



# Family Values

## Promoting Cyber Safety – Part 2

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Part 1 of this series pointed out the resources available to parents and responsible adults for protecting and monitoring children on the internet. As helpful as these programs are, it is still up to adults to provide a safe environment for kids. The following are a few tips gleaned from the experts:

1. **Screen the sites that small children visit.** Kids often know more about computing than adults. Have them show you around. Don't hesitate to ask questions.
2. **Locate the computer in a highly visible place.** The family room or kitchen is preferable to a bedroom where kids are by themselves.
3. **Get to know kids' online pals.** Ask about the names on their buddy lists. Become familiar with who they are visiting with via the computer.
4. **Advise kids to never give out personal information without permission.** This includes more than just name, password, address or phone number. Emphasize also that they not divulge where you work, where siblings go to school, or what they want to buy, etc. Pedophiles can track down kids with even a few pieces of information.
5. **Warn kids that people are not always what they seem online.** If someone starts asking personal questions or makes them feel unsafe or funny, have them log off immediately and notify you a librarian or a teacher.

6. **Believe kids when they share something out of the ordinary.** Report any unsettling activity to your internet provider. Don't let them ever agree to meet someone without your approval.
7. **Consider filtering and blocking programs.** Software such as Cyber Patrol, CyberSitter, Net Nanny and Surf Watch can block objectionable sites. But they have limits. They can't stop all inappropriate material and may block content you think is OK.

If you take reasonable precautions and treat kids with respect, there is no reason to be overly leery about cyberspace. Happy safe surfing!

*Adapted from "Surround your kids with safety," article by Edward C. Baig in the Wednesday, April 5, 2000 edition of USA Today.*

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