

Pointers For Parents

Enter Your Child's World Through Text Messaging

(NAPSA)—In a recent survey conducted by Mediathink, 63 percent of parents who use text messaging believe that it improves their communication with their children. In addition, 65 percent of parents who text message say they communicate more frequently with their children when they are away from home and 64 percent said that texting made their kids easier to reach.

Inspired by the survey results, Cingular has teamed with clinical psychologist and parenting expert Dr. Ruth Peters to develop "TXT2CONNECT—A Parent's Text Tutorial," which provides parents with tips on how to better communicate with their kids via text messaging and to understand popular text messaging lingo.

"Wireless phones and text messaging have become a central force in the way tweens and teens connect with one another," says Dr. Peters. "Kids want to communicate—but on their terms. Parents who are in vogue with the text messaging trend can stay in better touch with their kids and connect with them on their level and in a more meaningful way."

According to Dr. Peters, text messaging is a great option for parents and kids to stay in touch because:

- Parents get a quick answer to their questions. This is good for today's busy kids, who are often in between school and extra-curricular activities or hanging out with friends, and might not—or, in some cases, can't—take the time for a normal conversation.

- Kids are more apt to respond to text messages when



For adults looking to sharpen their parenting skills, it can help to relate to kids in a language they understand. And with many teens, that language is often expressed through text messages.

they are with their friends. It is more discreet and their answers don't have to be as detailed as in a conversation to be.

- You, or they, don't have to worry about tone of voice. Some kids tend to become defensive when they hear their parent's tone of voice, which often results in delayed return phone calls or avoidance. Texting helps to take tone of voice and misinterpretation out of the mix.

- Texting allows you to enter your child's world. By using text messaging, parents can communicate in the style their children are used to and become more hip in their children's eyes.

- Text messaging allows parents to compose and edit a message before pressing Send. If emotion surrounds an issue, Dr. Peters often counsels parents to write things out before actually saying them to their kids to help edit their thoughts. By making parents think about it more, text-

ing removes explosive emotions from potentially charged communications and situations.

- Texting vs. calling gives kids more space but allows parents to keep in touch as often as necessary. It's a good way to check on a child's whereabouts without nagging.

- Texting can strengthen parent-child bonds and let kids know that parents are thinking of them. Send them a text wishing them good luck before the school play audition, or let them know you are thinking of them if there is something they were concerned about, such as a difficult test or a grade.

Texting Trends

There has been significant growth in wireless messaging over the last year, spurred by increasing popularity of text messaging, photo messaging, video messaging, mobile instant messaging, mobile e-mail, downloadable games and ringtones. For example, in the third quarter of 2006 alone, Cingular delivered 10 billion text messages and 138 million multimedia messages.

To further help parents and their kids stay in touch, Cingular has introduced new messaging packages and MEdia Bundles that offer four ways to message—text, picture, video and Instant Messaging—for one price. Customers have the freedom to message any way to anyone without worrying what each message costs. Whether it is a text, picture, video or instant message, every message counts the same.

To learn more about MEdia Bundles or to download the "TXT2CONNECT" tutorial, visit www.cingular.com.