

Parenting

Tips To Help Keep Children Safe From Internet Dangers

(NAPSA)—Parents don't have to be computer experts to keep their children safe online.

According to the University of New Hampshire's Crimes Against Children Research Center, the first step is to realize that one out of every five youths who use the Internet receives an online sexual approach of solicitation during a one-year period.

Even scarier, in 15 percent of such cases, the solicitor attempts to meet the child in person. And, only 25 percent of those children who encounter a sexual solicitation tell a parent.

Worse yet, if asked, more than 29 percent of Internet-using children will freely give out their home address, e-mail address and other personal information online.

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition and the GEICO Educational Foundation have teamed up with the University of New Hampshire's Crimes Against Children Research Center to let parents know how to help keep children safe online:

1. Keep the computer in a common room in the house and position the monitor so it's available for public viewing.

2. Establish rules for using the Internet and teach your child important safety guidelines.

3. Use blocking software or filtering programs, but don't rely on them as your only line of defense.

4. Predators often use chat rooms to contact children. Teach children that people online are not always who they say they are.

5. Frequently check your computer's Internet history to see what sites your child is visiting.



There are several ways parents can help protect their children from online dangers.

6. Monitor your child's e-mail account. Let him or her know you're checking it and why. Talk with your child about potential online dangers.

7. Spend time with your children when they're online. Have them show you their favorite sites.

8. If you see anything suspicious or think that your child may be a victim of Internet exploitation, contact your local FBI office or law enforcement agency.

9. Tell your children to protect their personal information. Children should never give their real name, address, phone number, the name of their school or a picture of themselves to anyone they meet online. Never let your child meet in person with anyone they've met on the Internet.

10. Teach children to tell a parent, teacher or trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable about anything they've seen online.

For more information, visit www.iKeepSafe.org and www.geico.com/auto/safety.