

Resources for Parents and Children

Here are some useful sites to learn more about Internet safety:

- www.wiredkids.org
- www.isafe.org
- www.getnetwise.org
- www.netsmartz.org
- www.cyberangels.org
- www.fbi.gov/fbikids.htm

For specific Internet safety concerns, contact the Pennsylvania Attorney General:

www.AttorneyGeneral.gov

717-787-3391



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INTERNET SAFETY



A GUIDE FOR
STAYING SAFE
ONLINE

Internet Safety Tips For Parents

There is no question that the World Wide Web has advanced the sharing of information. The Internet is a wonderful resource that exposes children and adults to new ideas, places and people. The Internet can be fun and informative, but it also holds access to dangerous Web sites and information.

With the prevalence of computers in today's society, it is imperative that we protect our children when they're online. Advances have been made in blocking unsafe Web sites, but to ensure the safety of our children when they are online, parents need to first be aware of the dangers and warning signs.

Here are some suggested safety tips that can protect children from Internet-related danger:

- Move the computer to a populated area of the home, such as the family room, so parents can monitor their child's activities.
- If your child minimizes the screen being viewed when a parent walks by the computer, treat it as a "red flag." Learn what sites the child has been visiting.
- Talk to your child to learn what he/she uses the computer for. Be especially aware of popular kid sites, such as xanga.com and myspace.com, where children often upload photos and personal information. They can unknowingly supply information to child predators.
- Use Internet Service Provider (ISP) filters to restrict your child's access to certain areas/items on the Web. Some ISPs can even be set up so that when a child visits a Web page, an email is sent to the parent's email address notifying the parent of your child's "journey" through cyber space.
- Teach your children the responsible use of the resources online. There is much more to the online experience than chat rooms.

- Take the time to talk with your child to learn what they are doing. If you have any concerns, contact your local police department, or the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office.

Dangers Children Face on the Internet

Please note that not all of the information your child finds on the Internet is bad. However, making the wrong choices online can have serious consequences. Your child may not even be aware that they are doing something wrong until it's too late. That is why as a parent it's your responsibility to prepare them for what they may encounter online so that they know how to properly and safely react.

The first important step in practicing safe Internet usage is knowing what the dangers are that web users face online. The six main types of risks online include:

- Sites that allow the accessing of inappropriate information, including pornography, hate, intolerance, bigotry, gore, violence, hoaxes, and misinformation and hype.
- Sites that provide access to dangerous products and hazardous information, such as bomb-building recipes, the selling of guns, alcohol, poisons, tobacco products, and drugs, as well as online gambling.
- Sites that allowing the posting of personal information, like blog sites. If not monitored, this can lead to the child being stalked or harassed by others who may pose to be a friend or who may be rude, insulting and make threats. Additionally, the information may be accessed to send viruses or hack into computers.
- Sites that provide forms that solicit personal information to enter contests online and, as a result, information providers are targeted by irresponsible solicitors using unfair marketing techniques.

- Sites, if not legitimate, that allow for the purchasing of products online run the risk of disclosing important financial information to others, such as credit card numbers, pin numbers and passwords.

- Dishonest "cyber-predators" may pose as adolescents in chat rooms or on networking sites. Their goal is to lure an unknowing child into a face-to-face meeting.

Talking to Your Child About the Internet

While children need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement. Learning to make good choices on the Internet can serve young people well by helping them to think critically about the choices they will face

If your child has been exposed to trouble on the Internet, the best way to help your child is to:

- Remain calm when learning of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Work with your child so that you can both learn from what happened and decide how to keep it from happening again.
- Be understanding and supportive of your child if they tell you about an uncomfortable online encounter. It is important to protect your child, not blame them or punish them.

