

INTERNET SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

Children with internet access have a useful tool that is not only entertaining but can assist them with school projects and communicating with friends and family. *Unfortunately, the Internet can also be a dangerous place, however, parents can reduce the risk to their children by teaching them some simple rules.*

- ✓ Children should never give out their personal information over the Internet. This includes their address, school information and they should have an on-line name that is different from their real names. Pictures, letters or telephone calls should not be exchanged without a parent's approval. Parents should explain to children that people they "meet" on-line might not be who they say they are, and they should never agree to meet anyone they have met on-line without your permission.
- ✓ It is important to teach children not to purchase anything on-line without a parent's approval. Con artist often use free offers or giveaways, as means to sell something the purchaser might not have never even wanted. Children should to learn not give out credit card numbers without permission.
- ✓ Talk to your children. Encourage them to speak to you if someone sends them e-mail or a message in a chat room that makes them feel uncomfortable or they know is obscene. Parents need to remember that how they react when their child tells them something will affect how much he or she shares information with you in the future. So keep the lines of communication open and don't ever blame the victim.
- ✓ Using the computer is truly a family affair. Set rules that cover the amount of time the child can be on the computer, how late they can surf the Web, and sites they may or may not visit. Teach your children to ask permission before visiting a new website. Once all the rules are discussed and agreed upon, it is a good idea to have everyone sign them and post them next to the computer. A sample list of rules can be found at www.Safekids.com/kidsrules.htm .