Media and Technology

Safety Tipsheet

Category: Internet

What You Need to Know

Benefits

- The Internet is a great learning resource.
- The Internet is a great tool for social and entertainment planning.
- The Internet is a great communication and networking tool.

Risks

- The internet is a common place for predators.
- Cyber-bullying is a growing problem on the internet.
- Schools are concerned with plagiarism, as well as abundant access to inaccurate sources of information.

What You Can Do

- Make sure your children feel comfortable talking to you about their online experiences.
- Keep your family's computer in an open space in a common room. You want to be able to casually monitor what your child is doing.
- Educate yourself about what your child is doing online, and make sure you are comfortable using the programs your child uses.
- Periodically review with your child his or her list of online contacts. If you don't know someone listed, ask your child about that person.
- Search the Web for information about your family. Using a search engine, periodically search for your family members' names on the Internet to see what comes up. You want to stay a step ahead of potential predators.
- Install blocking or monitoring software on your family's computer.
- Establish a Media Use Contract with each child in your family. It is important that you have a conversation with each child to set rules and limits that are appropriate for him or her. Once the contracts have been signed, post them next to your family's computer as a reminder.

Visit these online resources for in-depth information:

- Parent Teacher Association, www.pta.org
- Cable in the Classroom, www.ciconline.org/mediasmartparents
- Common Sense Media, www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/
- Internet Keep Safe Coalition, www.iKeepSafe.org
- NetSmartz Workshop, www.netsmartz.org

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(800) 307-4PTA (4782)
www.pta.org

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