Parenting & Technology: Realities, Issues and Solutions

ChildrenOnline
Devoted to the safety of children and teens online
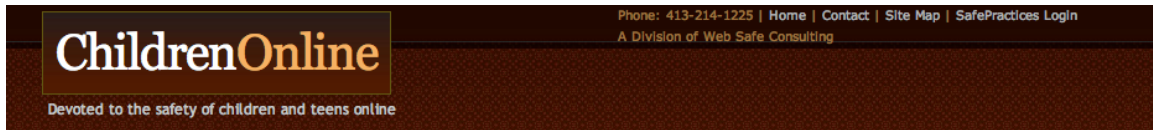
Tips and Strategies for Parents

- Have frequent conversations with your child about online safety and decision making online
- Know the passwords for all your child's accounts including email, instant messaging, Facebook and gaming sites
- For children under 11, read and censor emails, consider not allowing instant messaging or social networking sites and carefully monitor use of YouTube
- Consider purchasing parental control software for your child's computer. See www.childrenonline.org for recommendations
- Discuss the responsibilities of communication and remind children that it is never ok to bully or be bullied online
- Avoid social networking sites for children under age 15. If your child does have an account, consider making sure you have their password and checking their account regularly.
- Limit the list of "buddies" or "friends" on instant messaging and social networking sites. Tell your child they should know their "friends" in person in order to "friend" them online
- Consider not allowing texting until high school. Check carriers for parental controls for texting on smart phones.
- Separate homework from Internet time at night. Allow your child a half hour of Internet browsing for research purposes before they begin homework time.
- Research and check out gaming sites and video games before letting your child under age 15 use them. They are often filled with violent and/or sexual images. (see www.commonsensemedia.org) for extensive gaming information.
- Discourage online chatting along with games such as Call of Duty or Halo. (Games rated M for Mature) Chatting often becomes harassing, mean or vulgar.
- Encourage children to create strong passwords using numbers, letters, and characters such as the = sign. Good passwords should be at least 8 characters in length.
- Consider taking gaming or Internet devices (Ipod Touch, DS, Iphone, PSP, etc) at night or only allow them in public spaces.

- Keep in mind that your best tool is frequent conversations and clear rules in your home.

10 Internet Skills Our Kids Should Learn:
1. Resist the urge to click
2. Take responsibility for individual postings and behavior
3. Stop and think before you reply; If angry or upset DON'T REPLY
4. Mouse-over and look where a link points to before clicking
5. Be skeptical online, just because it came from a friend's account, doesn't mean he/she sent it
6. Never take a quiz or survey or respond to ads
7. Clicking the "Like" button has risks and reduces privacy
8. If it seems to good to be true, it is
9. Check your accounts and privacy settings once a month
10. Carefully review the apps using your account – What are you giving up?

10 Internet Rules for Middle/High School That Parents Should Consider:

1. Parents have teen's password to all online accounts, especially social networking sites until age 16
2. Parents monitor/filter or key-log child's web use
3. Set limits/boundaries to texting and chatting
4. Set limits on technology time and activities
5. No friending strangers
6. Guard your privacy and reputation online
7. Be kind and respectful online, and report problems and harassment to parents
8. Parent's passwords should not be known by teens
9. Parents take cell phones, game controllers, or other devices at night
10. Parents turn off Internet access during bedtime

Taking Action: What to tell kids & what to do as a parent

- Don't "friend" bullies
- Think carefully before posting jokes or images that could embarrass someone else
- Report threats, cruelty and meanness
- Offer support to friends being harassed/bullied
- Massachusetts laws offer protection
- Take your online reputation seriously
- Speak out against cyberbulling and cruelty
- Keep lines of communication open and safe

- Listen with compassion first, work on strategies second
- Work with the school
- Encourage your kids to report bullying and not to be a by-stander
- Set limits on technology use & friending behavior
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Online Resources:

Check out www.childrenonline,org/resources for extensive online resources in all areas of technology and parenting.

PEW Internet Study: www.pewresearch.org/internetandtechnology

Common Sense Media: Excellent resource for parents
www.commonsensemedia.org

Connect Safely: Resource on electronic communication
www.connectsafely.org

Chat Safely: Resource for safe chat among children
www.chatsafely.org

Net Family News: Advice for parents on cyber life/bullying
www.netfamilynews.org