



Most children who use the Internet have positive experiences, but children can be vulnerable targets for exploitation, crime and harassment.

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Child Abuse Prevention Fund
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Internet safety

Teach your child Internet safety

The Internet can be an excellent tool for children to communicate with friends, get homework assistance and learn new things. It is the largest collection of information in the world, and children can access virtually anything on the Internet.

Most children who use the Internet have positive experiences, but children can be vulnerable targets for exploitation, crime and harassment.

Sexual predators or ill-intentioned strangers may use the Internet to contact children through chat

rooms, instant messaging and e-mail. In addition, children can be exposed to inappropriate materials on the Internet. Preteens and teens are especially at risk because they often use the Internet unsupervised and spend a lot of time using instant messaging, e-mail and Internet chat rooms.

Although it is impossible to avoid all inappropriate material on the Internet, parents can teach their children basic safety information and monitor Internet use.

What parents can do

- Keep the computer in a common area of the house, such as the living room, where you can easily monitor your child's Internet activities.
- Set reasonable rules for Internet use and post the rules near the computer.
- Make sure your child understands that he or she should never give anyone personal information or send digital photos. Your child's e-mail address and screen name should never reveal any information, such as age, last name and city you reside in. Remember that people online can misrepresent themselves and may not be who they seem.
- If you are not familiar with computers, take a basic class and spend time learning about the Internet with your child.
- Find out what types of parental controls are available from your Internet provider, maintain access to your child's on-line account and randomly check his or her e-mail.
- Talk to other parents about your child's Internet use when they are at their friends' homes and find out what type of computer safety and parental control programs are used.
- Report any disturbing incidents to your local law enforcement, Internet service provider or visit cybertipline.com.
- NetSmartz® is an interactive, educational resource for parents and children ages 5-17. The Web site, www.netsmartz.org, uses age-appropriate activities to teach children how to stay safe on the Internet.