

BE P.E.S.T.S.



PROTECT YOUR KIDS. Children often don't recognize the risks that go along with Internet use. Talk with your child about these risks. Let her know it's OK to come to you if something happens online that makes her uncomfortable.

ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR COMPUTER USE AND ONLINE TIME. Limit computer time as you would time spent in front of the TV. Discuss which sites are acceptable and which ones are not. Have the computer setup in a public place—NOT your child's bedroom.

SECURE ALL PERSONAL OR PRIVATE INFORMATION. Make sure children understand they should NEVER give out ANY personal information online; NEVER to use their real name as part of an email address; and NEVER answer questions from someone they (and ideally, you) have not met *in person*.

TOLERATE NO EXCUSES OR RATIONALIZATIONS. Being online feels safe and comfortable to your child. Let him know that computer rules are not up for ongoing negotiation. You've established these rules to keep your child safe— "giving in" when it comes to the Internet could place him at risk.

SNOOP EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE. Let your child know that you will be checking her online activities (including *myspace* pages and email) from time to time. Explain that you are not doing this to invade her privacy, but because you need to be sure that she is safe.

Try these websites for more information on Internet safety:

▶ Netsmartz.com
▶ Isafe.org

▶ theantidrug.com
▶ noslang.com

Courtesy of Dr. Lawrence P. Filippelli
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