

# Protecting Our Children

## Defusing A Dangerous Trend

(NAPSA)—Parents can protect their children from a new and potentially dangerous phenomenon: “sexting.”

With modern technology, teens have taken flirting to a scary level. “Sexting” combines the words “sex” and “texting” and involves sending sexually explicit messages (texts, photos, videos) via cell phone. What teens may see as innocent, flirtatious photos and messages can lead to social, even legal disaster.

According to a recent study conducted by Interpret Mobile & Technology Group on behalf of LG Mobile Comm. USA, one out of four teens think many people sext and see nothing wrong with it and 33 percent have received nude picture messages.

### What Parents Should Know

The vast majority of texts are harmless, but when it comes to sexting, however, many teens don't consider the consequences. A message can be sent instantaneously. Unfortunately, once a text is sent, there is no way to retrieve it. A once-private photo can be seen by millions in a matter of minutes.

Parents should be aware that:

- Recipients can easily share explicit texts, photos and video so a message can go viral, ending up in multiple cell phones and websites.

- A photo or video online can easily become a target for child predators.

- When images on a cell phone involve a teen and some form of nudity, they can be defined by law as child pornography. Some teens have been arrested in relation to sexting.

### What Parents Can Do

“In this digital age, where personal boundaries for kids are becoming more blurred and



**Savvy parents can save naive teens from the dangers of “sexting.”**

ambiguous, monitoring your child's mobile phone and online behavior is crucial,” said Dr. Charles Sophy, child and family psychiatrist and LG Text Ed Advisory Council Member. “Sexting is here to stay and parents need to equip themselves with the tools to be prepared.”

You can educate yourself on teen terminology and “text talk” because it truly is like another language. Talk to your children—about everything. Ask if they know about sexting, if they know anyone who does it and if they have ever engaged in it themselves. If they are sexting, create a safe space so they can confide in you about it. Tell them of the dangers involved. Polarizing the issue with blanket judgments that condemn sexting probably won't bring you closer to your child.

### Learn More

To learn more about this issue and how to talk to kids about sexting and other ways to combat this negative mobile phone behavior, you can visit an easy-to-use, interactive resource, the LG Text Ed website at [www.lgttexted.com](http://www.lgttexted.com).