Your child needs the Internet

The Internet is a wonderful research tool. Reliance on the Internet in schools has grown rapidly - so even if you don't have a computer in the home, chances are very good that your child is online at schools (and very likely at friend's houses as well). Online, your child has dozens of encyclopaedias at his fingertips, he can call on experts in almost any field for information, he can play, keep in touch with friends, meet new people, and explore ideas and world-views we never dreamed of when we were young.

But the Internet isn't all good

There is, however, a downside to the Internet. Dropping your children off on-line is as ill advised as dropping them off in a mall unsupervised. There are predators online who would take advantage of your child's innocence and trust. There is a great deal of easily accessed pornography. There are bullies who would harass your child. There are hate-sites, pro-drug sites, and sites that promote any activity you can think of that you would protect your child from. Just as you don't give your child carte-blanche in a video store or in a theatre, and just as you monitor what types of books or magazines he is permitted to read - so should you approach the Internet issue in your home.

The Internet is a marvelous tool and a wonderful resource - and just as you teach your child basic safety principles before allowing them to cook unsupervised in a kitchen, you'll want to teach them how to stay safe online! There are risks, but they are minimized when parents take the time to learn about the online world their children are spending time in.

http://www.cyberangels.org

Winner of a 1998 Presidential Service Award, CyberAngels was founded in 1995 as the first cyber-neighborhood watch and is one of the oldest in online safety education. Cyberangels is a program of Guardian Angels, which is a 501(c)(3) program. We are staffed by volunteers from all over the globe.

This brochure created for distribution by the FBI by CyberAngels, a program of the Guardian Angels

"Role Models for Real Life"

Protecting Your Online Child

We know you have concerns about the safety of your online child. We have some tips and resources to help you and your family take advantage of the Internet without being taken advantage of!

Filtering and Blocking Programs

as easy as

A B C

No one program can guarantee your child complete and total security, but parental control programs can be a useful tool in helping to protect your family.

Software options can include:
- Prevent use of certain types of programs like file sharing, e-mail, or chat programs
- Filter out certain sites, images and words
- Limit the times your child can go online
- Prevent children from revealing personal information online
- Monitor your child's activity and report it to you
- Limit activities within an application (allow only your listed websites through the browser, or e-mail only to and from approved addresses)

Reminders for Teens

- Never give out personal information
- Be discriminating and don't believe everything you read
- Use Netiquette
- Protect your family and your computer by not opening attachments you aren't sure about
- Take time off the computer
- Help your parents set up fair Internet agreements for your home
- Respect copyright laws for all media – written, music, movie and games
- Talk to an adult before taking online relationships offline
- Share your online life with your parents

Parents: When to Worry

- Screen Switching
- Strange Phone Calls
- Odd hours of the night
- Sudden influx of cash or gifts
- Unusually upset at an Internet interruption
- Withdrawal

There are a number of signs that may signal a problem with your online child. You know your child better than anyone else, so don't rely on this as your only guide. Follow your instincts!

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Visit our website at http://www.cyberangels.org. We offer Internet Usage Agreements for your whole family to sign, classes about issues that concern us all, and other articles of interest to parents and families. By working together as a family, you can get the best of what the Internet offers without risking your child's innocence, safety, or your peace of mind.