



Tips for Safer Technology Use for Parents & Teens

Browsing and exploring the internet can be exciting and informative for adults and young people. However, you can also be exposed to people and material that are inappropriate and offensive, and that youth may not know how to handle. Talk with your youth about technology and create an "open door" policy so that they can come to you for help no matter what. Together, you can guide your youth in making good decisions and enjoying the internet safely and responsibly.

Parents/Guardians:

- Keep the computer in a room with high traffic for easy monitoring.
- Talk to youth about the dangers associated with giving out personal info- not just when chatting with someone, but also on social networking websites.
- Talk to youth about their online experiences in the same way you would about any other part of their day.
- Create agreements and guidelines about technology that place parents/guardians in the mix. A sample agreement can be found at http://www.ag.state.il.us/children/internet_agreement.pdf.
- Come up with helpful guidelines to keep by the computer to be used as a reminder of what tends to be safe and what does not. Examples include:
 - Don't disclose personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, places of employment, schools, etc.
 - Don't agree to meet with someone you met online without first checking with a parent/guardian.
 - Don't send pictures to someone you met online without first checking with a parent/guardian.
 - Avoid public chat rooms. They provide anonymity for users, thus allowing people to conceal their true identities and take advantage of other users.
 - Do talk to a parent/guardian if someone you don't know contacts you online and asks you for personal information.
- Talk to youth about why certain behaviors are not safe- do not just make rules without explaining. Set a good example by following the same rules.
- Continue the conversation. Don't just assume that one conversation about internet safety is sufficient, have them intermittently.
- Inform yourself and your teen about the reality of predators - they can be anyone, particularly online.
- Have your teen demonstrate that they can use technology smartly and safely and then increase their privileges accordingly.
- Let youth know they always have a safe adult to talk to- even if they make a mistake online.



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Youth:

- Discuss the internet with an adult you trust. Talk about the reality of the internet, including the positive and negative aspects, so that you can be prepared.
- Talk about things that make you feel uncomfortable. If you're browsing the internet and come across something odd, offensive or weird to you, talk with an adult you trust about it.
- Think twice about doing things online that might hurt someone or get yourself in trouble- remember being online isn't always as anonymous as you think, and what you post online is often more permanent than you think.
- Don't disclose personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, places of employment, schools, names of family members, etc.

Resources

- Rape Victim Advocates (RVA)
Advocacy, Counseling, Crisis & Education Services
312-443-9603
www.rapevictimadvocates.org
- Illinois Attorney General
High Tech Crimes and Internet Safety
www.ag.state.il.us/communities
- CyberAngels
Online safety education program
www.cyberangels.org
- GetNetWise
Ensuring safe online experience
www.getnetwise.org
- iSAFE
e-Safety education
www.isafe.org
- National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)
<http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying>
- STOP Cyberbullying
Cyber bullying prevention
www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying
- YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago
Support & advocacy services
312-372-6600
www.ywcachicago.org
- Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline
24/7 hotline, 888-293-2080
- Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN)
24/7 hotline, 800-656-4673
- NetSmartz workshop
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
www.netsmartz.org
- FBI Parent's Guide to Internet Safety
<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>
- Chicago Public Library
<http://www.chipublib.org/forkids/kidspages/intresources.php>
- Family Violence Prevention Fund
<http://endabuse.org/content/campaigns/detail/1206>

For statistics and information about youth and technology use,
please review Rape Victim Advocates' Fact Sheet: *Youth and Technology*