

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS
INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR AND CHILDREN AND PARENTS

The Internet offers incredible benefits to families, and people are becoming more connected at a younger age every day, Know where your child is going online, just as you would make sure you knew where your child is going to be after school

- The computer should be in an open area, not in a child's room. You don't want to spy on your kids or peer over their shoulder, but you want them to know you're in the room.
- Assure your children that you know you can count on them to use the Internet responsibly. Kids need to feel they can be trusted.
- Set clear expectations for your child, based on age and maturity. Does your child have a list of websites she needs to stick with when doing her research? Is she allowed to use a search engine to find appropriate sites? Is your child allowed to visit social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace? What sites is she allowed to visit just for fun? Write down the rules and place them next to the computer. Your child's teacher should be able to advise you on which sites are appropriate for schoolwork and educational fun.
- Use filtering software designed to help parents limit the websites children can access. Some programs have monitoring features that can tell you sites your child visits and can even send you a message letting you know your child is online. Remember that the programs are never a substitute for your supervision and communication.
- Tell your child if you are using software to track his online activity. Remind him that you're not spying but keeping him safe and protecting him is your job as a parent.
- Stay involved with your child's school by staying in close contact with your child's teachers and counselors. If trouble is brewing among students online, it probably started at school. Knowing what's going on at school increases chances you'll hear about what's happening online.
- Tell your child that people who introduce themselves on the Internet are often not who they say they are. Show your child how easy it is to assume another identity online. Don't assume your child knows everything about the Internet. Kids are naturally trusting.
- Instruct your child to never give out personal information online, including her full name, gender, age, school, address, or teams. Teach your child to be generic and anonymous on the Internet.

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS (cont.)

- Make sure kids know never to send a photo to anyone they meet online or agree to meet face-to-face with them. Let them know the risks.
- Teach kids to tell you if anyone online asks to meet them or makes them feel uncomfortable in any way.
- When your child goes to other houses, make sure you speak with people there about their rules for letting their children use the Internet. Let them know your rules for your child.
- Use the Internet with your kids and teach them how to use the Internet wisely. From the moment youth start using technology, parents should take an active role in communicating and keeping current on what their child is doing

Cyberbullying

- A growing concern with kids and the Internet is online bullying. Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience. Some youth who cyberbully:
 - Pretend they are other people online to trick others
 - Spread lies and rumors about victims
 - Trick people into revealing personal information
 - Send or forward mean text messages
 - Post pictures of victims without their consent.
- Ask your child specific questions about whether he is being bullied at school or online. Talk about your experiences with bullying, letting him know you know it goes on. Assure him you won't try to fix the problem, if it is happening, without talking to him first.
- Parents may worry about their child being bullied, but don't consider their child could be a bully. Talk to your child about why it's never okay to bully, online or in person.