Many parents have no idea of the growing need for them to become “bilingual” when communicating with their tweens and teens. “Teen Slang,” the complex group of acronyms, innuendos, and code words is used freely among teenagers and their peers. However, what happens when parents have no clue what their teenager just said? Many slang terms are relatively harmless in and of themselves, but certain terms should instantly put up red flags for parents.

By learning our way around the tricky language of our teens we allow ourselves to not only build a stronger bond with them but also know when they’re in potential danger. Unfortunately, some slang is specifically designed to keep parents in the dark. In an interview with the popular morning news outlet, Today, some teens revealed important insider’s tips on what they’re actually saying.

**Fun and Harmless Teenage Slang**

**Teen slang** allows our kids to communicate in a fun, interesting way among themselves. It gives them a sense of independence and individuality. This type of communication is often second nature and many teens don’t even notice the differences in their conversations. Some of the more harmless and funny expressions include terms such as:
- Bruh–A casual nickname for “bro”
- Fam–Their closest friends
- GOAT–Acronym for “Greatest of all time!”
- TBH–Acronym for “To be honest”
- It’s lit–Short for “It’s cool or awesome!”
- I’m weak–Short for “That was funny!”
- Hundo P–Short for 100% sure or certain
- Gucci–Something is good or cool
- Squad–Term for their friend group

Teen Slang Terms to Keep an Eye on

While many expressions are innocent and even hilarious some should catch our eye as parents. They are not necessarily wrong, but they show that your teen may be involved in activities that require more maturity and advice from you as their parent. Many warning expressions involve dating or interest in new relationships. Some of these terms also reveal that your teen is experiencing some type of emotional turmoil or stress within their friendships or lifestyle. While you may not necessarily need to intervene, it’s always wise to at least be aware of what your teen is experiencing.

- Bae–Short for “baby.” It’s used as a term of endearment for a significant other such as a girlfriend or boyfriend. As an acronym, it stands for “Before Anyone Else.”
- Curve–To reject someone romantically
- Low Key–A warning that what they’re saying isn’t something they want everyone to know
- Salty–To be bitter about something or someone
- Skurt–To go away or leave
• Throw shade—To give someone a nasty look or say something unpleasant about them.

• Straight fire—Something is hot or trendy

• Sip tea—To mind your own business

### Warning Flags

As a parent, you are rightfully concerned or suspicious when your teenager becomes secretive. They may “talk” a lot, but at the same time avoid actually saying anything revealing. In dangerous or high-risk situations, slang can become a good hiding place for your teen. When terms such as these appear in hushed conversations with friends or on their phone, be alert to oncoming danger for your child. Some of these dangerous terms even appeared in a special news report for CNN.

• Thirsty—Being desperate for something

• Down in the DM—Short for plans in their social media or texts for an oncoming sexual hook-up

• Smash—To have casual sex

• Netflix ‘n Chill—To meet under the pretense of watching Netflix/TV together when actually planning to meet for “making out” or sex

• NIFOC—Acronym for “Naked in front of their computer”

• CU46—Acronym for “See you for sex”

• 9—Short for “A parent is watching!”

• GNOC—Acronym for “Get naked on camera!”

It’s rarely easily, but as parents, one of the most important ways to keep our teens safe is through consistent communication. Many horrible situations have evolved over the years in families where proper parent/teen communication was neglected. Although you may not always instantly understand everything your teen says, take the time to honestly ask them. Show your desire to understand and communicate. If all else fails, consult trusted sources or even slang dictionaries such as Urban Dictionary where many modern slang terms appear.
Sometimes there may be a reason where parents may want to limit or completely disable texting or calling. Apple does not provide a process to block either, although Netsanity does show parents how they can mirror iMessages in this blog. However, for parents who have Samsung smartphones and tablets, they have more options when using Netsanity.

The internet and its social media sub-world change on a near day-to-day basis. Trends pop up
and fall away before some parents even realize they existed. In a world where some of these trends can be risky or downright dangerous (like the recent and devastating Blue Whale Challenge), it’s essential for parents to stay aware of what their teenagers are doing online.

Trends that we think Parents need to be watching in 2018

Social Media

Though Facebook is the most popular social media platform overall, and the one you’re most likely to be using as an adult, Snapchat and Instagram are most popular among teenagers.

The unique issue with Snapchat is that photos are shared and disappear within a certain amount of time, which can make it challenging for a parent to keep track of what their kids are sharing. This can give teenagers a boost of confidence to post photos they might not otherwise, but the recipients only need to take a screenshot for that photo to live on and be shared on other platforms.

Here are some other social apps to keep an eye on:

Kik: This is a free messenger app that can be used innocently enough to send messages to friends. However, “…Kik has also gained quite the reputation for being a sexting platform, primarily among strangers looking for someone to hook up with.”

Confession Sites: These include PostSecret, Secret, and Whisper, where users anonymously post secrets and confessions, which, of course, may or may not be true. The potential problem
lies here: “Often PostSecrets are twisted or sexual in nature. While some secrets may lead to meaningful conversations about various life topics, most secrets are too complex to be read and discerned by minors.”

Badoo: Common Sense Media says this adults-only dating app doesn’t monitor the content; therefore, a lot of sexual material is present.

Other Dating and Hook-Up Apps: As with any online forum, it’s easy for teenagers to lie about their birthdays in order to bypass the need for parental approval or join an adults-only community. Take a look at this list of popular apps where the focus is on casual sexual encounters. These include Wild, Feeld, and Casualx.

Up and Coming

Entreprenuer mentions the growing popularity of digital hangouts via Houseparty: “It is primarily used by Gen Z as a way to hang out with friends digitally. The platform is so successful that Facebook is reportedly investigating ways to create a similar functionality within their platform.”

The article also says to watch for more live streaming and augmented reality, as well as a continuation of influencer marketing. This is something to pay attention to, since your teens might follow certain social media celebrities who promote a variety of products because of their agreements with the companies who make those products. They’re called “influencers” for a reason, so keep track of the ones your teens are following.

Internet Slang in 2018
Teenagers speak a different language online (some of which might spill over into the real world), and keeping up with those teen slang terms can give you insight into what your child is doing on the internet.

Some recent trends in teen slang:

- **TBH**: Generally used as a hashtag, TBH stands for “to be honest” and it is used when a teenager is looking for honest opinions, often about his or her appearance. Though it can result in some positive feedback, it can also invite cruel comments that zap your teen’s self-esteem.
- **Ship**: Short for “relationship.”
- **Boots**: This is a way to say “very” or “a lot.” It’s added after the verb or adjective.
- **Woke**: Highly aware of social issues.
- **FOMO**: “Fear of missing out.”
- **Savage**: The cool way to say “cool.”

Research from 2015 indicated the prevalence of “secret hashtags” used to connect teenagers who engage in self-harming or other self-destructive behavior, and this recent Parents article says the practice is alive and well. These hashtags include the following:

- **#sue**: suicide
- **#deb**: depression
- **#ana**: anorexia
- **#thinsp**: thinspiration (photos or messages that “inspire” an effort to become thin)
- **#svv**: self-harming behavior
“Fitspiration” emerged as a response to “thinspiration,” focusing on photos and messages that promoted fit, healthy lifestyles as opposed to a “thin at all costs” attitude. However, both can hurt your child’s self-esteem if she starts to feel as though she can’t measure up to those standards.

How to Stay On Top of the Trends & Terminology

Changes happen fast, so you have to be faster. Here are a few tips for staying aware of online trends and how your teen uses the internet.

- **Bookmark Urban Dictionary**: This handy site gives you the definitions for the slang terms you see on your child’s social profiles.
- **Set Google Alerts**: Google lets you set news alerts for a term of your choice; every day, you can receive an email with news items relating to that term. For example, you could set a “social media” alert and get a list of articles about the latest social media updates without doing weekly searches for what you might be missing about new apps and sites, trending hashtags or campaigns, and more.
- **Block Dangerous Sites**: At Netsanity, we offer trustworthy parental controls that you can depend on to work so that you can block questionable material like hook-up apps, pornographic websites, and any new social media apps you don’t want your child to use.
- **Limit Internet Usage**: The more time a child spends online, the more time he has to explore new online interests. Using parental controls to disable the internet during certain hours of the day allows (or forces) your child to spend an appropriate amount of time with his family, doing homework, or sleeping. It also means less online time with
which to get curious and start digging through the internet.

- **Communicate**: By keeping an open line of communication with your child, you encourage her to speak up about questionable material she sees or experiences online. It also opens the door for you to ask, “What’s that?” and get an honest answer when you hear mention of a new app or behavior.

This is a good place to start, but remember: the internet is changing even as you read this. Keep doing your homework to keep your child protected from emerging risks!

**TAKE OUR TEEN SLANG QUIZ!**