

Parents as Partners

By: Stacy How B.A. (CYC)

CYBER SAFETY!

Do you know where your kids go online?

The first step to knowing what your kids are doing online is to talk to your child about what sites they visit, who they talk to online and the risks that kids face. Many parents aren't aware of the risks that their children face every time they log onto the world-wide-web or a gaming system. We need to be asking our children where they are going and when they will be back even when they are at home on the computer or devices. Just like we teach our children and teens about stranger safety, we need to teach them about online safety. The following are tips for parents to help create safer surfing experiences for you and your child:

- Canadian Pediatric Society recommends families be aware of the 4 M's; **Manage** screen use, encourage **Meaningful** screen use, **Model** healthy screen use and **Monitor** for signs of problems.
 - Keep the computer/gaming systems in an area where it can be monitored, like the family room.
 - Anything with a camera should **NOT** be in bedrooms!
 - Put a little piece of tape over the webcams so that others can't see into your home.
 - Teach them never to meet an online friend offline unless you are with them and meet in a public location.
- Check regularly to see who your followers/friends are
 - Make sure that your children feel comfortable coming to you with questions and try not to over react if things go wrong.
 - **Many online social networking sites have an age restriction of 13 yrs.** Some are older. Be aware that these sites share your information and pictures.
 - **MAKE SURE TO SET PRIVACY SETTINGS AND CHECK THEM REGULARLY!**
 - Teach them what information they can share with others online and what they can't (like telephone numbers, address, their full name and school)
 - Warn them that people may not be what they seem to be and that people they chat or game with may not be their friends, they strangers!
 - Discuss and agree upon rules and post as a reminder.
 - Always use an Internet "screen name". Never reveal personal information.
 - Never respond to a threatening email or message. Instead, save the message, screen shot it or take a digital picture so you can take the appropriate action.
 - Be cautious when posting and sharing photographs
 - **Turn off** Location Services on Camera and Social Media sites! If you don't, imbedded within that

picture may be the actual location and address to where that picture was taken.

- Never tell anyone your password or login info. Never use the same password twice.
- Write down your phone's IMEI # (found under general settings) and store it safely should your phone be stolen
- Remember children learn from parents so be a positive online role model!
- Know what games your children play online and be aware of the ratings. M rated games are for Mature-over 17yrs of age.
- When shopping online meet in public locations (police dept.) and with at least 2 adults over 18yrs old
- Make sure your child is aware of the penalties for sending pictures involving nudity online- this is considered child pornography!

Resources for Parents:

- www.needhelpnow.ca
- www.connectsafely.org
- www.cyberbullying.ca
- www.cybertip.ca
- www.netsmartz.org
- <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

When your child is cyber bullied:

1. Don't reply to abusive messages- that may only encourage the bully.
2. Block and Report anyone who is being inappropriate.
3. Keep a record of events/messages or pictures. You will need them for the police or mobile phone to trace the bully.

Safe Search Engines for Kids:

- www.yahooligans.com
- www.kidsclick.org