



For Parents

Back to School Tech Tips

1. Check your Wi-Fi connection if you have trouble connecting. Learn about other connection options.

- A quick visual check can let you know if your Wi-Fi is working. Look for the Wi-Fi icon at the bottom-right corner of your screen. If it has a yellow exclamation mark or a small flower by it, then your Wi-Fi is not working. If you get a pop-up asking to run a test to locate the problem and correct it, run the test. If that doesn't work, disconnecting and reconnecting may work. If this still doesn't work, contact your internet provider.
- If you lose Wi-Fi connectivity, you may be able to use your mobile device as a personal hotspot, which allows you to share your Wi-Fi access from your mobile device to your personal computer (PC). Check with your mobile service provider to confirm that your plan includes mobile hotspot. Note: Unlimited plans work best for hotspot access, since sharing Wi-Fi from your mobile device uses data. If you have a limited data plan, it can be costly if you go over your data plan.
 - [Use your PC as a mobile hotspot.](#)
 - [How to set up a Personal Hotspot on your iPhone or iPad.](#)
- If your Wi-Fi connection isn't very strong, consider the following:
 - Restart your home router. A router is the device that connects your PC to the internet.
 - Purchase an extender/booster. These devices can be purchased online and extend your Wi-Fi network coverage space by boosting your internet signals to a wider area.
 - Connect to a modem by a wire from your PC to bring the internet directly to the computer, instead of relying on wireless connection.



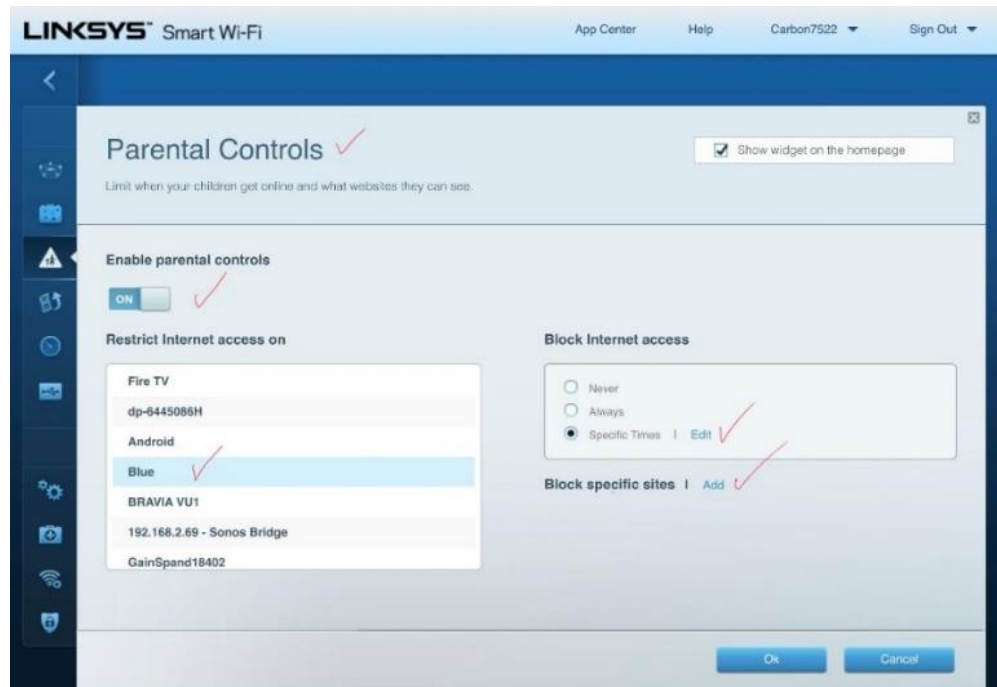
2. Make sure your work environment is safe and private.

If privacy and safety are a concern, turning your PC off at the end of the school day should be sufficient. For additional privacy, consider covering the webcam lens and disabling the microphone, when not in use.

3. Take advantage of parental controls.

You can manage website access to certain devices from **Parental Controls** on your home router. You can block sites altogether or during certain times of the day.

Here's one example of a parental control setting – the look will vary depending on the network router.



4. **Keep student IDs, passwords and email information in one place.**
Print out a sheet with important information that you or your children need to access frequently (e.g., important reminders, student IDs, emails and passwords). This is especially important for children who are too young to remember them. Favorite frequently used websites. Click [here](#) for instructions.
5. **Purchase the right headset for your child.**
Many schools require headsets with a microphone. While large, noise-canceling headsets are great for blocking out noise, they can hurt a young person's ears over time. Before buying them, ensure they are the right fit. If you buy them online, read description details, sizing information and check online reviews. You can also opt for the standard ear buds that come with your smartphone. These have a microphone and are easy to wear for extended periods of time without pushing on the ear.
6. **Learn more about Canvas, Google Meet, Teams or Zoom.**
Regardless of the virtual meeting platform selected by your school, they all have similar features, including mute and camera options. Click below for tips on these commonly used platforms.

Note: Although you may be able to access these platforms from a website, they work best if you download the designated app directly to your PC. The web versions don't always offer the same functionality that the apps offer. Most district-issued devices will already have the apps preloaded with the program.

- [Canvas](#)
 - [Basic guide.](#)
 - [Student guide.](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
 - [Cheat sheet.](#)

- [Quick start guide.](#)
- [Adjust your view.](#)
- [Teams](#)
 - [Download a quick guide.](#)
 - [How to blur your background.](#)
 - [Day in the life guide for teachers and students.](#)
 - [Adjust your view.](#)
- [Zoom](#)
 - [Start guide.](#)
 - [Changing your background.](#)
 - [Adjust your view.](#)

7. Adjust your platform view.

Discover how to adjust your child’s view of students and/or the teacher to meet their needs. For example, some schools may prefer that your student only view the teacher speaking, while others may want you to view the teacher and the participants.

8. Use voice-activated tools like Alexa, Siri or Google Assistant as a timer and spell checker.

Set reminders for changing schedules or households with multiple children. For example, you can ask Alexa to remind you at 1:58 p.m. every Tuesday that your child has two minutes before Math class starts. Similarly, you can use the timer/alarm feature on your smart device to go off at set times or increments.

Does your child interrupt you with spelling questions? Show your child how to ask these tools for help with spelling a word. You can even ask Alexa to spell a word slowly.

9. Contact your school’s district call centers and websites for support.

Many school districts have set up specific websites for troubleshooting technology issues, FAQs and other helpful resources. Click [here](#) for links and phone numbers to some of the school districts in the Greater Houston area.

10. Remain calm. Teachers expect that there will be technical glitches.

Just as technology at work can sometimes experience downtimes, the same is true for online schooling. In fact, teachers expect technical challenges. Prepare for the unexpected and know you may experience some hiccups as everyone adjusts to this new way of teaching and learning.

Most importantly, remember that we’re all in this together. If you or your child is struggling, please consider reaching out to the Employee Assistance Plan for counseling services. EAP, administered by LifeMatters, gives you free, confidential support and resources, 24/7 for you and for family members. Call 800.634.6433 or go online to mylifematters.com or through the LifeMatters app. When accessing digitally, use **HM1** to sign in.