Internet Safety Information for Children

Forty-five percent of children in the United States, <u>more than 30 million</u>, use the internet where a great deal of inappropriate content is available to them. Internet dangers to children include sexual exploitation or enticement.

According to the latest online victimization research,

- Approximately **one in seven youth** online (10 to 17-years-old) received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet.

- **Four percent (4%)** received an aggressive sexual solicitation - a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere; called them on the telephone; or sent them offline mail, money, or gifts.

- **Thirty-four percent (34%)** had an unwanted exposure to sexual material -- pictures of naked people or people having sex.

- **Twenty-seven percent (27%)** of the youth who encountered unwanted sexual material told a parent or guardian. If the encounter was defined as distressing - episodes that made them feel very or extremely upset or afraid - forty-two percent (42%) told a parent or guardian.

Adapted from: **The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**.
www.missingkids.com/

Online Tips for Parents:

- Emphasize how important it is to keep information private.

- Do not give out personal information such as address, last names, pictures, telephone number, parents work number, or the name and location of their school.

- Tell children they should never send pictures of themselves to people they do not know personally.

- If a child gives out personal information online, contact the internet service provider or the site where the information is posted to see what you can do to have it removed.

- Do not use the computer as a babysitter. Establish rules for when the Internet may be used, the length of time, and appropriate areas to go online. Remind children that people are not always who they say they are.

Instruct children to check with you before downloading or installing software or giving out any personal information.

+ Do not allow children to give out their Internet password to anyone.
+ Monitor the child's online behavior and keep the computer in a highly visible place.
+ Refer to the back page for the Internet Safety Checklist to be signed by you and your kids.

When a Child Feels Uncomfortable Online:

Use filtering software to protect the child, but remember that filters do not guarantee safety and use the privacy setting in the social networking sites.

Remind children that whatever they are told online may not be true.

Instruct them never to respond to bulletin posting that are suggestive, obscene, or harassing.

If your child ever shows you a site that contains illegal behavior, such as pornographic images of children, contact your Internet service provider and the CyberTipline. (www.cybertipline.com)

Sexual Predators May Target Children Online:

Sexual predators often maintain relative anonymity, so save any communication to your computer (conversations can be powerful evidence)

Sexual predators frequent various chat rooms looking for children.

These predators may initiate offline sexual relations quickly or spend months grooming the child.

Always encourage your child to talk about their online experiences.

Make the child agree to never get together with someone they meet online, if it is another child they will meet in a public place with their parents

NetSmartz

NetSmartz is an interactive, educational safety resource from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for children aged 5 to 17, parents, guardians, educators, and law enforcement. The goal of the NetSmartz workshop is to extend the safety awareness of children to prevent victimization and increase self confidence whenever they go online. (www.netsmatz.org/)

NetSmartz provides on and off-line learning activities for parents to facilitate discussions with their children and teens about Internet safety. Online activities can be played repeatedly and offline activities are designed to be printed out for use away from the computer.

Kid's Rules for Internet Safety

1. I will never give out personal information, such as my last name, address, telephone number, parents' work address/ telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' or teachers permission.

2. I will tell my parents or teacher right away if I come across any information that scares me or makes me feel uncomfortable. I will click the "back" button if I find myself at a site where I know I don't belong.

3. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online (over e-mail or chat) without first checking with my parents.

4. I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents or teacher.

5. I will not respond to any messages that are strange, mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. If I get a message like that, I will tell my parents or teacher right away so that they can contact the service provider.

6. I will not give out my Internet or email passwords to <u>anyone</u> (even my best friends) other than my parents or teacher.

7. I will be a responsible online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law.

8. I will only use the Internet when my parents or teacher tell me it's OK, and I will only visit areas that are appropriate for kids.

Adapted from: **Child Safety on the Information Highway** by Lawrence J. Magid
© 1998 National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

For more information abut online safety, including resources for kids, teens, parents and teachers, visit: http://www.wiresafety.org/

Child's Signature_____

Adult's Signature _____