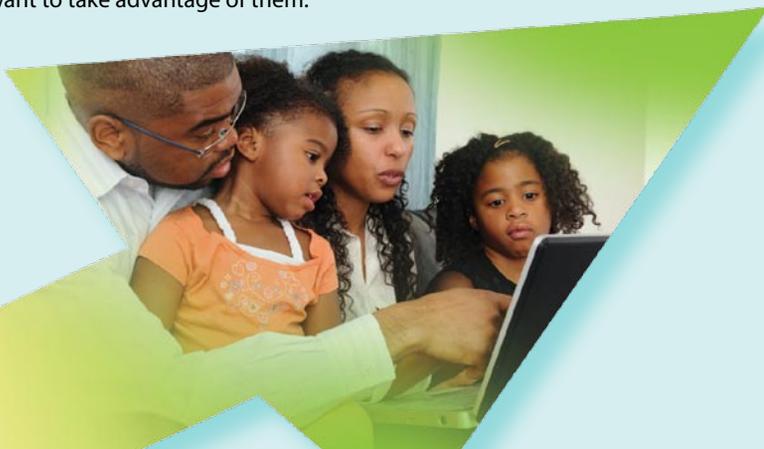


# Parents Must Keep Their CHILDREN SAFE on the INTERNET

**The Internet and wireless communication have opened up a wonderful world** of instant information and communication for adults and children alike. Children learn about computers and cell phones at very early ages. These devices present countless virtues: They are sources of news and research for homework, games and entertainment for free time, and communication with friends and parents through everything from email to blogs and social networking. But just as parents wouldn't send their children near a busy street without some safety rules, they shouldn't send them onto the information superhighway without knowing the rules of the road. Too many dangers, from pedophiles to con artists, can reach children (and adults) through the Internet and wireless access and communication.

One of the greatest challenges parents face today is managing their children's use of the Internet. Parents must make sure that their children's use of the Internet is balanced with other, healthy activities—sports or the art club, for example. They must ensure that their children's use of the Internet is age-appropriate. And they must ensure that their children don't unwittingly give out information that could make them susceptible to the con artists and deviants that might want to take advantage of them.



## TO KEEP THEIR KIDS SAFE, PARENTS SHOULD

- Agree on a list of rules and post it by each computer in the house. They should put the computer in a central location where it can be observed by a parent and post the rules there. Have everyone in the family agree to an Internet safety pledge (visit [www.safekids.com/contract\\_kid.htm](http://www.safekids.com/contract_kid.htm)). The Wireless Foundation, [www.wirelessfoundation.org](http://www.wirelessfoundation.org), has a Contract for Responsible Wireless Phone Use (see reproducible section of this kit) that should be signed by family members and also placed in a central place.
- Talk to their kids. If a child tells them about an upsetting event experienced online, they should never blame him or her. Keeping the lines of communication open is crucial.
- Tell their children never to give out personal information—their last name, their address, their phone number.
- Tell their children never to arrange to meet an online acquaintance in person without their parents' prior permission.
- Tell their children that if an online acquaintance sends a message or picture that makes them uncomfortable they should tell them at once.
- Tell their children they should never sign up for an offer that is "free" without asking them first. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Fortunately, there are parental control services that can help parents keep their children safe on the Internet. McGruff® SAFEGUARD intelligently monitors all Internet activity for potential danger. The service allows parents to conveniently review their kids' activities on a secure website, or to be notified of potentially dangerous situations via cell phone and email alerts. Go to [www.gomcgruff.com/m/about.asp](http://www.gomcgruff.com/m/about.asp) to learn more. The Wireless Foundation ([www.wirelessfoundation.org](http://www.wirelessfoundation.org)) provides a comprehensive list of parental controls available from major wireless carriers with descriptions of the services they provide.

The world can be a dangerous place, especially on the Internet. But with the right precautions, our children can be free to enjoy the virtually limitless opportunities to learn and thrive that the Internet and wireless communications provide.