Teach Children about Internet Dangers

- **Online information is not private**. Pictures or information shared online can be seen or used by anyone. As a result, your child may become the victim of a cyber predator, cyberbully or identity thief. Future employers, college admission officers, and coaches use the Internet to find out what kind of person they are hiring or recruiting. By posting inappropriate material, your child may be embarrassed or suffer lost opportunities.

- **People online may not be who they say they are**. Another child or an adult may pose as someone else to bully or harass your child. An online sex offender may pose as your child's friend. Sexual predators often seek to earn a child's trust by showing interest and listening to their problems. They especially prey on the unfulfilled emotional needs of children craving attention.

- **Many Internet sites host pornographic materials**. Children may come across these sites by accident. Some sites deliberately lure children by linking pornographic site to character names such as Pokeman.

- **Information children read online may or may not be true.** Not all Web sites are to be trusted.

Warning Signs of a Predator

- Spends an unusually long time on the computer – especially at night
- Has or hides pornography in his/her room or on the computer
- Receives phone calls by strangers or makes calls to phone numbers you do not recognize
- Receives unsolicited mail or gifts
- Conceals computer content by turning off the monitor or changing the screen when you come in the room
- Displays a behavioral change, such as withdrawing from family or friends or being secretive
- Uses a different online email account or profile

Initially pedophiles may attempt to develop a non-sexual relationship with the child. Eventually, a sex offender always steers the relationship to sex. They often supply their potential victims with pornography as a means of opening sexual discussions and for seduction. As part of the seduction process, it is common for offenders to send letters, photographs or gifts to their potential victims. Computer sex offenders have even sent plane tickets in order for the child to travel across the country to meet them.

Hear the true story of a 15-year-old girl who left home to meet in person with a man she first "met" online. Listen to "Amy's Choice" — the story from her mother's perspective

"Amy's Choice" is a NetSmartz® video.

iSafe.org teaches children to recognize S.I.T.S. tactics used by sexual predators.

S.I.T.S

- **S**imilar **I**nterest: They tell you that they like the same things that you like
- **T**rust: They make you think that you can tell them anything. When you talk about problems they always take your side.
- **S**ecrecy: They make you think that you can tell them anything. When you talk about problems they always take your side.

For more detailed information read "How to Recognize Grooming" by Anne Collier (SafeTeens.com)

Cyber Safety Tips For Parents

Teens are raised in an Internet enabled world where blogs, social networking, text messages, and Instant Messaging are the dominant means of communication. Even though teens are Internet savvy, they are not always aware of the consequences of their actions. So here are a few steps to keep your child safe online.

- Keep the computer in a common area, such as the family or living room. This helps you monitor your child's computer use.
- Spend time with your child online, and talk to them about their Internet use. Ask to see their profile page(s). Many children have more than one profile. Google your child's name.
- Know your child's screen names and passwords. Ask your child to add you as a "friend" on his/her profile page.
- Limit the information allowed in online profiles and make sure profiles are set to private.
- Control access to chat rooms and Instant Messaging. Monitor the sites they are visiting by clicking the internet browser's History button.
- Teach children the grooming techniques used by sexual predators

- Teach children to avoid risky behavior, such as maintaining buddy lists that include strangers, flirting or discussing sex online with people they do not know in person, posting sexually suggestive material or being rude or mean to someone online.
- Teach children to **Stop, Block, and Tell** if they are bullied or made to feel uncomfortable online. (source Wired Safety)
- Remind children that computer use is not confidential.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Make agreements about computer use, such as:
  - o sites they are allowed to visit
  - o length of time they can be online
  - o basic safety rules

Here are basic safety rules you should include in your agreement:

- Never give out personal information (name, age, address, phone) or use a credit card online without permission.
- Never share passwords with anyone, including friends.
- Never arrange to meet in person someone they met online unless you agree and go with them.
- Never reply to a bully or any other uncomfortable messages they receive online.

Agree upon the consequences for not following the rules or breaking the agreement. If can be helpful to write down the rules and agreements in the form of a contract.

Cyber Safety Tips For Kids

- Don't share your password - even with your best friend.
- Know who your friends are! Make sure you know someone in person before you add them to your "friends" list.
- **DON'T POST ANYTHING YOU WOULDN'T WANT YOUR GRANDOMOTHER TO SEE.**
  - o Video link is *http://www.makeadifferenceforkids.org/BulletinBoard.mp4*
- What you post online stays online--forever--so ***THINK BEFORE YOU POST***.
  - o Video link is
    http://www.makeadifferenceforkids.org/Everyone%20Knows%20Your%20Name%2060.mp4
- Pay attention to how you are communicating. Don't say anything online you wouldn't say in person. Don't be rude online.
- Protect your privacy and your friends' privacy too...get their permission before posting something about them.
- Check what your friends are posting or saying about you. Even if you are careful, they may be putting you at risk.
- Don't take, keep, or send nude or partial nude pictures of yourself or others. You could be prosecuted for creating or distributing child pornography if you possess or send nude or partial nude pictures of someone under the age of 18. One teen from Florida was prosecuted and had to register as a sex offender after forwarding a nude picture of his exgirlfriend to her family and friends.
- Don't hang around online places where people could treat you badly.
- That cute 16-year old boy may not be cute, may not be 16 and may not be a boy! You never know!
- Tell a trusted adult if someone does or says something online that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- And, unless you're prepared to attach your MySpace page to your college/job/internship/scholarship or sports team application, don't post it publicly!

Additional Resources for Parents and Kids

To access the following sites, cut and paste the following address in your internet address bar
http://www.makeadifferenceforkids.org/index.php?id=79

Resources for Parents
 A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety
Growing Up Online
What You Need to Know to Keep Your Child Safe
When your child is the cyberbully
Tips for Removing Offensive Profiles from Social Networking Sites
How Children Access Pornography on the Internet
Report a Cybercrime – National Center for Missing and Exploited Children - Cybertipline

Resources for Kids
Mousetrap
NetSmartzKids and NetsmartzTeens
Kids Privacy
Cyber Savvy Teens
Safety Tips and Advice from Connect Safely
Think you Know
Internet Safety for Teens – Attorney General, Washington State
10 New Privacy Settings Every Facebook User Should Know
How to Recognize Grooming

Additional Resources for Educators

To access the following sites, cut and paste the following address in your internet address bar
http://www.makeadifferenceforkids.org/index.php?id=86

NetSmartz Educators
iSafe
iKeepSafe

Information taken from the website www.makeadifferentforkids.org