



Keeping Your Child Safe Online

Your involvement in your children's online life is always the best assurance you have of your children's safety. The most reliable strategy is to set aside a time each day or week when you do online activities together. Learn with your children the fun things to do on-line as well as about what they should stay away from. This way you'll be their partner in the experience.



The Online World Mirrors The Real One: it includes the good, the bad, and the ugly. And, just like the real world, different parents have different standards for what they want their children to experience and need to make decisions about how to steer their children to safe, productive, and legal time online. Parents are becoming more aware that certain information online is not appropriate for children, or is appropriate only for certain ages. Most parents have strong feelings about what their children should be exposed to and are concerned about how easy it is to get to information online.

Tools & Resource Are Available There are several ways for parents to limit where their children can go online, and limit who can contact their children online. These include stand-alone filtering software, similar to V-chip technology for television; commercial online service blocking features offered by your Internet service provider; as well as Web-based PICS filtering which allows parents to block access to certain sites based on web site rating systems. These filtering technologies are just tools and are not meant to be substitutes for parental guidance.

Advertisers Have An Interest In Kids Advertising directed at specific online users fill the internet. Children are a special target. Advertisers are using online interaction as a way to collect children's names, addresses, and marketing information. This adds to the importance for parents to protect their children's privacy on-line.

Protecting Children On-Line Although rare, there have been incidents where individuals have used the internet to contact children and young people with the intent of harming them. The common sense rules about caution with strangers apply just as strongly in cyberspace as in playgrounds or parks. If you or your children are harassed or threatened online, contact your internet service provider and the police immediately.



Adapted from The Parent's Guide to the Information Superhighway, a publication of the Children's Partnership, National PTA and National Urban League. Available on-line at: www.childrenspartnership.org. Additional information is available from the Media Awareness Network on-line at: <http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/>

