

area like a bedroom.

7. **Be aware of the dangers of using chat rooms.** Once users enter a chat room, they can get messages right away, even if they don't initiate it. This is where "cyber stalkings" begin, and all too often end in violence against its unsuspecting or overly trusting victims. As well, warn your children of dangers of giving out personal information. Small amounts add up and make it easy for someone to track your child down.

- ⇒ One in five young people who used the Internet regularly were exposed to unwanted sexual solicitations (study by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2000)
- ⇒ One in four young people encountered unwanted pornography in the last year.
- ⇒ Over 20% of online predators' targets are 13 years old or younger.



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- 1. Avoid sites that ask for personal information.** Many Internet sites ask for personal information that may be shared with others without your knowledge. Do not let children give out their name, address or other personal information over the Internet, unless you have seen the site and allow it.
- 2. Remind your children that everything they read online may not be true.** Help your kids be aware of what sites or information might be good or bad. Any offer that sounds "too good to be true," probably is.
- 3. Remind your children that people online may not be who they seem.** Because you can't see or even hear your on-line contacts, it is easy for someone to lie or 'stretch the truth' about him or her self. For example, someone saying that "she is a 12-year old girl" could really be a 40-year old man. Alert the police of any attempts to set up meetings or visits with your child from a stranger over the Internet.
- 4. Know that your home is not the only place your children may get on the Internet.** Computers at friends' houses, the library, school, the baby sitters', or while baby sitting, may not have filters or proper supervision. Talk to the adults who are in charge of these settings and find out what safeguards they use and ask them to watch your child while he or she is surfing the Internet.
- 5. Encourage your children to email friends and family members known to you.** This gives them less of a reason to contact someone they don't know.
- 6. Make the Internet a family activity.** Keep your computer in a common room like the TV room or kitchen. Surf the net together. Never let children have a computer in a private