Consumer Action   Survey of major U.S. wireless carrier parental controls (2011)

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Carrier	Cost/Fees	Block SMS Texts	Block Calls	Block Picture/Video Messages	Block Web/ Media Downloads	Text While Driving Restriction	Web Content Filter	GPS Location Tracker	Usage Allowances	Time of Day Allowances
AT&T *see pages 2-3*	$0 - $15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Metro PCS	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Sprint *see page 4*	$0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
T-Mobile *see pages 5-7*	$0 - $10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
U.S. Cellular *see page 8*	$0	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Verizon *see pages 9-11*	$0 - $10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Key to chart

Block SMS Text Messaging: Ability to block incoming/outgoing text messages all together or by specific number
Block Calls: Ability to block incoming/outgoing calls to specific numbers
Block Picture and Video Messaging: Ability to block picture (MMS) and video messages from being sent and received
Block Web Access/Media Downloads: Ability to block access to web and /or ability to download ringtones, games, graphics and apps
Text While Driving Restriction: Restricts phone from receiving/sending texts and calls when phone is in motion

Web Content Filter: Ability to filter online content by age to ensure age appropriateness
GPS Location Tracker: Ability to track phone's location either in real-time or through reports
Usage Allowances: Ability to allocate amount of minutes/texts/dollars phone is allowed
Time of Day Allowances: Ability to restrict phone's use based on time of day (outside school hours, after certain times in the evening, etc.)

Notes: Survey was conducted between March 23 and April 10, 2011 by Alegra Howard of Consumer Action.

Carriers are listed in alphabetical order.

Warning: The survey is for informational purposes only. All terms are subject to change. Verify all program details with your carrier.

AT&T

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Smart Limits	$4.99/mo	Online setup and management lets you determine how and when your child can use their phone.	- Time of day their phone can and cannot be used - Number of text and instant messages per billing cycle - Dollar amount for download purchases (ringtones, games, etc.) - Amount of Web browsing usage allowed per billing cycle - Block/allow specific numbers that can be called or text messaged (incoming and outgoing) - Restricts content inappropriate for children	- Automatic notifications warning account owners of approaching limits of minutes/texts not available. Account activity can be monitored online or by calling customer care - Phones that have reached their limits will still be able to call emergency numbers - Limitations for iPhone customers: - Web Browsing Limits and Time of Day Restrictions will not block or restrict data usage while a user is in Wi-Fi mode or using iPhone 3.0 software - The AT&T Content Filters feature will not filter content on iPhone. This limitation applies to all iPhone software versions.	http://www.wireless.att.com/cell-phone-service/services/serviceDetails.jsp?LOSGId=&skuId=sku1010174&catId=cat320008
Data Blocker	Free	Block data from being sent/received on mobile phones (pictures images and video images)	- Restricts data from being sent/received on individual phone (photo and video images)	- Must call customer service and have each data blocker added to individual phones on the account	
MediaNet Parental Control	Free	Wireless Parental Controls from AT&T helps parents restrict access to content inappropriate for younger viewers with the Content Filter feature. You can also stop AT&T direct-bill purchases on your wireless phone with our Purchase Blocker feature.	- Purchase Blocker prevents premium content purchases that are direct-billed to the account holder. Parents can set Purchase Blocker to "On" or "Off." "On" prevents your children from purchasing premium content such as ringtones, downloads, games and graphics. The default setting is "Off" which allows all purchases. - Content Filter: Parents can set Content Filter "On" or "Off". The default setting is "Off" which has no restrictions and all content is visible and accessible. - When accessing Internet through AT&T/Yahoo! on select Smartphones (without MEdia Net or att.net) Content Filter blocks the device from accessing the Internet and application storefronts - Content Filter has the ability to block picture messages from being sent/received - Uses rating for individual AT&T's mobile sites	- Compatible handset required - Content Filter does not work when a Smartphone is in WiFi - Filtering not 100% accurate and not guaranteed - Turning filters "On" will restrict access to content that could be viewed and/or purchased from the device. - It may take up to 90 minutes for the controls to take effect. - Turning Purchase Blocker on will cancel any existing subscriptions you have as well as preventing future one-time and subscription purchases. - Smartphones require a Smartphone data plan. You will still be required to pay for a Smartphone data plan even if you use Content Filter to block the device from accessing the Internet and application storefronts - Content Filter will not work for iPhones or Blackberry which use their own browsers - Content Filter does not work in WiFi mode. Content Filter restricts access to mobile websites (like chat and dating sites) with mature content. It also shuts off access to the broader mobile web via the search function	http://www.att.net/s/editorial.dll?fromspage=design/CDLS10/ch/smct/toolContent.html&categoryid=&only=y&bfromind=19060&eeid=7626671&_sitecat=3563&dcatid=0&eetype=article&render=y&ac=3&ck=&ch=smartcontrol&cat=smct&serviceTopic=2020

AT&T

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
FamilyMap: up to TWO People	$9.99/mo (30 day free trial) plus standard data and messaging charges	Track your child's location from your PC or cell phone and request location updates at any time.	- Service locates up to two people on account - Manage and track from PC or cell phone - Receive scheduled updates for after school or activity arrival times	- Family Map locates up to two people on account. Standard data and messaging charges apply. If you do not cancel prior to the end of the free 30 days you will automatically be subscribed and charged $9.99 per month thereafter to locate up to two family members unless you cancel service - Service availability, timeliness or accuracy of location is not guaranteed. Coverage not available in all areas. - iPhone customers require different app for same fee	https://familymap.wireless.att.com/finder-att-family/welcome.htm
FamilyMap: up to FIVE people	14.99/mo (30 day free trial) plus data and messaging charges	Track your child's location from your PC or cell phone, and request location updates at any time.	- Service locates up to five people on account - Manage and track from PC or cell phone - Receive scheduled updates for after school or activity arrival times	- Family Map locates up to five people on account. Standard data and messaging charges apply. If you do not cancel prior to the end of the free 30 days you will automatically be subscribed and charged $9.99 per month thereafter to locate up to two family members unless you cancel service - Service availability, timeliness or accuracy of location is not guaranteed. Coverage not available in all areas. - iPhone customers require different app for same fee	https://familymap.wireless.att.com/finder-att-family/welcome.htm

Sprint

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Parental Controls	Free	Parents can set permissions for text messages, media downloads, calls, phone camera, incoming and outgoing picture mail and data ussage.	Block Text Messages Choose who you will receive text messages from. You can select the following options: - Do not block any text messages - Block messages from all senders in my block list - Only allow messages from senders in my allow list Block digital media downloads: Prevent a phone's primary user from buying and downloading games, ringtones, screensavers or other content.This feature is managed online through My Sprint Restrict voice calls: - Restrict incoming/outgoing voice calls to pre-approved list on selected devices - Ability to block all voice calls Restrict camera use: Turn your camera and video on or off on selected devices Restrict Wireless Web access: Allows a device user to access only family-friendly sites on Sprint's mobile network and the world wide web as established by Sprint. Content and sites must be rated appropriate for minors 17 and under or it will be blocked Block data: Limits the device user's ability to use anything that requires data, such as email, Web, video, etc. Block Picture Mail: Blocks all inbound and outbound picture mail. Permissions: Account owners can edit permissions for a device user to set data, voice, picture mail and text controls for their own device One Touch: Account owners can turn all controls "on" or "off" with one touch. (Voice "off" is limited to "block outbound" only. Phone will still receive inbound calls.) Location tracking: Ability to locate where phone is when checked on the online account. If phone is turned off, provides the last known location	- Location tracking requires smartphone - Text alerts for phone allowances (minutes and text messages) not available. The best way to monitor account and controlled phone usage is through online account	http://shop2.sprint.com/en/services/safety_security/parental_control.shtml

T-Mobile

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
FamilyWhere	$9.99/month (free 30 day trial)	FamilyWhere is a service that enables you to locate devices of family members that are on the same account.	- The ability to locate family members on interactive maps that are available on your computer or device - You can create and receive automatic, time-based alerts showing family members location with respect to favorite or safe places - FamilyWhere saves location history for a rolling seven day window - Unlimited location and schedule checks with no additional fee's or limits - Notifications are sent to the individual lines being located to help identify any unauthorized location requests - Ability to locate any device type	- Locations are approximate based on GPS location if available. If GPS is not available, network tower information is used to determine the device location - Service is compatible with "nearly any type" of phone on the T-Mobile network	http://support.t-mobile.com/doc/tm24274.
Message Blocking	Free	With Message Blocking you can block incoming and outgoing text messages (SMS), picture messages (MMS), Instant Messages (IM), and e-mail.	- Block incoming/outgoing text messages (SMS) - Block picture messages (MMS) - Block instant messages (IM) - Block email	- Blocking incoming and outgoing Instant Messages and e-mail applies to phones which use text messaging to send/receive these messages. If you want to be able to send or receive messages, Message Blocking is not the right service for you. - Message Blocking is not currently available for Prepaid accounts	http://support.t-mobile.com/doc/tm23533.xml?&navtypeid=2&pagetypeid=26&prevPageIndex=7
Web Guard	Free	Web Guard is an optional add-on feature which restricts access to adult-oriented content (over 18) on your phone when you use the T-Mobile network.	- Web Guard restricts access to adult-themed (18 or over) content on your phone - The feature targets Web access data plans and covers browse and search	- While Web Guard can be a big help, it's not foolproof. It may or may not block or filter some content, including user-generated content such as instant messaging (IM), e-mail, and text messages - Web Guard is an optional, add-on feature for post-paid and FlexPaySM customers	http://support.t-mobile.com/doc/tm23351.xml

T-Mobile

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Family Allowances	$4.99/month	Ability to set upfront limits for minutes, messages, and downloads, in order to avoid unexpected overage charges on your bill. Family members learn to "budget" their phone use, everyone stays connected, and you get some well-deserved peace of mind.	- Parent/guardian determines how many minutes, messages, and downloads each person on a family plan gets - If a family member reaches an allowance, parent will be automatically notified (enrollment required for notification) and the controlled phone's service will temporarily be disabled (Always Allowed numbers can still get in touch) - Ability to allocate more minutes and change allowances at any time—right from the web through your online T-Mobile account - Text message alerts can be sent to account holder and controlled phone notifying when when account allowance is nearing or has been reached - Ability to limit hours of texting and set phones so they won't ring during certain hours of the day - Ability to block unwanted callers and text messages with Never Allowed numbers. And with Always Allowed numbers, family members can still get in touch, even if allowances are spent - Ability to pre-approve websites. All other internet access will be blocked. Controlled phones will only be able to visit pre-approved sites	- Account preferences can be managed online or by calling customer care	http://support.t-mobile.com/doc/tm24226.xml

T-Mobile

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Drive Smart Plus	$4.99/month for all lines on the plan. Comes with a 30 day free trial.	DriveSmart is an application that provides the ability to defer incoming calls, messages, and other phone distractions while driving.	- Automatic Driving Detection activates the DriveSmart Lock Screen when driving speeds reach 10 mph -When activated, DriveSmart engages the DriveSmart Lock Screen, overriding the standard lock screen - Limits access to phone features and applications - Hides and silences incoming notifications to reduce distractions - Auto-replies to calls and messages with a customizable text message - Sends calls to voicemail or sends calls to Bluetooth device if enabled - Provides an override button to disable the DriveSmart Lock Screen - Provides a 911 button to allow easy emergency calling - Allows access of up to three applications from the DriveSmart Lock Screen - Notifications are sent to the parent when the override button is used.	- Service is only available on the LG Optimus T, but more hardware support is "coming soon." - DriveSmart Basic is a free pre-installed applications on the LG Optimus T	http://family.t-mobile.com/safety-and-security

US Cellular

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Limitations	Source
Overage Protection	Free with enrollment in the Belief Project Plan*	U.S. Cellular sends a text message alert when either your voice minutes or text messages are near or at the point where you will start to incur overage charges.	- A text message alert warns account holder and/or controlled phone when approaching 75 percent of monthly limit for minutes or texts, and again when at 100 percent usage. - Ability to elect to have one line receive the alert or all lines receive the alert		http://www.uscellular.com/uscellular/support/faq/faqDetails.jsp?topic=overage-protection.html
Overage Cap	Free with enrollment in the Belief Project Plan*	Overage Cap prevents voice overage charges from exceeding $50 for a National Single Line plan or $150 for a Family plan.	Overage charges	- Overage Cap only applies to minutes. It does not apply to data usage or text, picture, and video messages - Overage Cap is available on all Single Line and Family Belief plans with limited minutes - the Basic, Essential and Essential Plus plans. - Must be enrolled in U.S. Cellular's Belief Project plan. (http://www.uscellular.com/the-belief-project/index.html)	http://www.uscellular.com/the-belief-project/faqs.html#cap
Overage Forgiveness	Free with enrollment in the Belief Project Plan*	With Overage Forgiveness, customers on Belief Plans can even save up enough reward points to eliminate overage charges they may occasionally incur.	Overage charges	- The following fees and charges do not apply: Wireless Modem Usage, International Toll, PSMS Charges, Tone Room Charges, Application Charges, Directory Assistance, International Roaming (Airtime, Toll, Roamer Surcharges and fees in areas outside of the 50 United States), Monthly Recurring Charges, Equipment Charges, One Time Charges and Taxes. - Must be enrolled in U.S. Cellular's Belief Project plan. (http://www.uscellular.com/the-belief-project/index.html)	http://www.uscellular.com/the-belief-project/faqs.html

*Joining a US Cellular Belief Project Plan does not extend your contract. Several types of plans are availble to new and existing customers. The plan offers points and perks for long-term customers.

Verizon

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Usage Controls	$4.99/mo per line being monitored	Online setup and management lets you determine how and when your child can use their phone.	- Usage Allowance enables parents to set limits for voice minutes and messages that can be used during a billing cycle. Ability to send alerts to multiple numbers when account allowance is nearing. Controlled number (within 15 minutes or 15 message) or has been reached - Time Restrictions allow parents to limit and control cell phone use during a certain time of day or day of week - Blocked Numbers restrict calls and messages with phone numbers that you designate. - Trusted Numbers Calls and messages are allowed for Trusted Numbers regardless of any other usage controls or restrictions - Block picture and video messaging: must be done by Verizon representative - Block app and media downloads through online account - Ability to send warning notifications to multiple numbers if account allowance is nearing or has been reached	- Blocking picture and video messaging must be done by Verizon representative. Not available through online account management	https://wbillpay.verizon-wireless.com/vzw/nos/uc/uc_home.jsp

Verizon

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Family Locator	$9.99/mo per locatee phone line	Track your child's location from your PC or cell phone and request location updates at any time.	Location Tracking: - Provides detailed location information and the address of your family members displayed on an interactive map - Provides you the option to receive turn-by-turn driving directions to your family member's location using VZ Navigator. You can also get directions via email, text message, or print them from your computer - Locate Multiple family members at the same time automatically, as soon as you sign in Arrival and Departure Updates: - Receive updates when your family members leave or arrive at locations that you define such as school, soccer practice or home - Provides detailed updates of your family's movements right to your cell phone - Arrival & departure updates can be sent to multiple recipients via text or email - Monitored locations can be set up with 1/2, 1 or a 2 mile radius - Receive scheduled updates of your family member's locations. Choose the times you want to know your family member's locations such as at curfew. - Can be used for recurring events (e.g. curfew, end of shift) or one-time events - Flexible scheduling entry (daily, weekly, etc.) - Scheduled alerts can be sent to multiple recipients via phone or email - View location history		http://products.verizonwireless.com/index.aspx?id=fnd_familylocator

Verizon

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Restrictions	Source
Content Filters	Free	Allows account owners to establish an access setting for each line on their account based on four age-appropriate filtering settings.	Filter settings for content on Verizon's mobile network, including V CAST: - C 7+: content recommended for children aged 7 and older - T 13+: content recommended for teens aged 13 and older - YA 17+: content recommended for young adults aged 17 and older - No Filter: content recommended for adults aged 18 and over - Filter applied and managed by account holder for each controlled phone on account	- Content Filtering works on most mobile phones, most PDAs and most PC cards. However, it will not work on any device with a static IP address or on search results provided through the Get It Now search capability. - The music filtering capabilities of the service do not work on devices with V CASTSM Music v01.0 or v01.01 software. You can check if your device is using the v01.0 or v01.01 software by launching "V CAST Music" on your device, selecting "Help" and scrolling to the bottom of the screen to find the "About V CAST Music" version number - The Internet filtering capabilities of the service will not work with devices utilizing Wi-Fi, Mobile Web 1.0, or on devices that use the Venturi data compression software, including phones tethered to PCs or PC cards, unless the compression software is turned off or on BlackBerry devices. - Content Filtering may not work outside the National Enhanced Services Rate and Coverage Area	http://support.vzw.com/faqs/Features%20and%20Optional%20Services/content_filtering.html

Overview of parental control services and apps

Name	Cost/Fees	Block SMS Texts	Block Calls	Block Picture/ Video Messages	Block Web/ Media Downloads	Text While Driving Restriction	Web Content Filter	GPS Location Tracker	Usage Allowances	Time of Day Allowances
Phone Guard Drive Safe *see page 13*	$29.99/year or $4.99/ month	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
App Lock by Creative Core *see page 14*	$0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
eBlaster by SpectorSoft* *see page 14*	$69.99/year subscription	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
iHound Mobile *see page 14*	$3.99/ three month subscription	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

Marketed mainly to employers to track employees, but can be used by parents who wish to monitor text messaging, incoming and outgoing call information, web browsing history and/or location of the phone using GPS tracking.

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Limitations	Source
Phone Guard Drive Safe	$29.99/year or $4.99/month	Drive Safe Software "safe driving mobile application" is software that helps ensure safe and legal use of mobile phones while driving. The software automatically turns off certain functionalities of the driver's mobile phone when the phone is in a moving vehicle. If the current speed is higher than the threshold set by administrator, the PhoneGuard anti-text while driving application locks the phone by displaying custom lock screen on top of everything else currently running on the phone. By doing this, PhoneGuard locks the screen; restricting the ability to read or write text messages, emails, or any other activity that requires you to look at the screen. When the car is stopped for more than 5 seconds, the phone will automatically allow texting and other data functions to resume. Any missed text messages will be waiting for the user. Once the user starts driving again, the software will automatically block these activities again.	- Administrator controls the functions and the controls to enter customized personal functions of the software - Administrators can enter their contact numbers to receive reports and alerts from PhoneGuard's software on your child's or employee's phone - Time Out: Governs the time that the keyboard function works to prevent text messaging or internet browsing during school or work hours - Request Permission: Allows child to request permission from Administrator to use the keyboard of the cell phone for a set length of time - Speed Control: Alerts administrator(s) if the cell phone travels faster then the preset max speed threshold. Also delivers a Google Maps Link to show location and speed of cell phone	Software available for iPhone, Blackberry, Blackberry Storm, Android, Nokia	http://www.phoneguard.com/how-it-works.php

Service Name	Service Cost	Service Description	Sets Limits For	Limitations	Source
App Lock by Creative Core	Free in Android Marketplace	AppLock lets you protect any apps you want with a passcode: SMS, E-mail, Pictures, Calendar…any apps you choose. There is a PRO unlock key that removes ads and unlocks more features.	- SMS text messages - Pictures - Any app you choose	App available for Android phones	Android Marketplace https://market.android.com/details?id=com.
eBlaster by SpectorSoft	$69.99/year subscription	Sends all recorded activity to the parent's e-mail address in the form of an easy-to-read Activity Report	- Records both sides of all text message conversations and retains them even if the message history is deleted from the phone - Logs all voice calls made or received, noting the phone number and duration - All Web sites visited using the phone's browser get recorded - All camera phone photos are recorded - Tracks the phone's physical location, based on the nearest cell phone tower - Parents can choose to receive the activity report at intervals from once a day to every 30 minutes - If instant notification is enabled parents will receive texts and camera phone photos immediately - Once the product is installed on the child's phone parents can change configuration and notification settings through a web interface - Using the report parents can learn whether kids are using the phone after bedtime or visiting inappropriate web sites	- eBlaster doesn't include the remote lock and wipe functionality - It's specific purpose is to track what the child does with the phone, not to protect the data on a lost or stolen phone - Available for Android and Blackberry	http://www.spectorsoft.com/home-solutions.html
iHound Mobile	$3.99/3 month subscription	Location tracking app with reporting capability	- Locate family members using the mobile device's GPS - Parents can also configure it for "geo-fencing", a feature that ensures children stay where they're supposed to be. If the app detects that child is not at school during school hours, for example, it will send an alert - Ability to locate lost or stolen mobile devices - If the device is stolen or lost, iHound can lock and erase personal information	App available for iPhone, Android, and iPad	https://www.ihoundsoftware.com/ihound/template/iPhone.vm