

**Family Internet Safety Guidelines:
Basic Internet Safety Principles to Protect Children**

- 1. Define the word “pornography”** and help children understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate materials according to your family standards. (Tip: See “Good Pictures Bad Pictures” and the free “Quick Start Guide for Proactive Parents” at ProtectYoungMinds.org.)
- 2. Discuss the potential harms of viewing pornography** or other explicit material, how it can impact the brain, and how anyone can become addicted. (Tip: Parents can watch an informational documentary at PornPandemic.org to learn more about porn addiction.)
- 3. Explain that computer and internet use is a privilege that children earn** by showing they can use technology respectfully and responsibly; it is not an entitlement.
- 4. Explain to children that because of the nature of the internet, they will inevitably encounter inappropriate materials** and that part of a parent’s job is to help their children manage their computer/internet usage responsibly. For this reason internet usage cannot be a private activity for children.
- 5. Encourage children to let a parent know immediately if they have accidentally been exposed** to inappropriate material. Reassure them they will not be punished if this happens and that everyone has to learn how to deal appropriately with accidental exposure.
- 6. Create a plan for how children will handle accidental exposure.** (Tip: Help children practice shutting their eyes and immediately turning off the monitor so it becomes automatic and instinctive. You can even hold surprise “drills” so they can practice.)
- 7. Ensure that all devices with internet access have filtering services** to block harmful content to the extent possible. But make sure children understand that such filters are not foolproof and that they need to create internal filters and safeguards. (Tip: K9 Web Protection has a very good free filter that can be downloaded at <http://www1.k9webprotection.com>.)
- 8. Establish guidelines for acceptable computer usage.** Decide together the appropriate times during the day for internet use and the amount of time that is acceptable.
- 9. Discuss how to handle situations where peers share pornography** or when porn comes up in a film or on TV. (Tip: Role play with your children how to say no to a friend who tries to show them pornography.)
- 10. Reassure your child** that if they feel drawn to pornography or if they have a hard time not looking at it, this does not mean they are a bad person and that you can get them help.

15 Family Rules for Safe Computer/Phone Internet Usage

1. **Filters should be installed on all phones, computers and devices** that can access the internet. Encourage children to inform a parent if the filter ever fails.
2. **All passwords for email accounts and social media should be shared** with parents so they can periodically monitor appropriate usage.
3. **Computers should be used only in public areas of the home** where the screen is visible and not in the privacy of the bedroom or bathroom.
4. **Time limits for computer and phone use should be established.**
5. **Phones should be given to parents at a designated time each night** and charged in the parents' room. (Tip: Parents can also turn off routers at night.)
6. **Never give out personal information on the internet.**
7. **Participation in chat rooms should be prohibited.**
8. **Aimless surfing of the internet should be avoided.**
9. **The clearing of internet history or the use of private browsing should be prohibited.**
10. **There should be no downloading of browsers, apps, programs, videos, etc. without prior approval from a parent.**
11. **Do not chat with, message, friend or text people you have not met in person.**
12. **Do not open emails or messages from people you do not know.**
13. **If you wouldn't want your parents to read it, do not write it in an email, text or any other form of electronic communication.**
14. **A password may not be changed without notifying a parent prior to changing it.**
15. **Violation of the family computer rules may result in the removal of computer/phone privileges.**