



INTERNET SAFETY

ASK QUESTIONS

The best way to know what your child is doing online is to ask. Whether you ask other parents, an Internet-savvy friend, or your child about how they use the Internet asking the right questions will help you understand what your child is doing online so you can make sure they are making safe online choices.

Questions to ask your child:

- What sites do you visit?
- What do you do on those sites?
- Why do you go to that site?
- How much time do you spend on the site?
- Did you have to register?
- What information did they ask for?
- What information did you give?

[PRINT INTERNET AGREEMENT](#)

[PRINT SIX SAFETY TIPS](#)

Spend time surfing the Web with your child. This is a great way to learn about what types of interactions your child is having online, and with whom.

COMMUNICATE

Once you have an idea of how your child uses the Internet and what is available to them, you can establish online guidelines and rules. Whether it's setting guidelines about which sites to visit or what's okay to do online, it is essential to clearly communicate the rules to your child.

Speak often to your child about potential risks and what to do in various situations. Encourage your child to ask questions about situations they run into. Being aware of the risks your child faces, and communicating frequently with your child about these risks, will help develop their judgment and responsibility about Internet usage.

SAFETY RULES

While the Internet offers amazing opportunities for entertainment, education, connectivity, and more, anyone who goes online should understand basic Online Safety. Teaching these basics to your children is essential.

1. When asked by friends or strangers, online or offline, never share Account IDs and Passwords.
2. Don't reveal any personal identity information in your Screen Names, such as your birthday, hobbies, hometown or school.
3. In any information exchange, like e-mail or chat, never give any personal information about yourself or someone else.
4. Don't share photos of yourself, your family, or your home with people you meet online.
5. Never open e-mails that come from unknown sources DELETE them.
6. If you receive mean or threatening comments online, don't respond. Log off and report the activity to your parents.
7. Nothing you write on the Web is completely private. Be careful what you write and to whom.
8. Never make plans to meet an online "friend" in person.
9. WHEN IN DOUBT: Always ask your parents for help. If you're not sure, log off.

CYBER BULLIES

Just as a child may encounter bullying or aggressive behavior from other students in school, they may be subject to bullying online. So-called "cyber bullies" may send harmful and cruel words or images through the Internet or an electronic device such as a cell phone, in order to harass, embarrass, humiliate, and threaten their target. Other forms of bullying include password hacking, identity theft and blackmail. Many kids may be equally likely to become bullies or victims. While some are anonymous, cyber bullies are often kids who are known by a child from their school, camp, community group, or neighborhood.

It is important to talk openly with children about how to handle cyber bullying issues. If your child encounters a form of cyber bullying, remember that bullies thrive on the reactions of their targets. Children should avoid escalating the situation by refraining from responding to the bully. Parents should contact your local authorities if the problem persists. Be sure to save all messages, including dates and time.

RESOURCES

Children as young as two are interacting with the Internet from their parents' laps. As they get older, however, they may begin to venture online by themselves, with as much support and guidance as you can provide. It is up to parents to decide which controls to put in place and when to ease up as children grow and mature in their decision-making. Here are some resources that you can use to shape your child's Internet usage:

- Many sites have guides for parents. Take a look to make sure that you understand how the sites your child visits approach safety.
- Some sites offer parental controls. Take advantage of parental controls to determine what your child has access to.
- Most browsers have settings that can block Web sites or entire domains. Use these controls to pre-select Web sites children can or cannot visit.
- Research software available that can monitor children's Internet use.
- Review the privacy policies of your child's favorite sites to be aware of what kind of information is being collected about your child, and how it is being used.



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