

Parents Beware

Internet Safety

Welcome to the wonderful world of technology. Adults often plod through new technological pathways, but our children have learned how to manage this new world with lightening speed. Ninety-nine per cent of all Canadian children use the internet [<http://www.protectchildren.ca>]. The internet is a tremendous resource for adults and children. However, it also has many dangers particularly for children and teenagers. Some students are sharing personal, traceable information while others are using the internet freeway to bully and harass their peers. As parents we have the daunting task of protecting our sons and daughters in this challenging new world. Some strategies for our parent tool box are listed below.

Be Informed:

- Explore the games that your children are playing to determine if they are age appropriate, does it contain sexually explicit or violent materials?
- Know your teen's login information and e mail addresses.
- Consider putting the computer in a common area of your home.
- Supervise your teen while they are on line.
- Use filtering software [for more information, visit www.cybertip.ca]
- Check the websites your child visits by reviewing their history files and view their instant messaging habits

Talk to Your Child:

- Limit the amount of time that your child spends on line.
- Set the expectation that you will monitor your child's online activities, as the internet is a public place.

- Discuss the difference between public and private information.
- Teach you child to check with you before sharing personal information.
- Reinforce the idea that not everyone is who they say they are online.
- If your child experiences something or someone that makes them feel uncomfortable, explain that they can tell you without fear of losing computer privileges.
- Explain that the internet is NOT a place to make new friends.
- Explain and enforce codes of contact for online activities, just as you do for offline activities.

Education is the key to success for parents and children. Informed parents will be better equipped to monitor and guide their child's use of the internet.

Parents can access further information at the websites listed below:

<http://www.zoemandmolly.ca/>
<http://www.cybertip.ca>
<http://www.protectchildren.ca>
www.wiredsafety.org
www.teenangels.org

Submitted By:

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