

PLATFORM SHOES FORUM

ONLINE EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Safe Zone Checklist for Parents

1. Consider whether it is wise or necessary to have a computer in your child's room.
2. If he/she is too young to be left alone at home, he/she is too young to be using the Internet's communication tools without supervision.
3. How much time is he/she online everyday? Do you know who he/she is chatting with? Make it your business to get familiar with his/her "buddy list" and the chat rooms he/she uses (Yahoo, Myspace, etc.).
4. Notice his/her behavior when you come into the room. Does he/she hide her screen? If so, for his/her protection, it may be necessary to do some background checking.
5. Look in your computer's history (CTRL +H) for PCs and "history" tab on Macs.
6. Keep your computer's router in your room and disconnect the Internet at night to discourage late-night chatting.
7. Google your child's name from time to time to make sure her profile or info is not popping up in inappropriate places.

Look up her profile on MySpace or Yahoo and ensure that he/she does not reveal:

- Full name
- Address
- Town and State
- Phone number
- School district
- Team name
- Email address
- After-school job
- Provocative images / screen-names / blogging

Web Filtering Software?

No parent wants to spy on his or her child. But if house rules aren't working, protection takes precedence over freedom. After the Homeland Security predator was caught, Perry Aftab, Founder of WiredSafety.org, personally recommended Spectorsoft (www.spectorsoft.com) on the CBS Early Show, which essentially alerts you at work through email about any inappropriate use of communication tools your child may be using at home.

Internet Safety #1 Priority

Still unsure of which websites to trust? Encourage your children to participate in websites that:

1. Checks the identity of the adult who provides permission for the child based on the COPPA ruling from the FTC.
2. Look for how the community tools are monitored. Is it automated? Or is a real person overseeing your child's safety.
3. Does the website review all chat transcripts, provide automated warning scripts for misuse and enforce a policy of no cyber-bullying, requiring community tool "time-outs" if necessary.