WHAT YOU CAN DO IN THE COMMUNITY

- Make sure that access to the Internet at your children's school is monitored by adults.
- Know your children's friends and their parents. If your child's friend has Internet access at home, talk to the parents about the rules they have established. Find out if the children are monitored while they are online.
- Make sure that your child's school has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). This policy should include a list of acceptable and unacceptable activities or resources, information on "netiquette" (etiquette on the Internet), consequences for violations, and a place for you and your child to sign. Your family can design its own AUP for the home computer.
- If your child receives threatening e-mails or pornographic material, save the offensive material and contact that user's Internet service provider and your local law enforcement agency.
- If you come across sites that are inappropriate for children when you are surfing the Net, send the addresses to online services that offer parental control features or to sites advertising protection software to add to their list to be reviewed for inclusion or exclusion. Even if you don't subscribe to the service or own the protection software, you can help protect other children.

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

Crime Prevention Tips from
National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
and

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Cybersafety for Kids Online: A Parents' Guide

The Internet has opened up a world of information for anyone with a computer and a connection! Your children will learn about computers. But just as you wouldn't send children near a busy road without some safety rules, you shouldn't send them on to the information superhighway without rules of the road. Too many dangers from pedophiles to con artists can reach children (and adults) through the Internet.

GETTING STARTED

- Explain that although a person may be alone in a room using the computer, once logged on to the Internet, he or she is no longer alone. People skilled in using the Internet can find out who you are and where you are. They can even tap into information in your computer.
- Set aside time to explore the Internet together. If your child has some computer experience, let him or her take the lead. Visit areas of the World Wide Web that have special sites for children.

CONTROLLING ACCESS

- The best tool a child has for screening material found on the Internet is his or her brain. Teach children about exploitation, pornography, hate literature, excessive violence, and other issues that concern you, so they know how to respond when they see this material.
- Chose a commercial online service that offers parental control features. These features can block contact that is not clearly marked as appropriate for children; chat rooms, bulletin boards, news groups, and discussion groups; or access to the Internet entirely.
- Purchase blocking software and design your own safety system. Different packages can block sites by name, search for unacceptable words and block access to sites containing those words, block entire categories of material, and prevent children from giving out personal information.
- Monitor your children when they're online and monitor the time they spend online. If a child becomes uneasy or defensive when you walk into the room or when you linger, this could be a sign that he or she is up to something unusual or even forbidden.

TELL YOUR CHILDREN...

- To always let you know immediately if they find something scary or threatening on the Internet.
- Never to give out their name, address, telephone number, password, school name, parent's name, or any other personal information.
- Never to agree to meet face to face with someone they've met online.
- Never to respond to messages that have bad words or seem scary or just weird.
- Never to enter an area that charges for services without asking you first.
- Never send a picture of themselves to anyone without your permission.