

Are parents using GPS keeping up with or stalking children?

Using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to keep up with children is not stalking. In fact, it's good parenting. This fact can be demonstrated by exploring the meanings of GPS and stalking and then examining their interrelationship.

GPS is a space-based navigation system that utilizes satellites to supply information as to the whereabouts of GPS receivers. In general, the satellites broadcast signals from space and receivers pick up the signals on earth. Receiving devices can be used by land by air and by sea to determine locations from point A to point B. Many humans adore the fact that cellphones are included among these easily operated pieces of equipment.

With cellphone popularity extending from the rich to the not so rich to children barely old enough to press phone numbers and to the elderly who aren't as technologically advanced as their grandchildren, the inclusion of GPS in phones presents opportunities for users to navigate their lives and determine the whereabouts of others better than ever before.

Moving on to the meaning of stalking – stalking involves behaviors, such as threatening and harassing, that prompts humans to fear for their safety. Although it stands obvious that threatening and harassing behaviors can promote fear, other fear provoking behaviors unique to individual stalkers may also be considered stalking. With this info in mind, one would have to conclude that keeping up with children via GPS devices is not stalking unless parents utilizing the devices are provoking fear in their children. Since any parent provoking said fear would likely do so with or without the assistance of GPS, it would be unreasonable to generalize that simply because a parent uses GPS he or she is stalking.

As stated above, the fact is, GPS is good for parents – good for kids – and good for society.

Since parents have a right to know the whereabouts of their children at any given time and GPS has provided parents a means for discerning children's whereabouts better than ever before, there's no point in parents simply ignoring the gift. Many parents drop their children off at places they expect them to remain for hours and wonder if the kids are honoring their parent's trust by staying where they are expected to stay. Many parents call homes of their children's friends to make certain their kids are where they said they were going to be after leaving home on their own. By utilizing a GPS locator, that provides accurate information twenty-four-seven no matter what the weather, parents can keep watchful eyes on their kids without leaving home, without making checkup phone calls, and without causing embarrassment by showing up at their teens' friends' doorsteps.

GPS is good for kids when parents include GPS' condensed map capabilities with their children's phones. The GPS maps can help kids figure out where they're going in unfamiliar neighborhoods and help them find their way if they get lost. Even without the addition of the user mapping capability, GPS allows 911 to locate any person having a GPS device in their custody.

Society as a whole may benefit from parental rights to keep track of their children. When parents use GPS technology to assure children are where they say are, they reduce the number of kids sneaking to Mary's party while her parents are out of town; or hanging out with the guys after curfew spray painting schools, street signs, and brick walls. Kids are less likely to leave the places their parents expect them to be when they know their parents may check on them.

No... Keeping up with children with the aid of GPS devices is certainly not stalking. What it is – is good parenting.