

Internet Safety for Children

Children today are exposed to not only the traditional risks of childhood play such as broken bones, and scraped knees but also to a whole world of danger that is poorly understood by many parents and grandparents...the Internet.

“Cyberspace” is full of dangers and possibilities that adults must be aware of, **teach** their children about, **control** their child’s access to, and **monitor** their access to computers. Sexual predators prowl the online world in many ways looking for children to exploit, whether online or by meeting them in person.

What are the risks?

- Arranging to meet someone in person whom they met online
- Disclosing personal information to strangers
- Posting pictures or videos of themselves
- Viewing inappropriate material
- Getting into online “fights” and bullying
- Playing age inappropriate games
- Download viruses
- Displaying their image via web cam
- Participating on social networking sites
- Posting information that endangers others



Discuss the following with your children:

- Never disclose personal information online, including their name, address, phone number, or school
- Never arrange to meet someone in person whom they met online
- People are not always who they say they are and some of them are bad people who want to hurt children
- Never send pictures of themselves, family members, or their homes
- Do not post a picture online that they would not want the whole world to see
- Use of a web cam is to communicate only with close friends and family
- Do not download or open messages from an unknown e-mail address
- Inform their parents if they experience something bad online

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What else can parents do?

- Establish boundaries regarding the type of web sites and activities are off limits
- Create the expectation that a child's online activity will be controlled and regularly monitored
- Discuss the idea that inappropriate activity will result in the loss of privileges
- Teach children that friendships should be developed in person, not online
- Place the computer in an open area such as the kitchen or family room, rather than in the child's bedroom
- Sit with the child when they start using the computer to see what web sites they visit and discuss online safety with them
- Install filtering software to restrict access to certain types of sites
- Read your child's e-mail messages and chat histories to determine the nature of their conversations
- Limit the amount of time your children spend online and specify the time of day after which online activity is prohibited
- Install monitoring software to track which websites your children are visiting
- Learn your child's online screen name and password to ensure they are not personally identifying themselves
- Installing anti-virus software to protect against viruses
- Use filtering options in search engines like Google and Yahoo
- Talk to your children about privacy and ensure they understand that there is no privacy online. Inform them that information, pictures, and conversations posted online can be distributed by anyone, and they can never be permanently deleted
- Check your child's page on social network sites like Facebook and MySpace



**Use of a computer by a child is a privilege that must come with rules, limitations, and consequences.
Please visit www.safecanada.ca
for more information regarding Internet safety.**