Internet Safety

Protecting Your Child's Innocence Online

Source: From Enough is Enough's Internet Safety 101 multimedia program, for information and complete program visit www.internetsafety101.org and www.enough.org, or call 1-888-744-0004. Copyright 2009. Used with permission.

Note: We strongly encourage parents and educators to visit both web sites to obtain more information. Enough is Enough's Internet Safety 101 multimedia program is inexpensive and well worth the investment to protect your children from pornography, sexual predators, cyberbullying, online gaming, risky online behavior, and more.

Rules 'N Tools® Checklist

for parents, educators, and other caring adults

Implement both safety rules and software tools to protect children online. Focus on the positives of Internet use while teaching children about the dangers and how to make wise choices online.

Rules	
☐ Establish an ongoing dialogue and keep lines of communication open.	☐ Teach your children how to protect personal information posted online and to follow the same rules with respect to the personal information of others.
☐ Supervise use of all Internet-enabled devices.	☐ Be sure your children use privacy settings.
☐ Know your child's online activities and friends.	☐ Instruct your children to avoid meeting face-to-face with someone they only know online or through their mobile device.
☐ Regularly check the online communities your children use, such as social networking and gaming sites, to see what information they are posting.	☐ Teach your children how to respond to cyberbullies.
☐ Supervise the photos and videos your kids post and send online.	☐ Establish an agreement with your children about Internet use at home and outside the home.

Tools	
☐ Set age-appropriate filters.	☐ Use safe search engines.
☐ Consider using monitoring software, especially if you sense your child is at risk.	☐ Set up the family's cyber-security protections.
☐ Periodically check your child's online activity by viewing your browser's history.	☐ Utilize parental controls on your child's mobile phone and other mobile devices.
☐ Set time limits and consider using time-limiting software.	**Parental controls should be utilized on all Internet-enabled devices (desktops, laptops; and gaming, mobile, and music devices). However, these resources are not a substitute for parental supervision**
☐ Disallow access to chat rooms and only allow live audio chat with extreme caution.	
☐ Limit your child's instant messaging (IM) contacts to a parent-approved buddy list.	

Rules 'N Tools® Age-Based Guidelines

Remember to use Enough is Enough's Internet Safety Rules 'N Tools® to protect kids at every age.

Key Principles for all age groups include to:

- Keep lines of communications open.
- Create a list of Internet rules with your kids.
- Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a complement— not a replacement—for parental supervision.
- Supervise all Internet-enabled devices and keep computers in a public area of the house.
- Talk to your kids about healthy sexuality in the event they come across sexually explicit, online pornography at home, school, a friend's house, or the library.
- Encourage your kids to come to you if they encounter anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. (Stay calm and don't blame the child; otherwise, they won't turn to you for help when they need it.)
- Teach them not to interact with people they don't know offline because an online predator can easily disguise him/herself.
- Check the history file on your computer to see which sites your child has accessed.

Two- to Four-Year Olds	
Kids at this age:	Guidelines:
• Will accept media content at face value • Don't have the critical thinking skills to be online alone • May be frightened by media images, both real and fictional • Risk moving from appropriate to inappropriate sites through hyperlinks.	• Always sit with your child at the computer (EIE recommends that children at this age not be exposed to the Internet). • Parents can begin teaching basic computer skills by introducing age-appropriate games and educational programs.

Five- to Seven-Year Olds	
Kids at this age:	Guidelines:
• Are very capable at using computers and cell phones (i.e., following commands, using the mouse, and playing computer games) • Will accept media content at face value • Don't' have the critical thinking skills to be online or text alone • May be frightened by media images, both real and fictional • May be unintentionally exposed to inappropriate websites • Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms • Risk moving from appropriate to inappropriate sites through hyperlinks	Always sit with your children when they are online. • If children are introduced to the Internet, parents are encouraged to: 1. Use kid-friendly search engines and/or "walled gardens" with parental controls. 2. Set age-appropriate filtering at the most restrictive level. 3. Create a personalized online environment by limiting your kids to their list of favorite or "bookmarked" sites. 4. Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area where you can easily monitor your kid's activities. 5. Start teaching kids about privacy. Tell them never to give out information about themselves or their family when online. 6. Have your kids use an online nickname if a site encourages them to submit their names to "personalize" the web content. 7. Block or disallow the use of instant messaging (IM), e-mail, chat rooms, mobile Internet, text, picture and video messaging, and access to or message boards at this age. Note: Services such as The Children's Internet offer children safe, age-appropriate Internet experience available for a monthly fee. If you do allow your child to use a mobile device, use a kid-friendly mobile device.

Eight- to Ten-Year Olds	
Kids at this age:	Guidelines:
• Are interested in the activities of older kids in their lives, are starting to develop a sense of their own identity, and they tend to be trusting and do not often question authority • Enjoy surfing online and using mobile devices for fun and playing interactive games • May be using e-mail and may also experiment with instant messaging (IM), chat rooms, and message boards (online forums), social networking and other interactive sites, and mobile devices although the use of these programs is strongly discouraged at this age • Are curious and interested in discovering new information • Lack the critical thinking skills to be online alone • Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms • May be frightened by realistic portrayals of violence, threats, or dangers • May begin to communicate with online acquaintances they may not know in real life • May be influenced by media images and personalities, especially those that appear "cool" or desirable • May be exposed to search results with links to inappropriate websites • Are vulnerable to online predators if they use chat rooms, message boards, social networking, text messaging or instant messaging (IM)	• Sit with your kids when they are online, or make sure they only visit sites you have approved. • Keep any Internet-connected computer in a room area where you can closely monitor your child's online use. • Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a complement—not a replacement—for parental supervision. • Use kid-friendly search engines or search engines with parental controls. • Do not allow instant messaging, chat rooms, or social networking sites intended for older audiences at this age. • You and your child should have the same e-mail address. Establish a shared family e-mail account with your Internet service provider rather than letting your kids have their own accounts. • Get to know your child's online activities and friends. Talk to your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their other activities. • Teach your kids to always come to you before giving out information through e-mail, message boards, registration forms, personal profiles, and online contests.

Eleven- to Thirteen-Year Olds	
Kids at this age:	Guidelines:
• Can be highly influenced by what their friends are doing online and crave more independence • Tend to use the Internet to help with school work, to download music, e-mail others, play online games, and go to sites of interest • Enjoy communicating with friends by instant messaging (IM) and chat features, and text messaging on their cell phones • Lack the critical thinking skills to judge the accuracy of online information • Feel in control when it comes to technology • Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms • Are at a sensitive time in their sexual development—particularly boys—and may look for pornographic sites. Girls may try to imitate provocative media images and behaviors • Are interested in building relationships (especially girls) with online acquaintances, and are susceptible to crushes on older teens or young adults • Are at the most vulnerable age range to become victims of sexual predators • May be bullied or may be bullying others online	• Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area and out of your children's bedrooms. • Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a complement—not a replacement—for parental supervision. Use parental controls on all Internet-enabled devices such as cell phones, gaming devices, IPods, and PDAs. • Talk with your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their offline activities. • Instruct your child to avoid face-to-face meetings with anyone they only know online. "Online friends" may not be who they claim to be. • Teach your kids never to give out personal information without your permission when participating in online activities (including e-mail, chat rooms or instant messaging, filling out registration forms and personal profiles, and entering online contests). • Insist on access and passwords to your kid's e-mail and instant messaging accounts to make sure that they're not talking to strangers. Limit instant messaging to a parent-approved buddy list. • Talk to your kids about ethical online behavior. They should not be using the Internet to spread gossip, bully, or make threats against others. • Disallow chat rooms. • Do periodic spot checks (like checking browser history files) to monitor your kid's online behaviors. • Limit time online. • Do not allow your children to have online profiles or pages on social networking sites that have a minimum age requirement such as MySpace (thirteen years old) and Facebook (thirteen years old). (Kids can lie about their ages and gain access to these sites.) Only allow your children to access YouTube with caution. Sites such as ImBee, ClubPenguin, and TweenLand are more appropriate for users under fourteen years of age. • Your children should not post pictures or videos unless under close parental supervision.

Fourteen- to Eighteen-Year Olds	
Kids at this age:	Guidelines
• Crave both group identity and independence • Tend to download music, use instant messaging (IM), e-mail, social networking sites, and play online games; most of them have visited chat rooms, and many have participated in adult or private chat • May push the boundaries of safe online behavior by looking for gross humor, gore, gambling, or explicit adult sites • Are more critical and selective in their media interests and activities • Are more likely to receive unwanted sexual comments online • Receive the highest percentage of pornographic spam • Are interested in building relationships with online acquaintances (especially true of girls) • Are more likely to be asked for real-life meeting by an online acquaintance, and more apt to accept • Are still vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms • May be bullied or be bullying others online • Are more likely to use credit cards online • May be experimenting with online gambling Remember: A teen's prefrontal cortex is not full developed at this age; teens still need your guidance!	• Create a list of Internet house rules with your teen. You should include the kinds of sites that are off limit. • Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a complement—not as a replacement—for parental supervision. Use parental controls on all Internet-enabled devices such as cell phones, gaming devices, IPods, and PDAs. • Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area and out of your teens' bedrooms. • Talk to them about their online friends and activities just as you would about their offline activities. • Talk to your teens about the IM list and make sure they're not talking to strangers. Your teens should only use parent-approved buddy lists and you should check their lists regularly to make sure your teens do not alter them. • Insist that your teens tell you first if they want to meet an "online friend." Then check out the online friend, and if you feel the online friend is safe, accompany your child to the meeting. • Teach your teens to protect personal information. • Help protect them from spam. Tell your teens not to give out their e-mail address online or respond to junk mail, and to use e-mail filters. • Teach your teens responsible online behavior. File-sharing and taking text, images, or artwork from the web may infringe on copyright laws. • Talk to them about ethical behavior. They should not be using the Internet to spread gossip, bully, or threaten others. • Oversee financial transactions online, including ordering, buying, or selling items. • Discuss gambling and its potential risks, and remind your teens that it is illegal for them to gamble online. • Do periodic spot checks (like checking browser history files) to monitor your kids' online behaviors. Remember: Kids are safest if not on school networking sites. Follow the Rules 'N Tools if you allow your teens to use them.