

## Using a Computer is a Family Affair

- ◆ Agree to a list of rules and consider posting it by the computer. The rules should cover how long children can spend on the Internet, how late they can surf the Web, what they may and may not visit on the Web, and whether or not they are allowed to make purchases over the Web.
- ◆ Talk to your kids. Keep the lines of communication open. Be responsive and nonjudgmental if they tell you about an inappropriate site they found accidentally. The way you act will affect how much he or she shares with you in the future.
- ◆ Encourage your children to ask you to check out new sites with them.
- ◆ Consider using a family-safe or child-safe search engine or a filter, blocking or ratings system. Some services have a “kids only” section so you can be sure the children won’t have access to questionable material.



### Problems? Report Them!

Internet-related crime should be reported. Consult the following authorities:

CyberTipline - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
1-800-843-5678

Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (Indiana State Police)  
1-800-845-1837

The United States Attorney's Office - Northern District of Indiana  
(219) 937-5500



Pick Non-Descriptive Screen Names

Project Safe Childhood

## Project Safe Childhood

### Things Parents Should Know About Children on the Internet



United States Attorney's Office  
Northern District of Indiana  
5400 Federal Plaza  
Suite 1500  
Hammond, IN 46320  
(219) 937-5500

## Internet - Useful and Fun but DANGEROUS

The Internet can be a great place for work, research, shopping and more. It has opened up a world of information for anyone with a computer and a connection! Your children will learn about computers from friends, school and hands-on knowledge. Some children may even know more about computers than their parents. With that in mind, it may be hard to monitor your child's every move on the Internet, but just as you would not let your children go out without guidelines you should definitely not let them on the Internet without rules and regulations.



## What will Your Child Be Asked in a Chat Room?

Chat rooms are places where some people think that harmless fun can occur. In a chat room, without initiating anything, your child may be approached by many individuals. It probably will not be long into the "chat" that questions regarding your child's age, sex and location may be asked. Depending on how your child responds to this inquiry, the communication may stop, or their response may have just peaked the curiosity of the individual inquiring. More times than not, the individuals over 18 will keep communicating, even if your child tells them they are too old to talk with. If your child continues to chat with the individual, the conversation may begin to focus on contacting your child by phone or in-person (including the request to send pictures that your child will not ever be able to get back). Questions may also be sexual in nature.

Picking the right screen name is very important. Screen names that identify age, gender, location, hobbies, sports and more will attract more attention than non-specific/descriptive screen names. *In a study of a regional chat room, a screen name (littlegirl14) will get bombarded with instant messages, on average, within 33 minutes of signing on.* A non-descriptive screen name in the same chat room only received a few instant messages after 45 minutes.



## Basic Rules for Teens to Surf the Web Safely

- ◆ **Your identity should be kept private** - Make sure your children know to always avoid giving out their name, address, phone number or anything that would help someone find their actual identity. That includes not revealing the name of their school or work.
- ◆ **Never make plans to meet the friend you "meet" on-line** - Your children could be in grave danger if they agree to actually meet people from on-line.
- ◆ **Never respond to any chat room message, E-mail or news-group message that makes you feel uncomfortable or is hostile, belligerent or inappropriate** - Make sure your children know to show you these messages.
- ◆ **Report Harassment** - If someone sends you or your children messages or images that are obscene, lewd, filthy, or indecent with the intent to harass, abuse, annoy or threaten you, this may be a crime and should be reported to your Internet Service Provider and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline by calling 1-800-843-5678 or contact your nearest law enforcement agency.
- ◆ **Talk with your children about ground rules for surfing the Web** - There should be an agreement between you and your children about their on-line activity.
- ◆ **Your computer should be in a location that you can see the monitor** - Children will still be able to use words that you may not understand but this may help you monitor them better.

TTYL - Talk to you later  
A/S/L - Age, Sex, Location

LOL - Laugh Out Loud  
BF - Boyfriend

PLZ - Please  
B4 - Before

MUSM - Miss You So Much  
BRB - Be Right Back

TAW - Teachers are Watching  
LMIRL - Let's Meet in Real Life