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Team up with kids to explore cyberspace safely. Start by educating yourself and your children about the risks online. Not understanding how to use the Internet safely, children may:

- > Share passwords or reveal personal information that makes them vulnerable to bullies or exposes them to other risks.
- > Stumble upon inappropriate material including sexual or hate-filled content by clicking a link in e-mail or IM, or while surfing the Web.
- > Encounter people who pretend to be friends, but don't mean well.
- > Click a flashy ad or open an enticing "free" game or spam, which may download a virus, spyware, or other malicious software.

People may unintentionally or deliberately expose children's information. School or club Web sites often share too much personal information about students and members. Less-than-reputable online businesses may sell the information they collect.

Flaws or gaps in devices (such as cell phones) and services (like kid's games) may also put kids at risk. They may fail to implement adequate filtering and safety tools, neglect to effectively monitor their services, or encourage kids to disclose more information than is necessary.

More Internet Safety Info

- > For further age-based guidance, visit microsoft.com/protect/family/default.aspx.
- > For information written especially for parents and kids, visit iLOOKBOTHWAYS.com.



Smarter Online = Safer Online

Protecting Young Children on the Internet

- > Understand the Internet risks for young children
- > Practical advice to keep kids safer on the Internet
- > What to do if there are problems



Understand the Internet Risks for Young Children

The Internet is a stimulating classroom and a rich playground for kids—a virtual infinity for exploration, learning, and fun. It's also a place to join friends (and make new ones) from around the world, to exchange e-mail and instant messages (IM), play games, and discover virtual worlds.

Content contributor



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Practical Advice to Keep Young Children Safer on the Internet

Make online safety a joint commitment, a mix of guidance and monitoring rather than a struggle over control. Encourage young Web surfers to develop a smart sense of how to deal with situations, information, and people they encounter on the Web. Then help them use new online services and tools as they demonstrate their skill and readiness.

Pay attention to what kids do and who they meet online

- > Evaluate the devices and Web sites children want to use beforehand. Experiment to make sure you're comfortable with the functionality available—GPS on cell phones, computer Web cams, the ability to send unfiltered images on IM, etc.
- > Join the fun. Play with children on the Web, or sit with them while they play. Ask them to show you what they're doing—who they're talking to, what sites they visit, what games they play, and so on.
- > Put Internet-connected game consoles and computers in a central location. Consider permitting kids to use the Internet only when you're home.
- > As kids use the computer, watch for changes in behavior that may be signs of online bullying or other problem—for example, uncharacteristic reluctance to go online or unusual secretiveness.

Set clear rules

Before children begin using the Internet, discuss the kinds of sites that are off limits, what information should not be shared, and boundaries for communicating with others. Explain that these rules are set to help protect, not control, them.

Teach kids to keep personal information private

Stress the value of personal information to those who may want to misuse it—full name, cell phone number, age, school, favorite playground, interests, even photos.

- > Choose an e-mail address and online name that reveal nothing personal and aren't suggestive. Make sure real names don't show when sending e-mail. Find out how to do this at microsoft.com/protect/yourself/email/name.aspx.
- > Create strong passwords. Learn how at microsoft.com/protect/yourself/password/create.aspx.
- > Don't share passwords with anyone but parents or a trusted adult—not even best friends.
- > Ask permission before sharing personal information about themselves, friends, or family.

Teach kids to treat others as they would like to be treated

- > Be kind.
- > Be honest. Stealing from other players in games, or copying music, games, or pictures that are copyrighted is just like stealing from a store.

Teach kids to act responsibly

- > Don't open attachments or click links in e-mail or IM from someone they don't know personally. Don't click ads or "free" offers (like games) on Web sites.

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What to Do If There Are Problems

Teach children to listen to and trust their instincts

If something feels uncomfortable or scary, it almost always is. Let them know they can come to you and that you will do what you can to solve the problem. Make it clear that you won't punish them or take away computer, phone, or game privileges.

Immediately report:

- > Physical threats, ongoing cyberbullying, or any form of exploitation to the police.
- > Inappropriate content or behavior to the Internet service provider, cell phone company, or Web service. For example, look for the **Report Abuse** link as available in Microsoft® services or software, or contact us at abuse@microsoft.com.
- > Content that exploits minors or threatens to harm them to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at **800.843.5678** or online at cybertipline.com.

- > Be choosy about accepting new friends on cell phones, in IM, or in games. Make sure you and your children know everyone on all contact lists.
- > Don't contact someone they don't know or respond to anyone who makes them uncomfortable.
- > Be skeptical. Not everything they see online is true, nor is everyone who they say they are.
- > Say "no" to and stop contact with any adult who wants to have a secret friendship.
- > Never meet an Internet "friend" in person, unless a parent or guardian is with them.

Put technology to work

Explore different tools to keep kids safer. These can help you filter out harmful content, monitor the sites children visit, and find out what they do there.

- > Turn on safety features like those in Windows® Internet Explorer®, Windows Vista®, Zune®, and Xbox LIVE®. Get the details at microsoft.com/protect/family/safetysettings/default.aspx.
- > Check out the comprehensive list of popular tools at kids.getnetwise.org/tools.

Defend your computer against Internet threats.

Use firewall, antivirus, and antispyware software. Password-protect your wireless router. Keep security software current with automatic updates. See how Microsoft can help at microsoft.com/protect/computer/default.aspx.

Put a password on your child's cell phone to keep anyone who steals it from accessing stored info or making calls.

Be the administrator of home computers so you can manage settings for your child. Find out how to create different user accounts for Windows® XP or Windows Vista at microsoft.com/protect/family/guidelines/basics.aspx.