The most important tools at your disposal for protecting your kids from the effects of pornography are: 1) your relationship with them, and 2) your direct instruction to them about sexuality. In addition, tech-based solutions like those described below are a key part of an overall protection strategy.

**Filtering Software**: Qustodio/Net Nanny (qustodio.com, netnanny.com)

1. To begin, visit the website to set up an account for your family, download the tracking app on all devices, and create profiles for all users. From there, a number of options become available.
2. Setting restrictions-
   1. You can set restrictions for CATEGORIES of websites (e.g. pornography, gambling, etc.) which will BLOCK those websites.
   2. You can set restrictions for SPECIFIC websites or apps.
      1. You can restrict a category but whitelist a specific website/app within that category. For example, if you allow one social media platform, you can block the category “Social Media” but whitelist “Facebook.com”.
      2. These restrictions are much more reliable than they used to be and difficult to get around.
      3. You are also able to restrict any websites that are not yet categorized.
   3. You can set TIME LIMITS.
      1. Time limits can be set by device or by user, which means if a user’s time is up for the day then they can’t access the internet on any device.
      2. Time can be restricted by total amount AND by time range. For example you could restrict internet access for one user from 5pm to 9pm, but only allow 2 hours within that window.
      3. Specific apps, websites and categories of websites can have their own time limit. For example, of the 2 hours of internet time, only 30 minutes is allowed for gaming.
3. Setting email/text alerts-
   1. For any website or category of website, you can set it to alert you when it is accessed.
   2. For restricted sites, it will automatically alert you when someone ATTEMPTS to access them.
4. Viewing history-
   1. Qustodio and Net Nanny keep detailed logs of everything searched, so even if someone gets around a blocker to access porn, you could see exactly what they searched and where they clicked.
5. Other notes:
   1. TopTenReviews and PCmag both rate Qustodio highest, citing comprehensiveness and ease of use.
   2. These cost $4-$8 per month for a family, with Net Nanny being the cheaper option.
   3. Qustodio has a Panic Button that sends your child’s location via GPS. Net Nanny can replace specific words of your choosing.
   4. This type of software is designed for parents to monitor their children, not peer accountability.
   5. Norton Family is very similar to Qustodio/Net Nanny, but is incompatible with any Apple devices.

**Accountability Software**: Covenant Eyes/Accountable2You (covenanteyes.com, accountable2you.com)

1. You create a family account and install the program/app on all devices, all from the product’s website. Subscriber’s internet activity is then shared with chosen accountability partners. While both Covenant Eyes (CE) and Accountable2You (A2U) have filtering options, they are most known for informing accountability partners that pornographic content has been accessed, rather than restricting access. The idea is that at this point the accountability partner will have a conversation with the user about the report.
2. REPORTING to accountability partners-
   1. CE and A2U generate detailed, categorized REPORTS on a set schedule.
   2. The report monitors by category, by maturity ranking (children, teens, etc.), and by website.
   3. The report also shows how much time is spent using each app on each device.
3. Notes:
   1. Previous versions made you use their own browser in order to track internet use. For example, if you used Chrome to access the internet, it couldn’t track your usage—it would only track your internet usage when you used the Covenant Eyes browser, for example. THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE. Both CE and A2U track web activity for any browser or any app that has a built-in browser.
   2. It uses a VPN-like system (Virtual Private Network). Your phone accesses the VPN, and the VPN accesses the internet. This makes it so the accountability software catches *any* web addresses that make their way to the phone. While this won’t track content seen on a Facebook/Instagram feed, it would notice if anything was clicked on and opened within that app.
   3. The Covenant Eyes family plan is $15.99 a month, and A2U is $11.99, making these peer-to-peer style options over twice as expensive as the parental-style filtering programs listed above.

**Options that Filter Content through Your Wireless Router**: OpenDNS/Circle (openDNS.com, meetcircle.com)

1. These options allow you to control what gets filtered THROUGH YOUR WIRELESS ROUTER, not your devices. ANY devices connected to your wireless network will be protected, but only at your home.
2. CIRCLE is a box that plugs into your router. It costs $90 and has a $5/month fee. From your computer, you can program it to restrict websites, categories of websites, and time limits for specific devices.
3. OpenDNS is a FREE service that can filter content from 50 different categories through your router. How does it work? When you type in a website (e.g. the letters “google.com”) you type in the *domain name*. But the actual address of Google’s website is not the letters “google.com,” but the numbers “74.125.224.72”. This is the address of Google.com in computer language, and this kind of website name is called an *IP address*. Your router translates the website’s *domain name* (human language) into the website’s *IP address* (computer language), and this translation is done by a *domain name server* or DNS. OpenDNS is this kind of translation service. You can get it set up on your router by going through the steps at OpenDNS.com that are specific to your hardware. Once it is setup, all of your internet traffic goes through their DNS rather than whatever DNS it was going through previously (typically speeding up your internet slightly). Then you can block or allow certain types of websites based on their 50+ categories.
4. Notes:
   1. Neither Circle nor OpenDNS has the ability to distinguish between different USERS. That means if you can’t allow one person to have access to things that are restricted to someone else.
   2. OpenDNS also is unable to distinguish between DEVICES, whereas Circle is able to do that. With Circle, you could set your son/daughter’s tablet to very limited internet access, but allow your computer to access more. But that would be impossible with OpenDNS.
   3. If your son/daughter’s friends bring over wireless devices, internet use on your wireless network will be restricted to your specifications on those devices as well.
   4. On the other hand, any data-enabled device could get around Circle/OpenDNS by connecting to cellular data (4G/LTE). For kids with data-enabled phones, they would just need to turn off wi-fi on their phones, connect to the 4G network, and their phones would be unaffected by the filter.

**Other Need-to-Know’s**

1. A combination of different tech solutions may provide the best protection.
2. Checking browser history is unreliable, as all teens know how to clear history.
3. Any modern game console is capable of unfettered internet browsing if no restrictions are set.
4. Social media sites often display pornographic material, particularly Instagram and SnapChat.
5. There are free equivalents of each of the paid products above, but most seem to be poorly reviewed.
6. Many parents have also recommended not allowing children/teens to keep electronics in their bedrooms, including their own TV’s/consoles or portable devices. Use is restricted to public areas.
7. Remember, technological solutions are important, but they are just part of the answer. They aren’t as important as your *relational investment* and your *direct* *instruction* about sexuality and pornography.