

## Look Both Ways

How many times have you reminded your children to look both ways before crossing the street, or to not talk to strangers? Now that children and teens are spending more time than ever on the Internet, there's a new set of precautions to remind them about. Just as we've been teaching them about physical safety in the real world, we need to help them be safer in the online world

### Consider These Facts:

- 1 in 4 children/teens, ages 10 to 17 have been exposed to unwanted sexual material online.\*
- 1 in 5 children/teens under the age of 17 have received unwanted sexual solicitations online.\*
- 1 in 33 children/teens have received an aggressive solicitation to meet somewhere.\*
- 96% of those who solicited teens online were under age 25, 48 percent were under the age of 18.\*\*
- 49% of online solicitations are not disclosed.\*
- 6% of children/teens ages 10 to 17 are threatened or harassed online and only about half reported the incident to their parents.\*

\*Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation's Youth, Crimes Against Children Research Center, NCMEC.

\*\*Online Victimization: A Report on the Nations Youth, Crimes Against Children Research Center, NCMEC. This information is based on Internet communication as reported by teen study subjects who may not truly have known the ages of the perpetrators.

## Cyber Grooming

Among the many online threats to children including: exposure to pornography, harassment, and cyber stalking, the most dangerous threat is cyber grooming. Cyber grooming is the process of

gaining trust and building false relationships to entice victims.

### Cyber Predators “Groom” Their Victims by:

- Meeting them in chat rooms and progressing to Instant Messaging, or email, telephone and ultimately direct contact.
- Befriending/isolating victims by building their trust.
- Asking the victim to keep their “friendship” secret, sometimes threatening violence.
- Sending pornographic images to lower inhibitions, provide instruction, and arouse victims.

### Your Child May Be Being “Groomed” by a Predator if He/She:

- Spends excessive time on the Internet, especially late at night.
- Is secretive about cyber friends, or how they spend their time on the Internet.
- Withdraws from family and friends, seems depressed or unresponsive.

### What Parents Can Do: Practice Proactive “Protecting” vs. “Policing” (Empowerment vs. Monitoring)

- Discuss the dangers in using the Internet and empower your children to make wise decisions online.
- Develop “rules of the road” with your children.
- Keep the computer in a more public area of the house vs. your child's bedroom.
- Spend time with your children online.
- Encourage your children to tell you about disturbing online encounters.
- Report child pornography and/or sexual exploitation of children to your local law

enforcement office and [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).

## i-SAFE Helps Kids and Teens Take Control

i-SAFE is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate and empower youth to take control of their Internet experience.

### i-SAFE Empowers Students

Our goal is to educate every student in grades K-12 with curriculum that is designed to:

- Empower students to recognize techniques used by predators to deceive them.
- Empower students to refuse requests for personal information.
- Provide students with the tools they need to respond assertively.
- Encourage students to report suspicious or dangerous contact.

### For grades K-8, the i-SAFE Curriculum covers:

Living as a Net Citizen in the Cyber Community, Personal Safety as a Cyber Citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Technology and the Computer Virus, Plagiarism & the Theft of Intellectual Property, and Law Enforcement and Internet Safety.

### A series of webcasts for grades 9-12 provide additional information on:

Privacy and the Internet, Cyber Relationships, Intellectual Property Theft, Social Issues and Security.

For more information about Internet safety, visit our website – [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org). Download a copy of our Internet Safety Handbook and subscribe to the “i-SAFE Times” newsletter.