



# Is your child safe on the Internet?

While today's new technology has expanded the horizons for children, it has also increased their vulnerability to becoming victims of crime. Surfing the Internet, instant messaging, and emailing could put your child in harms way. A new trend that many young persons are also engaging in is an activity called blogging. Blogging is the posting of an online journal or diary entry (blogs) that can be read by just about anyone. Additionally, many children are unknowingly targeted by marketers of pornographic websites, may become subject to on-line bullying, or become the victim of an on-line sexual predator.

## According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:

- 20 percent of children ages 10 to 17 received an on-line sexual solicitation.
- 14 percent of children freely give out their email addresses.
- 29 percent of children give out their home addresses when asked.



## Parents, what can you do?

- Change the settings on your computer to block sites that contain inappropriate sexual material. Your Internet service provider can also block chat rooms and blogs.
- Keep the computer in a common area in your home so that you can better monitor your child's use.
- Check your cell phone bills and question any unfamiliar numbers to help keep tabs on who your child may be talking to or text messaging.
- Find out if your child is blogging or using a networking website such as [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com) or [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), and review the content of their profile.
- If your child acts secretly around the computer, or quickly turns it off as you walk into the room, ask why and monitor their usage more closely.
- Talk with your child about Internet safety and stress the importance of NEVER giving out identifying information such as home address, telephone number or school name. Warn your child to never meet someone they have met on-line unless you are accompanying them.



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