

E-Safety



Teaching your child to be safe online

Some tips to be safe:

- **Talk to your children.** Much like anything else, it's important that your child knows what your expectations are, understands the basics of Internet safety, and feels comfortable talking to you about problems and concerns.
- **Set guidelines.** Create a set of guidelines about when and how long your children can use the computer. Be clear about what they can and cannot do online. If they need to complete chores or homework first, outline that as well. Discuss things like instant messaging, chat rooms, blogs, and social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook), virtual worlds (Club Penguin, RuneScape, Gaia, Webkinz).
- **Follow through.** It is important to stick with your rules. It's true that kids need boundaries and, as much as they fight you on it, count on you to set them. Set a timer for online activity. Use monitoring software that tracks where they are going and what they are doing.
- **Pay attention.** It's not enough for your computer to be in a central location in your home if you're not paying attention to what your kids are doing. Make a habit of pulling up a chair and talking to your child about what they're doing. If you expect to know who your kids are with and where they go when they leave the house, this is no different.
- **Read more about it.** If you ask your child what they're doing and you don't understand the answer, it's time to read more about it. Visit the website if possible, search for related news about it and see if you can find an article here on About.com or another site. You can even email the Family Computing Guide to ask. Whatever path you take, it's important to understand what your kids are going when they're online.



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- **Join the fun.** This is no different from attending a sporting match or chaperoning a dance or field trip. If your child has taken an interest in an online community such as Webkinz, Neopets, MySpace, Facebook, etc., find out what they like about it. Sign up for your own account and add your child as a “friend.” This allows you to have a better sense of what they’re doing and what sort of things they’re coming in contact with, but it also shows your kids that you’re interested in their activities.
- **Use available technology.** There is no shortage of Internet Safety tools available to help you control, track and/or limit what your kids can say and do online. Take the time to learn about Internet filters, firewalls, monitoring software, [browsers for kids](#) and other tools. While they are not a replacement for strong parenting, they can help make your task easier, especially with younger children
- **Do a little sleuthing.** Use your browser history, cache and cookies to find out what sites your kids have been visiting. This is not to suggest that you should spy on your child, but a spot check now and again is a good idea. Enter their names (including nicknames) into popular search engines to see if they have public profiles on social networking sites. Do the same with your address and phone number. You might be surprised by how much of your personal information is online!
- **Watch for warning signals.** A child who is reluctant to talk to you about what they’re doing online or seems to be withdrawing from family and/or friends may have a problem. It can be easy to chalk up certain things to normal teenage behaviour, but that doesn’t mean you should ignore changes in your child’s personality. [Cyberbullying](#) is just one experience that may cause your child to withdraw.
- **Know when to say, “No.”** If your child continually spends too much time online or ignores rules about what they can and cannot do, it may be time to pull the plug on the Internet.



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Child Friendly Search Engines

Search engines can be half the problem with using the internet,

These search engines are completely safe for your children and don't bring up inappropriate pages. You can also set them as your homepage!

Kidrex.org

Safesearchkids.com

Wisekids.org.uk

Swiggle.org.uk

Gogooligans.com

Searchypants.com



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Social network sites are a huge favourite with children, allowing them to stay in touch with their friends.

Some facts:

- 1 in 3 10–15 year olds are in contact with people they don't know.
- 44% of children aged 10–15 use social networking sites.
- 27% of children names social networking sites as their favourites.

The lower age limit for most social networking sites is 13

How can you help your child be safe?

- * Educate yourself on what the various sites do.
- * Agree with your child when they can join a social network site and always know their password
- * Set privacy settings at the strongest level.
- * Teach your child to never share personal information
- * Talk to your child about how what they post can't always be taken back