

Tips for Internet Safety

When the children are out of school your home computer will probably be used more often. Take a few minutes to go through your Internet rules with your children and remind them the computer is not a toy.

It is important for parents to consider that when kids go on-line, they are anonymously inviting all spectrums of the 'information highway' into the home. As an avenue for research, entertainment, and learning, parents must also realize that the Internet carries with it pedophiles and masters of coercion. Since the birth of the world wide web, many child predators have been successfully using this hi-tech tool to lure and exploit children in some way, shape, or form, i.e. child pornography, man/boy-love groups, and web sites.

Most often, child predators win over their victims in "kiddie chat rooms" by posing as children themselves. By way of manipulation, temptation, and befriending a child, child predators have adopted the capacity to lure children into activities that are far beyond a child's comprehension.

Parents, to minimize your child's risks while surfing the World Wide Web, here are some tips to follow:

1. Establish rules for Internet use (when your kids can go online, for how long, what activities they can pursue) – and post the rules next to the computer.
2. Keep the computer in a common room, like a family room or den.
3. Remind them never to give out personal information online, especially in "chat rooms", including their name, address, city, school, sports teams, etc. Don't send photographs to "strangers" online.
4. Treat everyone online as if they are strangers. Trust your instincts, and don't answer personal questions. Remember people online may not be who they say they are.
5. Never agree to meet anyone from the Internet in person without parental permission – and never meet them alone.
6. Not everything you read or hear on the Internet is true – AND REMEMBER the "off" button is always there. You don't have to stay online.
7. "Blocking" software is available to control your children's Internet access. Ask your software retailer, or check on the Internet.