

Launching Your Kids into a Family Friendly Internet

The Information Highway, Web Sites, Chat Rooms and the Internet

The Internet is an excellent source of information for children as well as adults. We can get material on almost any subject by entering a few key words on our computers. Unfortunately, the material that appears on request is not reviewed before becoming available to our children. This means that unsuitable information can be accessed just as readily as material we want our children to read. In fact the latest form of “stranger danger” is occurring via the Internet. Through “chat rooms,” strangers can get to know your children and learn a lot about your family.

Like many parents, you may be concerned about your children’s safety on the information highway. Here are some ways to prevent troublesome incidents from occurring on the computer in your home.

Ask your Internet provider about features that allow parents to block their children’s access to adult oriented sites, “chat rooms,” and bulletin boards. A variety of programs are available.

- Some programs block specific sites but allow access to the rest of the Internet.
- Some programs permit access to specific sites, blocking everything else.
- Some programs keep a tracking log of where children have gone on the Internet and what sites they are most frequently visiting.
- Some programs block your address, phone number and credit card numbers, making it impossible for strangers to gain access to this important information.

Establish Rules to Follow When Using the Internet

Keep the computer in a high-traffic part of the house. You can monitor your children’s activities without appearing to watch over their shoulders.

Spend time on the Internet with your children. Let them take you down the information highway.