For policymakers and tech companies, there is an opportunity to develop resources that encourage parent-teen dialogue about online safety and positive tech use. This could include public awareness campaigns and resources that educate parents and teens on the importance of open dialogues about online safety and relaying what healthy digital living looks like. This could also happen within apps and supervision tools. Tech companies could develop future tools that help teens understand the 'why' behind their parents' decision to set limits and be the springboard for positive, transparent parent-teen conversations.

There is an opportunity to reframe the dialogue around online supervision as a pathway to autonomy, rather than a means of control.

Parents want to grant their teens independence and privacy, but they also prioritize their safety. Parents should approach discussions – and supervision practices – with a critical reframe in mind: that these tools are not meant to be an infringement on teens' privacy, but rather that they provide a training ground where teens can learn and practice safe tech use and show that they are ready for increased responsibility, privacy, and autonomy.

Policymakers and industry can help parents and teens see online supervision from a place of safety and openness, not control. They can support education for parents and schools, helping drive a more nuanced understanding of the necessity of supervision and tools as a means to protect online privacy. They can also develop mechanisms that enable – rather than undermine – privacy for teens while empowering parents to loosen (or tighten) digital controls based on their teens' behavior.

Appendix: Detailed Methodology

Introduction

This study was commissioned and funded by Google and conducted by Kantar. The study highlights self-reported data from parents and teenagers among three countries: the United States, Brazil, and Germany.

Sample definition & specifications

The Qualitative study surveyed parents of teens aged 13-17. Teens aged 13-17 were paired in friendship groups, where one teen was invited to bring a friend to the focus group. N=12 parents and N=48 teens participated in the Qualitative discussions. In each of the three markets, 4 parents and 16 teens were qualitatively surveyed.

Qualitative teen friendship groups recruited an even mix of gender and ages in each country:

- One group of teen boys ages 13-15
- One group of teen girls ages 13-15
- One group of teen boys ages 16-17
- One group of teen girls ages 16-17

In the Quantitative study, parents and their teens were surveyed across the same three markets: U.S., Brazil, and Germany. N=3,009 total responses were captured (as combined parent and teen responses), or approximately n=1000 combined household responses per country.

To qualify for the main quantitative survey, parents were defined as either the parent or legal guardian of a teen aged 13-17. Qualifying parents are 30-79 years old. The parent also holds the primary or shared decision-making role when it comes to overall parenting responsibilities. Other qualifying criteria include:

- Teen lives in parent household full-time or at least part-time
- Teen has high-speed internet at home
- Teen must have access to at least one of the following: smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer
- Parent allows teen to use tech/have screen time
- Parent cannot work in advertising, market research, media, or technology professions
- Mix of socio-economic levels
- Mix of household types

Data collection and fielding

Kantar fielded four qualitative in-depth interviews (IDIs) with parents and four focus groups with teens in each country. Each teen focus group included two friendship pairs per group (or four teens total per focus group). The IDIs and focus groups were conducted from April 25-30, 2024 in the US, Brazil, and Germany.

The online quantitative survey was soft launched on June 13, 2024, in the U.S. and June 27, 2024 in Brazil and Germany. The survey closed fielding on July 16, 2024.

Sampling

Sampling was monitored during fielding to help ensure the final General Population sample resembled the target population. No weights were applied in any of the three markets. This survey was only available to individuals with internet access and therefore the results may not be generalizable to those households without internet access.

Appendix: Detailed Question Information

The following are questions featuring the full list of response options presented to parents and teens, if not fully shown in the main report:

Full List of Parenting Styles Parents Relate to Their Personal Parenting Philosophy

1. I'm their friend, not just their parent
2. Household rules exist, but aren't always enforced
3. Teaching independence is key
4. Rules are non-negotiable
5. Love and care always come first
6. I support by pushing for greatness and success
7. Failure is not an option
8. Disagreements and conflict can be for good and for growth
9. Everyone's voice counts and is important
10. Trust is important, but verification is sometimes necessary
11. Proper support and guidance is my top priority as a parent

Full List of Attitude Statements on Parent's Right to Supervise Online Activity

As a parent…

1. I have the right to monitor/examine all of my teen's online activities
2. I should know what my teen is doing at all times online
3. I determine what is appropriate or not appropriate for my teen online
4. I have the right to intervene/provide guidance for my teen, but not to monitor/examine their online activities
5. My teen has no right to online privacy as long as they are living at home/under my roof
6. I have the right to oversee my teen's online interactions and activities

Full List of Attitude Statements on Parent's Opinion of Teen's Privacy Rights

1. My teen has the right to interact with whomever they want online without me (or other parental figures) monitoring
2. My teen has the right to interact with whomever they want during in-person get-togethers without me (or other parental figures) monitoring
3. My teen has the right to keep all of their online activities/ interactions private
4. My teen needs to earn their right to having privacy online without me (or other parental figures) monitoring
5. My teen should be able to do whatever they want online, so long as it's not dangerous or illegal
6. My teen should be able to do anything no matter what without me (or other parental figures) monitoring/supervising
7. My teen should be able to have privacy online without me (or other parental figures) monitoring

Full List of Attitude Statements on Teens' Opinion of Parents' Right to Supervise Online Activity

1. My parent should have the right to monitor/examine all of my online activities
2. My parent should know what I am doing at all times online
3. My parent should determine what is appropriate or not appropriate for me
4. My parent should have the right to intervene/provide guidance, but not to monitor/examine my online activities
5. My parent should have the right to oversee my online interactions and activities
6. My parent should have some right to monitor/examine any of my online activities whatsoever
7. My parent should have no right to monitor/examine any of my online activities whatsoever

Full List of Possible Parental Concerns about Teen's Online Activity

1. Harmful content
2. Potential harassment/bad actors
3. My teen engaging in inappropriate online behavior
4. Risks/scams
5. Spending time online when they should be doing other things
6. Quality of the time spent online
7. My teen using technology without safe guardrails
8. Other (please specify)
9. None of these concern me enough to monitor or supervise my teen

Full List of Attitudes on Media and Tech Usage, with statement wording adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

1. My teen has a healthy relationship with media and technology
2. My teen spends time with worthwhile content when they are using media and technology
3. My teen is able to calm their own emotions and get good sleep
4. My teen doesn't let media and technology interfere with important other things they should be doing
5. My teen and I often discuss what they are seeing and doing with media and technology
6. My teen has healthy interactions with others when using media and technology

Full List of Monitoring Tools, Settings, or Controls Parents Use to Monitor Teen's Online Activity

1. Standalone Monitoring Tools: Software or applications specifically designed for monitoring online activities
2. Device Settings: Parental control settings made directly on the device, such as phone settings, to regulate access or monitor usage
3. In-App Settings: Parental control settings within specific applications or platforms to monitor your teen's interactions
4. Router/Network Controls: Controls at the router level to manage or restrict internet access
5. Other Methods: Having discussions with teens or asking to see your teen's phone or following the content they post on social media, without the use of technology or tools
6. I have not used or do not currently use any of these tools or techniques to monitor my teen's online activity

Full List of Positive Reasons That Would Trigger Less Parental Supervision

1. An improvement in my teen's grades or academic performance
2. My teen starting a new extracurricular activity or exploring a new hobby
3. My teen taking on new household responsibilities (e.g., helping more with chores, helping out their siblings)
4. Noticeable decrease in my teen's screen time use
5. When summer vacation starts and my teen is out of school
6. Noticeable positive personality changes in my teen (e.g., being more kind or respectful)
7. My teen developing better sleep habits or quality of sleep

Full List of Negative Reasons That Would Trigger More Parental Supervision

1. A drop in my teen's grades or academic performance
2. My teen dropping out of an extracurricular activity or stopping a hobby
3. My teen falling out with current friends or going through a tough break-up
4. Discovering instances of my teen being cyber-bullied/harassed
5. Discovering instances of my teen cyber-bullying or harassing others
6. Noticeable increase in my teen's screen time use
7. A dramatic change in the family structure (e.g., death, divorce)
8. An incident with my other children or hearing about a bad incident from friends about their teen's digital activity
9. Noticeable negative personality changes in my teen (e.g., being more irritable or angry)
10. My teen's sleep habits or quality of sleep decreases

Full List of Neutral Reasons That Would Change Parent's Supervision Approach (More or Less or No Change)

1. My teen getting one year older
2. Changes in my teen's friends/inner circles
3. Differing opinions about how my teen should be monitored between family members
4. Availability of family member or personality of family member that will be monitoring my teen at home
5. My teen getting a new phone
6. My teen starting a new school
7. My teen starting a new job or getting their first job

Full List of Activities Parents Want to be Most Aware of Related to Their Teen's Online Activity

1. Watching content (YouTube, Netflix, Twitch)
2. Creating short-form or long-form videos (for posting on YouTube, Instagram Reels, Snapchat spotlight)
3. Streaming content (broadcasting themselves on Twitch, YouTube Live, Facebook Gaming)
4. Posting text or images on social media (Instagram, Snap, etc.)
5. Playing games (multi-player gaming, apps)
6. Scrolling on social media (Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
7. Educational/school activities (learning websites, apps)
8. Creative activities (digital art, photography, music)
9. Using generative AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Midjourney)
10. Communicating with friends or family (texting or calling)

Full List of Future Benefits/Tools to Help Parents Monitor Their Teen's Online Activity

1. Social media tracking reports, integrating insights on your teen's interactions on social media platforms with monitoring tools

2. Customizable interfaces, allowing you to personalize each tool to your specific setting preferences or family's rules

3. Prompts or conversation starter suggestions to help you initiate conversations about online safety with your teen

4. Reliable, unbiased platform that gives out advice or suggestions to help teens address uncomfortable situations related to their online life, without parents intervening

5. Bullying detection features, sending notifications when harmful speech or self-talk is triggered within teen's apps or text messages

6. Bad actor encounter detection features, sending notifications when a stranger tries to contact my teen within apps or text messages

7. Collaborative control of settings, where my teen and I co-create and set limits together in the app (e.g., my teen sets a time limit, and I approve it)

8. An AI-Powered Guide that provides parenting best-practices and suggestions for the best monitoring setting to use, based on my teen's specific digital habits and preferences

9. Emergency alerts, allowing my teen to send an instant ping if they need me or want me to start tracking them

10. A gamified way to incentivize my teen to become more responsible or independent from my monitoring over time (e.g., keeping track of milestones, their pattern of device usage leading to more relaxed monitoring)

Full List of Future Benefits/Tools Teen Would be Open to Parent Using to Monitor Their Online Activity

1. Social media tracking reports, integrating insights on your interactions on social media platforms with monitoring tools

2. Reliable, unbiased platform that gives out advice or suggestions to help you and your parent address uncomfortable situations related to your online life, without your parent intervening

3. Bullying detection features, sending notifications when harmful speech or self-talk is triggered within apps or text messages

4. Bad actor encounter detection features, sending notifications when a stranger tries to contact you within apps or text messages

5. Collaborative control of settings, where my parent and I co-create and set limits together in the app (e.g., I set a time limit, and my parent approves)

6. An AI-Powered Guide that gives my parent suggestions for the best monitoring setting to use, based on my specific online habits and preferences

7. Emergency alerts, allowing me to send an instant ping to my parent if I need them or if I want them to start tracking me

8. A way to keep track of milestones or my device usage leading to more relaxed monitoring over time as I hit each goal my parent sets or my parent and I set together

Full List of Benefits Parents Prioritize in Build Your Own Supervision Tool Exercise

1. Blocking access to harmful content
2. Restricting interactions with strangers
3. Setting time limits on specific devices, apps, or websites
4. Data protection measures to ensure information is secure
5. Usage analytics for tracking teen's online behavior patterns
6. Real-time detection and alerts: notifications sent when certain keywords or activities are triggered by the teen
7. Tracking locations, to see my teen's location and to detect when their location changes
8. Approval needed to download certain apps or programs
9. Other (Please specify)

Full List of Benefits Teens Prioritize in Build Your Own Supervision Tool Exercise

1. Blocking access to harmful content
2. Restricting interactions with strangers
3. Setting time limits on specific devices, apps, or websites
4. Data protection measures to ensure information is secure
5. Usage analytics for tracking your online behavior patterns
6. Real-time detection and alerts: notifications sent when certain keywords or activities are triggered
7. Tracking locations, allowing parent to see my location and to detect when my location changes
8. Approval needed to download certain apps or programs
9. Other (Please specify)