

LIFESTYLES

6 ways to keep an eye on kids**Gadgets track movements, cell phone usage and even driving skills**

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Maybe parents don't really have eyes in the backs of their heads, but an increasing number of monitoring devices means they can have eyes almost anywhere else.

Here's a look at some of the gadgets that make it happen.

1 Sprint Family Locator

What it does: Find your family members on an interactive map displayed on your cell phone or the Internet. "Safety Checks" notify parents by text message or e-mail that their son or daughter has arrived at school, at home or any other specified location.

Stealth factor: The locator program requires the youth's acknowledgment, and the youth is notified by a text message every time the parent requests his or her location.

What you need: Certain Sprint phone models can download the program.

How to get it: Go to www.sprint.com/familylocator or to a retail store.

Cost: For \$9.99 a month, register up to four phones with unlimited location requests and 100 text messages for each phone.

2 Disney Mobile Family Locator

What it does: It locates kids' phones with GPS, and it also limits text messaging, picture messaging and minutes used. Parents can determine the hours of the day and the days of the week when kids can use their phones.

Stealth factor: It doesn't send the child's phone an alert if he or she is being located.

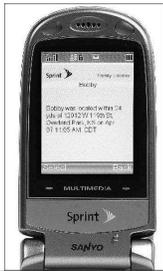
What you need: You'll have to buy either the Pantech or the LG phone.

How to get it: It'll be available at <http://www.disneymobile.com/> in June.

Cost: \$59.99 for the model by Pantech and \$109.99 for a model by LG. The cost for monthly service hasn't been determined.

3 Mapquest Find Me

Photos (click to enlarge)



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zoom

The Sprint Family Locator tracks family members on an interactive map. Messages tell parents when kids arrive at specific locations.

Advertisement

What it does: Locate friends and family through GPS and monitor them from the Web or a cell phone.

Stealth factor: Each user has to authorize the monitoring.

What you need: It's available on certain Nextel and Sprint phones, and on BlackBerry 7100i and 7520.

How to get it: Download it from <http://www.findme.mapquest.com/>.

Cost: \$3.99 per month.

4 Alltrack USA

What it does: This small black box (it's about the size of two decks of cards) lets parents track where and how teens are driving in real time, viewable on a map on the Internet, using GPS. It also records the history of where they've been. It's hooked up to the car's electrical system, so parents can remotely unlock the doors, disable the starter or honk the horn. Parents can set up a GeoFence and be notified if the car leaves that area, and it also records hard braking, hard cornering and rapid acceleration.

Stealth factor: Parents can hide this little black box. It's usually installed behind the dashboard.

What you need: It works with any car made after 1955.

How to get it: Order it at <http://www.alltrackusa.com/>.

Cost: \$524, plus an access fee of \$34.95 a month.

5 RS-1000 Black Box

What it does: This black box records any speeding and aggressive driving on a memory card, which can be plugged into the family computer to reveal exactly how the teen was driving at any time.

Stealth factor: Since it's small enough to fit under a driver's seat, they won't see it, but it gives audible warnings telling the driver to slow down or quit driving aggressively.

What you need: You can install the black box yourself on vehicles newer than 1996; anything older requires hard-wire installation.

Where to get it: Order the black box at <http://www.roadsafety.com/>.

Cost: \$280 for 1996 to 2002 vehicles; \$295 for 2003 and newer vehicles.

6 SmartDriver

What it does: It records speed, accelerator use, distance and starts and stops.

Stealth factor: This black box is small and doesn't include an alarm system for the driver, so it's possible to conceal it under the dashboard.

What you need: A model 1996 or later vehicle and a PC with Windows 95 or later. It can't operate with Macintosh-based systems.

How to get it: Order it at <http://www.smart-driver.com/>.

Cost: Buy it for \$495 or rent it for six months at \$49.95 a month.

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