



Parents Prepare For Holiday Texting

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NewsWest 9



MIDLAND - You may know LOL means laugh out loud and TTYL is talk to you later. But did you know the number 8 in a text could mean oral sex or that DOC means drug of choice?

Now a days there are all types of texting lingo for parents to muddle through. With the holiday break coming up, local professionals say parents need to learn the code and help keep their kids out of trouble.

"Sadly I text very often," 17-year-old Marissa Barrera, said. "I have my phone in my hand almost all the time."

Barrera says she's seen the ugly side of texting.

From rumors starting to kids getting in trouble by sexting or sending inappropriate pictures.

"Rumors spread mainly through texting and it's not like you can erase what you said. Because once you say it you can't take it back," Barrera said.

That's why counselor Becky Cagle says parents have to be aware.

"If they're not paying attention (kids) can very quickly be drawn into inappropriate interactions through texting with other teens," Cagle said. "This can be sexting, this can be inappropriate pictures sent across the phone. I would suggest get familiar with lingo and make it clear it's your cell phone, you have the right to look at what's on the phone."

Even if you don't know 143 means I love you or 420 means marijuana. You can still break the code by asking your child or someone else to translate or even turning to Web sites like Netlingo.com or Truecare.net for help.

"They could block picture messaging and take phones a certain hour to make sure inappropriate language isn't being sent," Barrera said.

With the holiday break coming up, Cagle says parents should get ready for more texts.

"The more time they have to be on cell phones, the more time they have to get in a bind," she said.

If you find something you don't like, don't be afraid to take a stand.

"Do not hesitate to ground a child or take away a phone if they are being inappropriate," Cagle said. "It is your job as the adult in the family to get that phone out of their hands and remove inappropriate material."

It's also important for parents to stay abreast of what your child is texting because on top of getting in trouble at home or at school, some forms harassment and even sexting are against the law.

Go to: NetLingo.com