

CAIP's Internet Tips for Parents

- 1. Keep the computer in a common area within your home.**

Do not keep the computer in your child's bedroom: it is not an inanimate tool like a desk or an atlas. Keep the computer in the kitchen, den or family room or go with your child when they go to use the computers at the public library. This way you as a parent and any other adults in the house can check in on your child as he or she explores the Internet. If it isn't possible to keep the computer in a common area of the home, then it is even more important to check in on your child while they are on-line and to spend time with your child while they are online.
- 2. Spend time with your child, on-line.**

Just as you teach your child about the real world by exploring it with them, guide them through the on-line world. Learn about the services that your child uses by taking the time to see what they are doing on-line and where their interests lie. If you run into content that is offensive to you, talk to your child about it: explain why you believe the material is harmful and what you intend to do.
- 3. Report suspicious activity.**

Encourage your child to tell you when they run into content that they are unsure about, and not to respond to it. Upon reviewing the questionable material, if you believe that someone on-line is doing or about to do something illegal, then you should report it to the appropriate authorities. Make sure that you keep copies of all of the email messages including the header information. The authorities will need them.
- 4. Set reasonable rules and guidelines for your child, and decide whether or not to use blocking or filtering software.**

Discuss your rules and guidelines with your child, post them near the computer and monitor your child's compliance. The rules should set reasonable limits on the amount of time spent on-line. If you decide to use blocking software, then find one that is consistent with the rules and guidelines that you have set. Additionally, you should take the time to learn the strengths and limitations of the package that you choose. Even the best programs are not a substitute for an involved parent.

Cyber Patrol <http://www.cyberpatrol.com>
Net Nanny <http://www.netnanny.com/>
- 5. Monitor your credit card bill and your phone bill.**

A credit card number is required to gain access to many adult Internet sites, and a modem can be used to dial phone numbers other than the phone number of your Internet Service Provider.

6. Tell your child not to give out personal information on-line.

This is Internet version of “never talk to strangers”. Teach your child to never give out their name, address, phone number, school name or any personal information especially in public places like chat rooms and bulletin boards.

Using a nickname or a pseudonym is common practice on the Internet, and it is a way in which your child can protect their personal information to a certain extent.

7. Know your children’s on-line friends.

It is possible to form beneficial and lasting relationships on-line, but there are people who misrepresent themselves on-line and there are people who will take advantage of your child. Make sure that your child knows not to arrange to meet their on-line friends without your permission. If you permit a meeting with an on-line friend, then make sure that: (i) you accompany your child and (ii) they meet in a public spot.

8. Learn more about the Internet.

Take the time to learn more about the Internet. Ask your child to teach you what they know. Look for courses being offered in your community. Surf on your own.

<http://www.media-awareness.ca>

<http://www.safekids.com/>

<http://www.safeteens.com/>

<http://www.safekids.com/computers.htm>