Become Knowledgeable:

One of the challenges of trying to protect our children is the child probably knows more about computers than you do. Don't let this stop you from doing what you can. You need to become more knowledgeable about the issues of the internet and how to protect your children. There are three websites that can help. They are, www.netsmartz.org, www.I-Safe.org, and www.ncmec.org. These sites all have good information on internet safety. Netsmartz even has videos for you and your children to watch. There is way too much information on internet safety for me to put it all in an article. So, check out these websites.

Everyone wants to protect their children from danger. Because the dangers facing our children have changed, we need to understand them and do what we can to protect our children.

In Summary, here are the main points on internet safety:

- Monitor your child's internet activities and move the computer to a public area
- Talk to your child about internet safety and establish rules
- Check into software utilities that can provide additional safety
- Become knowledgeable
- Report any inappropriate activities

DO you know LINGO?

POS	Parent Over Shoulder
PAW	Parents Are Watching
P911	Parents In Room (alert)
AITR	Adult In The Room
TPTB	The Powers That Be
KPC	Keeping Parents Clueless
A/S/L	Age/Sex/Location
MorF	Male or Female
BF or GF	Boyfriend or Girlfriend
BFF	Best Friends Forever
BM&Y	Between Me And You

LUV U	Love You
LYSO	Love You So Much
TOY	Thinking Of You
H&K	Hugs And Kisses
QT	Cutie
ADDY	Address
A3	Anytime, Anywhere, Anyplace
WH5	Who, What, When, Where, Why?
F2F	Face to Face
IRL	In Real Life
WK	Week
WKD	Weekend
2NITE	Tonight
OMW	On My Way
WRUD	What Are You Doing
RUOK	Are You Okay?
PTB	Please Text Back
DIKU	Do I Know You?
TMI	Too Much Information
411	Information
MYOB	Mind Your Own Business
NOYB	None Of Your Business
WAJ	What A Jerk
2G2BT	Too Good To Be True
IOMH	In Over My Head
BRD	Bored
IDK	I Don't Know
DKDC	Don't Know, Don't Care
IMO	In My Opinion
AFAIK	As Far As I Know
NM	Never Mind
BTW	By The Way
FYI	For Your Information
FWIW	For What It's Worth
BRB	Be Right Back
AFK	Away From Keyboard
LOL	Laughing Out Loud
ROTFL	Rolling On The Floor Laughing
K	Okay
JK	Just Kidding
SLAP	Sounds Like A Plan
PLZ	Please
TY or THX	Thank You; Thanks
YW	You're Welcome
NP	No Problem
G2G	Got TO Go
BFN	Bye For Now
TTFN	Ta Ta For Now
L8R	Later
CYA	See You (later)
CYT	See You Tomorrow

For additional examples of internet and text messaging lingo search the web for the phrase "texting lingo."

What Every Parent Needs to Know

Internet Safety

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Internet Safety Tips:

We've all told our children not to talk with strangers. So why is it we let them "Chat" with strangers on the internet? There is a growing problem with online predators, who are trying to talk with our children every day. Even with the success of the Dateline NBC's "To Catch a Predator" show there are still more predators waiting in line to get a chance to talk with a youngster and arrange a meeting. It is our jobs as parents to protect our children from these individuals. This article will provide a basic understanding of the statistics, rules, and tools as it pertains to internet safety.

Statistics:

70% of children on the internet have received a message from someone they didn't know.

14% of the children interviewed stated they had met someone in person who they met online.

40% of those receiving messages from someone they don't know; replied and chatted with them.

1/3 of children on the internet have seen unwanted sexual material.

1 out of every 7 child has received a sexual solicitation.

33% of those interviewed stated their parents know little or nothing about what they do on the internet (48% of 16-17 year-olds)

These statistics should wake you up. There are predators on the internet looking for victims. We need to educate our children and ourselves. We need to talk with our children and establish rules for using the internet. We also need to look into technology that can help us provide a safe environment. Probably the best advice I can give is to monitor your children's internet activities. This is best accomplished by placing the computer in a common area. Placing the computer anywhere else, especially a bedroom will only make your child more vulnerable.

Rules:

You need to sit down with your children and talk with them about the rules for using the computer and going on the internet. It is important that they know what they can and cannot do. They need to know there are predators out there. One good rule is; "Chat with people you know. NO ONE ELSE!". Although they love to chat with friends, it is imperative that parents establish these boundaries.

Other possible rules could be:

No adding software to the computer without asking.

You can only be on the computer for 1 hour a day.

Don't visit any websites without checking with parent.

Most importantly, they need to know that if something happens on the computer that is inappropriate, confusing, or threatening, they are to tell you. I believe this area is very under reported. If someone sends one message, that's one thing. But if someone is continually sending inappropriate messages it needs to be looked into.

Tools:

Firewall software. There are many software companies that provide firewall software that can limit the activities in and out of your computer. This software not only can help protect your children from unwanted material being displayed on the computer, but can help provide security to protect your computer from malicious software. Make sure you have software that blocks "Popups".

Monitoring software. There are some software packages that allow you to discreetly install the product which will log all in/out bound instant messages and chat room conversations. This allows you to monitor your children's conversations. This will also give law enforcement much needed evidence.

Monitor:

Monitor your children's activities. Know what they are doing, who they are talking with, and what information they are putting on the internet. Make sure you review the Internet History on a regular basis. This log will tell you what internet sites are being visited. You normally can find this log in C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\local Settings\History. If you can not find the history file, contact someone who is knowledgeable about computers. This log can be emptied, so make sure your child is not clearing it out. Tell them you want to review their internet activities. If your child has a MYSPACE account, have them give you the password so you can review their webpage. Make sure they are not putting information or pictures on the internet (for everyone to see) that you don't want out there.