The Internet & Children's Safety Tips for ensuring your children are safe when using the Internet.

Jean E. Stanfield
Sheriff

49 Rancocas Road
P. O. Box 6000
Mount Holly, New Jersey 08060

Telephone: 609-265-5785
Fax: 609-265-5923
For further information
E-Mail: mvanness@co.burlington.nj.us

The Internet

The Internet is a vast and wondrous tool that places valuable information about almost any subject at our fingertips. Unfortunately, the Internet is also a place where children can be seriously endangered and victimized by sexual predators.

The internet can also provide extraordinary tools for parents to learn how to be more effective and successful in raising children. There are numerous websites where they can find the latest and best information on parenting and child development, such as BabyCenter.com, ParentCenter.com, and the CICC website. Additionally, the Effective Parenting Newsletter founded by Dr. Kerby T. Alby from the Center for the Improvement for Child Caring (CICC) has grown to be one of the largest most productive non-profit parenting and parenting education organizations. For more information go to www.ciccpparenting.org, or call 1-800-325-2422

Safety Tips

1. Spend time “surfing” the Net with your child. Encourage them to explore the healthy creative opportunities offered by the Internet.

2. Make use of parental control features. If your Internet Service Provider (ISP) doesn’t already offer them, a variety of aftermarket programs are available quite inexpensively and will allow you to block out sites containing pornographic, obscene, or violent content.

3. Make sure your computer is in a public place in the house. An area heavily trafficked will not provide much opportunity to hide what your child may be doing, and will give you a chance to step in and correct any problems.

4. It is a good idea to restrict both the amount of time and the time of day you allow your children on the Internet. Late nights often mean not only a slower connection due to typically heavier traffic, but also more adults and less children using these systems. Over long hours spent online aren’t healthy either, as this causes vision problems and discourages exercise and social interaction.

5. Carefully watch your children’s “chat-room” discussions. While they may find someone online that genuinely shares their interests and hobbies, there have been a number of cases where predators have targeted children through the Internet. Severely limiting or even blocking access to chat-rooms is probably a good idea.

6. Review history logs kept by your computer. These can tell you what sites your child has
Vicimization: A Report on the Nation’s Youth (2000) found that one in five youths using the Internet access online sexual solicitations. These dangers have recently become more widely acknowledged as more young people are using the Internet for social networking and friendship communication purposes. A good example of this phenomenon is the use of MySpace, which now has over 70 million youthful members and Facebook.com.

How to Find your kid’s online blog
Your children value their independence and privacy. But they may be opening themselves up online. More children than ever use online journals (blogs). Some popular journal sites include MySpace, Xanga and LiveJournal. You as parents can search these sites to see if your children are registered. For example: MySpace.com Go to www.myspace.com. Click on search from the menu bar. At the next page, check “Find Someone You Know”. Enter your child’s name and click Find. Most members post photos, so try to find your child's e-mail address if you know it.

Law Enforcement Contacts:
Should your family become a victim of an Internet Crime, you should first contact your local police department. You may also contact: Burlington County Prosecutor’s Office, Sex Crimes/Child Abuse Unit, Telephone: 609-265-5879.

ABC News Internet Safety Report
Ned Potter the Science Correspondent for ABC News “World News Tonight” reported on 7/24/2006 that new software is available for parents to monitor their children on the Internet. This includes automatic e-mails to the parent’s should their child enter “keyword” searches such as ‘sex’, or even the ability to view their children’s IMs, (instant messages), etc.

Software Available:
eBlaster (http://www.spectorsoft.com/)
Content Protect (http://www.contentwatch.com/)
IM Einstein (http://www.im-protector.com/)
SafeEyes (http://www.safeeyes.com/)

Mentioned in this article are statistics provided by Common Sense Media:
- 85% of Parents say the Internet is the most risky (medium) for kids, compared to 13% for TV.
- 80% of Parents say they would like to make the Internet a safer place for kids.
- 83% of Parents say there is no excuse for not knowing enough about the Internet to protect your kids or teens.

To be sure, parents in the Common Sense Media poll also saw benefits to their children’s web use.
- 91% of Parents say that the Internet helps their kids explore things they’re passionate about.
- 77% of Parents say they see the Internet as an important tool.

Internet Acronyms
TTYI: talk to you later
TTYL: talk to you later
TTYLB: talk to you later
WUI: Welcome. Welcome back.
WNR is for me
WNEB: wouldn’t be nice if WGTF: way to go
WGTF: way to go
WYTG: want to go
WYU: what’s up
WYU: where are you from
YBS: you’ll be sorry
YLC: young lady
YLM: young man