

Children Online: Realities, Issues and Solutions

ChildrenOnline

Devoted to the safety of children and teens online

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A Division of Web Safe Consulting

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 purchases 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 sexual images. (see www.common sense media.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.