CYBER SAFETY TOOLS

Keeping Your Child Safe
On The TV and Internet

Technology offers incredible opportunities for learning and entertainment. Internet access and television programming can enrich our lives by delivering information about the world we live in. Glimpses of world histories, culture and lifestyles are literally at our fingertips through our PC's or remote control devices.

However, you need to be aware that for all we derive from surfing the Internet and television, there are some dark and dangerous off-ramps, especially for children. Without proper supervision, children can easily be exposed to inappropriate material and messages, be exploited by sexual predators and become victims to unscrupulous con artists. We want to help you keep your child safe.

This brochure is intended to give you tips on monitoring your child's behavior on the Internet and television. We hope this information will help ensure that your family enjoys safe and fun cruising on the Information Superhighway.

Net Tips

Parents should establish ground-rules for accessing the Internet. Your technical capabilities and lack of time may limit your involvement, but you can shape web surfing into a family activity. Use a common sense approach to family Internet use:

- Place the computer in a central area of the house such as the family room, den or kitchen.
- Establish specific times when access to the Internet is permitted and keep that schedule.
- If your child uses a computer at school, call and see if his or her school has adopted an "acceptable use policy" for the Internet. Use this policy as a tool to establish guidelines at home.
- Limit the length of access time. This will encourage your child to go directly to the information required, rather than aimlessly wander or surf the Internet.

- Explain to your children that many sites on the Internet are not appropriate for children or young adults, and they are expected to stay away from them.
- Make it clear to your child you are aware that there is pornographic material on the Internet, and that looking at such material is forbidden.
- Explain that if the sites' address has adult language in it, the site is not to be visited.
- If the child has access to a credit card, instruct the child never to give it out over the Internet.
- Instruct your child to talk to you if he or she ever finds anything on the Internet that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Encourage communication with your children. Ask about their Internet experiences and what they have learned.

Red Flags

- Secretive behavior on the computer.
- You feel unwelcome at an on-line session.
- Unexplained loss of capacity on the computer's hard-drive. (It may be crowded with pornographic image files, which are typically very large).
- A sudden new friend you don't know.
- Excessive time on the Internet.
- Hidden floppy or Zip disks which may be used for storage of inappropriate or illegal files.
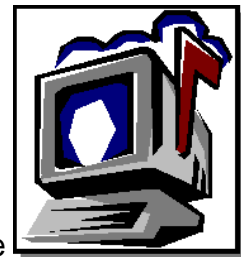
Useful Tools

Blocking & Filtering Tools

More than one hundred technological hardware and software tools are available to help empower families to choose what material is appropriate for their children.

These tools are specifically designed to promote child safety. With some programs, parents have the option of customizing the filtering device so that it reflects their family's values.

However, parents need to be aware that blocking and filtering tools should not be used as substitutes for instituting Internet ground rules.

Remember, even the best technology cannot protect your child from all the dangers in cyberspace.

You may want to check out the following programs:

GetNetWise
Net Nanny
Cyber Patrol

Ratings

Understanding the TV Ratings & the V-Chip

With about 2,000 hours of programming available in our homes each day, it's getting very hard for parents to monitor what their children are watching on TV.

TV ratings and the V-Chip can help parents navigate their children's way through the vast world of television. TV ratings can help parents figure out which programs are inappropriate for a certain child's age or unsuitable because of sex, violence or adult language. The V-chip can help parents "screen out" the programs they don't want their children to watch. The V-Chip is already built into new TV sets--parents who want to use it just have to turn it on when they set up their new TV. There's a lot of help out there for parents who want to protect their children from harmful information. Contact your local cable company for other ways to block out inappropriate programming. Also, check your local television listings and watch for these symbols at the beginning of programs.

TV Y — All Children	**TV PG** — Parental Guidance Suggested
TV Y7 — Directed to Older Children	**TV 14** — Parents Strongly Cautioned
TV Y7 FV — Directed to Older Children Fantasy Violence	**TV MA** — Mature Audiences Only
TV G — General Audience	

Contact the **Kaiser Family Foundation** at 1-800-656-4533 for a copy of "A Parent's Guide to the TV Ratings and V-Chip" (publication #1491) or visit their **website.**