

Instruction

Technology and Instruction Guidelines for Telecommunications Use at Home

Exploring the rich resources available through the telecommunications of the Internet can be a wonderful educational experience for your child. However, there are a few risks for children who use online service. Teenagers are particularly at risk because they often use the computer unsupervised and because they are more likely than younger children to participate in online chats and discussions. The Internet is not governed by any entity; therefore, there are no limits or checks on the kind of information that is accessible to Internet users.

The best way to assure that your children are having positive online experiences is to stay in touch with what they are doing.

Open communication with your children and getting online yourself will help you to understand the benefits of these systems and alert you to potential problem areas. Consider the following guidelines:

- The computer used for online services should be in a public place. If the computer is in the child's bedroom, the door should be open when he/she is online.
- Develop a set of rules and consequences. Write them in terms of what you want to have happen, rather than the negative behavior you don't want to occur.
- Respect privacy. Do not open another user's mail.
- Discuss screen names. May your child use his/her real name or something else?
- Set reasonable time limits for use. Most services charge by the time used. Set a monthly budget for use.
- Use the parental control features if available.
- Determine if your child may purchase online services or goods.
- If your child receives a message that is suggestive, obscene, threatening or makes him/her feel uncomfortable, forward a copy of the message to the service provider and ask for assistance.

The following rules are suggested by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

"My Rules for Online Safety"

1. I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.
2. I will tell my parent right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
3. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will make sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.
4. I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
5. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.
6. I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be on line, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.