

This project was supported by Grant No. 2005-MC-CX-K024 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®, 1-800-THE-LOST®, and CyberTipline® are registered service marks of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Printed on recycled paper.

Ad Council

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
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ANSWERS LOL laughing out loud BRB, be right back MUSH, miss you so much A/S/L age, sex, location BF, boyfriend TAW, teachers are watching SN, screenname? POS, parent over shoulder WTGP, want to go private? LMIRL, let's meet in real life

The Internet is an invaluable tool, but there are serious dangers that need to be discussed.

Online sexual predators: They can be anyone. The Internet allows people to remain anonymous and does not prevent adults from lying about their age or intentions.

Online sexual solicitation: Unprovoked, uninvited, or unwanted requests to engage in sexual activities, engage in sexually explicit conversations, or give personal sexual information.

It's important to educate your children and teach them how to better protect themselves. The best way to help protect your children is by being involved and talking to them. Feel free to use the acronym quiz on the front as a starting point.

Protect Your Child's Online Life

- Prepare your children for the online world just as you would for the real world.
 - Establish guidelines and rules.
 - Know who communicates with your children.
- Learn about the Internet.
 - Familiarize yourself with the programs your children are using.
 - Consider using Internet filters or blocks.
- Place the family's computer in a common room, where supervision and guidelines are more easily observed and met.
- Talk about the benefits and dangers on the Internet and help your children make smart decisions while online. This is just as important as limiting your children's computer time when it comes to safeguarding them while online.
- Explain to your children instant messaging (IM) is only for chatting with school and family friends they know by face and are approved by you. And go over your children's IM "chat list" with them. Make sure they are able to put a face to every screenname on the list.

When communicating online

- Tell your children not to write anything they wouldn't say in public
- Reinforce people are not always who they say they are when communicating online
- Make sure your children know how dangerous it is to give out personal information such as their name, mailing address, or E-mail address
- Stress the fact it is not safe to get together with someone they first "meet" online

How to Notice and Address a Problem

- Be sensitive to any changes in your child's behavior or attitude
- Be on the lookout for unknown telephone numbers on your bill or your child's cellular telephone bill and unexplained gifts your child has received
- Show concern, listen compassionately, and remain calm if your children share any distressing incidents they have encountered while online
- Don't judge your children or threaten to remove their Internet privileges
- Use the incident to discuss safety rules and reinforce the fact people are not always who they seem to be online

HELP DELETE ONLINE PREDATORS

Report any disturbing incidents by giving the screenname or E-mail address and any other information known about the online sexual perpetrator to your Internet service provider, local law enforcement, and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's www.cybertipline.com.

The majority of children who use the Internet do not get into serious trouble. The Internet is a wonderful tool, but like anything else you need to be careful when using it.

To learn more about Internet guidelines please visit www.cybertipline.com and www.NetSmartz.org or call 1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678).