

It's your turn to
make a difference.

Keeping Kids Safe Online *pg. 1*

The internet is valuable for information, entertainment and communication. While much of the information found online is accurate and helpful, some information may be misleading, offensive or even dangerous. Education and parent involvement allow kids to benefit from technology while protecting them from danger. Here are some ideas you can use to help your child stay safe online, followed by a few web sites you can visit for more ideas and information.

Set Ground Rules

Agree on what is reasonable for each child, from the amount of time they can spend online each week, to which sites they can visit without permission. If kids are searching for information, it is a good idea to assist them during the search process and then let them navigate the sites once you are sure they are safe.

Explain Safety Rules

When children know what you expect of them and have clear, consistent consequences for not following rules, they are more likely to follow rules and avoid dangerous situations.

Personal Information

Let your children know that it is dangerous to reveal any personal information about themselves to someone they meet online. This includes their names, where they live, their ages, the school they attend or where their parents work. Tell them to let you know if someone is asking for this information while they are online. Be sure to praise them when they follow through with this rule. Also, tell your children it is never a good idea to share user names, logins or passwords with friends or people they chat with online. This is personal information and should not be shared.

Pictures

Do not allow your children to send any pictures of themselves to someone online without your permission.

Meeting in Real Life

Tell your children never to get together with someone they meet online without your permission. If your children make a friend online they wish to meet in person, go with them to a public place to meet the person.

Cyber Bullying

Have your child agree never to post anything that is mean toward another person online. If someone sends your children a nasty message, tell them to let you know so that you can report it to the websites.

Keep the Computer in a Common Room

When everyone in the house can see the screen, there is a better chance kids will follow the rules of online safety. Children who have computers with Internet access in their bedrooms are more likely to come across inappropriate content online.

For More Information

www.preventchildabusewv.org

*Information provided by Prevent Child
Abuse Florida*



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Supervise

Just as we want to know where our children are physically, who they are with and what they are doing, we need to know where they are going on the Internet and whom they are meeting there. When kids are first learning about the Internet, use the Internet with them.

Respectfully Monitor Online Activity

Online activities are unrestricted and open for your review. Checking up on children online for their safety is very different from looking through their rooms for their private diaries. What is available about your children online could place them at risk, while personal thoughts they journal and keep to themselves allow for healthy self-expression and reflection.

Online Profiles

If you want to see if your children have online profiles, such as MySpace or Facebook, you can search the Internet by inserting your children's names, or their friend's names, into a search engine like Google. If your children have online profiles, let them know you need to see them, perhaps tomorrow. Give them a chance to look at their profiles and think about the content.

Website History

Check your computer's history. This will tell you what websites were viewed recently. However, many children and adolescents know how to clear a browser history or delete records of certain web sites. Fewer children will clear cookie files. If the history is consistently empty, your computer may be set to automatically delete the history each time you exit out of the Internet. This is a feature that you can easily disable. For instructions on how to check history visit: www.webwisekids.org/how-to-check-your-computer-history.pdf

Filtering and Monitoring Software

Check with your Internet service provider to see what free filtering and monitoring options are available. Software can track how much time kids spend online, allow them to access the Internet during only certain times of day when you know you will be home, and filter content so children aren't accidentally exposed to inappropriate content while doing a search on the Internet. Software programs can be a big help, but there is no substitute for adult supervision.

Talk to Your Children

Music, television, magazines, and the Internet are all sending messages to your children. Balance these messages with what YOU want them to know about different issues. If your children tell you about something they found online that is a concern, DO NOT OVERREACT. Talk to your child about what you know and believe about the issue. Remember to praise your child for coming to you with this information! By establishing clear expectations with your children, and supervising and monitoring their online activity, you are being a responsible parent.

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