



## Keeping Kids Safer Online

Every day, kids and teens use the Internet for homework, to listen to music, to e-mail, and Instant Message ("IM") their friends. Unfortunately, they are often exposed to unwanted sexual material while online. One survey found that, in an average year, 1 in 5 kids and teens have been exposed to "sex talk" from an adult online. To keep kids and teens safer online, follow these tips:

- Keep the computer in a common space in your home so you can monitor its use. Do not allow kids to have Internet access in their bedrooms or anywhere the computer screen can't be easily seen.
- Talk with your kids about what they should and should not do online and set reasonable rules. Try to understand their needs, interests, and curiosity. Non school-related screen time should be limited to 2 hours per day including computer, TV and video games.
- Find out about Internet blocking and filtering. Some block sites known to contain sexual or violent material, others prevent users from sharing information such as name and address, and still others keep children away from chatrooms or e-mail.
- Show interest in your kid's online activities. Ask to see their home page, profile or blog. Encourage your child to teach you what they know about the Web.
- Let your kids know they can always come to you if they have a problem.

### Internet Profiles

Several websites encourage young people to create profiles with their photos and personal information on them. Young people need to learn that their profile is public and anyone can look at it. Those looking for victims have used these sites to meet and hurt young people. Talk with your kids about the pros and cons of relationships that start online.

### Checking Your Child's Computer Use

Several websites teach how to check your computer to see what websites have been visited. You need to stay up to date on changes with software and hardware. The first place to start is with your Internet Service Provider (the company you use to access the Internet). Read the installation directions or call their customer service department.

#### For more information on Internet safety go to:

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Crash Course for Parents on Teens and Technology: <http://www.theantidrug.com/E-monitoring/overview.asp>

[www.chadkids.org/goto/childhealthmonth](http://www.chadkids.org/goto/childhealthmonth)

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Children's Hospital at Dartmouth, Injury Prevention Center, NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Department of Education, NH Pediatric Society, NH SAFE KIDS & the Partnership for a Drug Free NH