



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

QUICK TIPS: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN FROM INTERNET EXPLOITATION

The internet has created numerous ways for us to connect with people from all over the world. It is true that the internet has opened doors and made our lives easier and more convenient. However, it is also important to understand the ways that predators are using new technology to victimize and exploit children. It is estimated that 1 in 7 children experience some form of solicitation while using the internet. Below are 10 simple guidelines to keep your children safe and prevent internet exploitation.

- 1. Carefully monitor the websites and search engines your children use.** Some websites are more kid-friendly than others. It is important to make sure that your children use websites with proper protections. Make sure that you know which websites your kids are using, and always monitor their internet use to make sure that they are staying safe online.
- 2. Tell your kids to report any information that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.** There is a lot of information on the internet, and much of it is not appropriate for kids. Your children should know to tell you or a trusted adult when they see something that makes them uncomfortable. This will help you control what information your children are seeing online.
- 3. Help your children find information online.** If your children need to look something up on the internet, make sure you help them do so. Stick to websites that are kid-friendly, and show them how to find reliable sources of information.
- 4. Use filters to control what your children can see online.** Many internet service providers have options available that allow you to control what your children can access on the internet. This can help keep your children safe online, and ensure that they are only accessing information and material that you feel is appropriate.
- 5. Monitor who your children talk to online.** If your children have an email account, talk to them about safe online communication. Make sure they only share their passwords or personal information with trusted adults, and set up a spam filter to prevent them from receiving inappropriate emails. Make sure you know who they are talking to online, and ensure that you both understand the dangers of meeting people over the internet. Make sure they only talk to people they know in real life and who have been approved by you.
- 6. Learn the lingo.** Kids don't often talk to their friends online in the same language that they use with you. Take the time to learn the language that kids use online so that you can monitor their conversations and know what they are talking about online.
- 7. Protect your kids' identity:** It can be very dangerous for anyone, especially kids, to expose their names, address, and other identifying information online. Make sure that you know what information your kids are sharing online, and teach them about the potential dangers of sharing their personal information. If they use social networking

sites with personal profiles, closely monitor their privacy settings so you know who has access to your children's information.

- 8. Monitor your children's use of pictures and webcams.** Pictures and webcams can help friends and family members stay in touch. However, they can be very dangerous when not closely monitored and used appropriately. Control what pictures your children upload online, and who can see them. Talk to them about appropriate pictures to put online and ways in which webcams should and should not be used.
- 9. Prohibit websites that you do not feel are safe or appropriate.** Remember that you have the final say in what websites your kids use. Talk to them about how to identify safe and appropriate websites, and how to stay away from websites they should not be using. Monitor their time online so you know how much time they are spending online and what they are doing on the internet.
- 10. Talk, talk, talk.** As a parent, it is always important to have an open dialogue with your children. Make your rules and guidelines about internet use clear, and encourage them to come to you when they have questions or concerns. With a little help from their parents, the internet can be a safe and fun place for kids to explore and learn about the world.