

Parental Tips for Child Safety on the Internet

On-line computer exploration opens a world of possibilities for children, yet at the same time it can leave them vulnerable to exploitation and harm from on-line predators. Fort Collins Police urge parents to take the following steps to help minimize the chances of your child becoming a victim to on-line predators.

- Communicate. Talk to your child about sexual victimization and the potential of on-line dangers.
- Spend time with your children on-line.
- Establish rules for on-line use including blogging, instant messaging and chat rooms.
- Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area.
- Consider using parental monitoring and/or blocking software.
- Use logging features and parental controls.
- Find out what computer safeguards are utilized by your child's school, the public library, and at the homes of your child's friends.
- Instruct your children to never:
 - give out personal information on-line;
 - arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met on-line;
 - post (or upload) pictures of themselves onto the internet or electronically send photographs to people they do not know; and
 - respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing.
- Remind your children that whatever they are told on-line may or may not be true.
- Educate yourself, evaluate blogging services and see if they offer private or password protected blogs or "friends only" functions.
- Review on-line "Personal Profiles" for instant messaging accounts, chat rooms and blogging web-sites.
- Review your blogs and screen what kids post. Seemingly innocent information such as town name, school mascot or school name can provide unwanted information as to a student's identity and location.
- Report suspicious activity to the appropriate authority, including, local law enforcement, cyberline and ISP (internet service provider)

Website Resources for Internet Safety

- www.wiredsafety.org
 - www.getnetwise.org
 - www.safekids.com
 - www.netsmartz.org
 - www.cybertipline.com
 - www.missingkids.com/cybertip
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