

Ten Tips for Internet Safety

1. Talk about potential dangers of the Internet with your child – ***talk to your child openly about anything they are concerned about.***
2. Locate computers in common areas in the home, not your child's bedroom.
3. Ask questions about your child's use of the Internet.
4. Insist on access to passwords for the sites your child uses.
5. Periodically search your child's name on the Internet.
6. Watch what is posted about your child's identity on community or game sites.
7. Install monitoring software on your family's computers that will help monitor your child's Internet activity.
8. Use an interactive educational safety resource, available for children ages 5 to 17 at www.netsmartz.org.
9. Remind your child NEVER to give out his/her name, address, school name, or other information that could be used for identification.
10. Encourage your children to talk to someone they know in the real world – not the virtual world – if they are concerned about something. Remind them NOT to start relationships with someone on-line.

Facts about Kids and the Internet

- Many adolescents develop relationships with adults on-line – fully aware that they are not talking to other teens.
- Teens intentionally seek-out adult relationships when they feel confused or curious about something. If they don't think they can talk to parents, they will find someone else and it will most likely be someone on the Internet who is willing to talk to them about hard topics.
- Predators seek out kids on-line who...
 1. Spend several hours a day on the Internet
 2. Use age identifiers in their screen names or e-mail addresses
 3. Post comments, pictures or blogs that indicate any curiosity in sex
 4. **Seem desperate for someone to talk to**

Messages Kids Need to Hear About the Internet

- **Don't forget that nothing you post is private.** Don't post anything you wouldn't want the world to know. Avoid posting anything that would make it easy for a stranger to find you, such as where you hang out every day after school.
- **People aren't always who they say they are. Be careful about adding strangers to your friends list.** It's fun to connect with new friends from all over the world, but avoid meeting people in person whom you do not fully know. If you must meet someone, do it in a public place and bring a friend or trusted adult.
- **Harassment, hate speech and inappropriate content should be reported.** If you feel someone's behavior is inappropriate, react. Talk with a trusted adult, or report it to the appropriate authorities.
- **Don't post anything that would embarrass you later.** Think twice before posting a photo or info you wouldn't want your parents, friends or boss to see!
- **Don't mislead people into thinking that you're older or younger.** If you lie about your age, MySpace/Facebook will delete your profile.
- **If you need to talk to someone, or have questions about a difficult topic, seek out an adult you already know – even if its not your mom or dad.** The Internet is not a safe place to discuss difficult topics such as sex or relationships.

Additional Resources

For more information about Internet Safety or protecting children, please visit www.dcac.org and look under “Education”

- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.netsmartz.org
www.netsmartz411.org
- Get Net Wise
www.getnetwise.com
- www.webwisekids.org
- www.safekids.com
- www.stopcyberbullying.org
- Child Help USA
www.childhelp.org