

SAFETY ON THE INTERNET

Leader's Guide for Kids and Adults



Tips for Presenting Safety On The Internet to Kids

Many kids think rules were invented just to keep them from having fun. If you are working with kids, let them teach each other. Help them develop a feeling of responsibility for the safety of their friends who use chat rooms. Help them become heroes! This may be the most effective weapon we can have in fighting online predators.

- *Divide the class into two groups.*
- *Use this Leader's Guide as an assignment for one of the groups. Group #1 is to teach group #2 using this guide and the DVD, "Safety On The Internet," or they may rewrite the leader's materials using their own words.*
- *While group #1 prepares their script, have group #2 complete the Worksheet: "How Would You Solve This Problem?" in the Leader's folder on the CD and also work on puzzles from the CD. (The answers to the puzzle pages are on the page 2 of those documents.)*
- *Before they begin, review Group #1's proposed material to be sure their facts ARE promoting online safety. After group #1 finishes teaching their class, have group #2 write a detailed evaluation of the class using "My Evaluation of Safety On The Internet." While they are working on this, Group #1 should complete the Worksheet: "How Would You Solve This Problem?"*

Review with them again the importance of following Safety On The Internet rules. This website, http://www.cyberwise.ca/epic/site/cyby-cybj.nsf/en/h_uz00095e.html, offers real life stories to illustrate the seriousness of talking with strangers online. Doing all of the above may take more than one session. Learning and following the rules about Internet Safety is the key to preventing kids from falling into the hands of online predators. Stress the fact that you are preparing them to teach Safety On The Internet to other teens, siblings, etc. This is crime prevention!

One very important thing to remember is that this may be a one shot deal for many of these kids. You may be the only one who ever tries to teach them how dangerous communicating online with strangers can be. Don't let this opportunity slip through your fingers without driving that point home to them. Include in your lecture information from the "Important Information For Teens About Predators" document on the CD.

Your presentation materials and conversation will vary with the group you are working with. Choose the right materials from the documents provided on the "Safety On The Internet Documents" CD for the age group you are teaching.

Thank you for helping to make the Internet a safer place for our youth by giving this presentation. If you have any questions, please contact: Mary Conyers, 919-266-0506, soapbox@bellsouth.net, www.protecteverychild.org.

Safety On The Internet Leader's Guide

(The following is offered as *only as a suggested format* to lead a conference about safety on the Internet. This was written for Middle School kids. *Adapt it to meet the needs of your audience.* It is very important that you stress to kids that Internet Safety Rules are for everyone using the Internet, and not just for kids! They may be more willing to accept these rules if they understand that the same rules apply to adults. Give them a chance to **tell you** the rules of staying safe on the Internet and why that particular rule is important. All documents/handouts are available on our CD "Safety On The Internet Documents" or at our website: www.protecteverychild.org, ready to be downloaded and printed.)

For a conference with kids: print and distribute documents from the CD. Be sure to include:

- Safety On The Internet Rules
- Important Information For Kids About Predators
- What Would You Do In This Situation
- Who Are You Puzzle Page For Kids
- Things About Me
- Internet Safety Contract for Parents and Kids
- Rules Are Not Just For Kids
- It's MY SPACE

For conference with adults: use the above documents but also print the remainder of the documents for parents from our CD "Safety On The Internet Documents."

1. Introduce yourself to the group using a false name. (For Example: My name is Sarah Smith. If they know you, this will certainly get their attention. At the end of the session, tell them your real name emphasizing that you were not honest with them in giving them your name. This will reinforce the fact that on the Internet everyone is not always honest and there is no way to know whom you are communicating with on the Internet.)
2. Have the class fill out the "Things About Me" form. Allow time for this, but don't discuss it at this time.
3. Begin by telling them you are here today to talk about Internet Safety. Ask how many have their own computer or use their family computer at home.
4. Where is it located? Tell them the computer should always be in a common area of your home—like the kitchen or den. Ask how many go into Chat Rooms, Blog Areas, My Space or other websites like that?
5. Learning the rules about Safety On The Internet is very important. Say--can anyone tell me why? The answer: It is very important to protect your identity on the Internet. What does the word identity mean? That is who you are. You are Tom or Jane. You are a boy or you are a girl. You love to play soccer or softball. You love the movie _____. You like to go skating or bowling. All of these things are a part of you. If you tell these things to a stranger, they may begin to put together all of these bits and pieces of information and find out who you are.
6. Ask: does anyone here have a dog? Does your dog stay in a fence? Chasing cars is something dogs like to do, but would you let your dog chase cars? Why not?

7. Ask: you wouldn't let your dog do anything that you think may hurt them would you? The same is true of your Mom and Dad. They don't want you to do anything that will hurt you, and the computer, as much fun as it can be, can indirectly hurt you if you don't know the rules about protecting your identity. (Note: use any illustration that teaches responsibility.)
8. Ask them to listen very carefully to the DVD. Most of these things you probably already know, but you may learn a lot of new things, too. Try to remember these rules about Internet Safety so you can teach your parents and your younger brothers and sisters how to stay safe while using the Internet.
9. After playing the DVD, ask them to tell you some of the rules of Internet safety. After they list each rule, ask them why this rule is necessary. Ask if they learned anything new. Remind them that going into a chat room and talking online with someone you don't know is like going to the park alone at night. It is very dangerous. Ask, can you tell me why? Answer: because you don't know who you are communicating with.
10. Almost 100% of the time, when an adult seeks out a teen or child to chat with online, they have one purpose in mind—to meet that boy or girl to engage in sex. This may make you giggle or it may scare you, but it is a fact.
11. Ask: did you know that you need to tell your parents about all adults that you talk with online or even email? This means teachers, friends, and even family members. We want to trust everyone we know, but you need help from your parents to know whom you can trust.
12. Give them the “It's MY SPACE” document. Ask: who can tell me what MySpace is. MySpace is for ages 14 up, so you may not be involved with that yet. It is a website that allows you to have your own website. Does anyone here what their own website? What kinds of things do you have on your website? Do you have your picture on your website? Do your parents know what is on your website? Did you know that putting something on your website makes it available for everyone everywhere to see. It is not private. And it is there forever. It can do a lot of harm. Did you know that someone could take your picture and change it without you knowing it? This could get you into a lot of trouble.
13. Do any of you ever go to Krispy Kreme Doughnut or Dunkin Doughnut stores? Or do you ever go to Baskin Robbins Ice Cream Shop. Why do you go there? Because it is the best place to get doughnuts or ice cream.
14. Predators—remember that word from the DVD? Predators go to chat rooms, and places like MySpace to look for girls and boys that they can meet. That is the best place to find kids!
15. Tell them you want them to help you identify a celebrity. Make a game out of it. Give them clues about someone they will all know. (In my county and state, all of the kids know the team members of the Carolina Hurricanes Hockey Team.) For Example: give them clues about team colors, jersey number, etc. or a movie actor or musician they would all know. They will soon be able to guess who that person is. Tell them that identifying that person is the same way a predator identifies them. They fit all of the pieces of the puzzle together.
16. When you are in a Chat Room, you are imagining the other person to be a cute guy or girl when you may actually be talking to some 40-year-old man patiently working on finding out who you are and where you are! All they need to know are simple little facts like your favorite sport or that your school's football team has a game on Friday afternoon. (Use an event that would be familiar to them. For example: Apex Middle School's football team is going to stomp Garner next week.)

17. From that bit of information and other things you have told them without even realizing you were giving clues, they can find you. They are working on a puzzle putting together the pieces that will lead them to you.
18. You may tell them that Language Arts is your favorite subject and that Ms. English makes it a lot of fun. You may tell them that Mr. Adams is a really hard social studies teacher.
19. Soon, they are your best friend and they want to meet you. Never agree to meet anyone you only know online. Some days you just feel very lonely, and you feel like no one cares about you. You need a friend. Predators WILL take advantage of these situations and become that friend you need. Many times if a predator is asked how he found a victim, their answer may be that the victim found them.
20. **Very Important!** Ask how many have ever been approached by someone they believe to be a predator? Give any who raise their hands a chance to talk about it. ***Whether they tell their story or not, follow through with this child before they leave the class.*** Most kids never share their stories and it can follow them into adulthood causing many psychological problems. Help kids to understand that reporting these incidents may save the life of another teen.
21. Remember how important it is to you to protect your dog. If your parents have told you not to go into chat rooms or places like MySpace or if they have set other rules for you that you think are too strict, it is not because they are trying to make life hard for you. It is because they want to protect you.
22. What do you think a predator looks like? Ask them to describe how they think they look—a beard, dark glasses, mean looking, etc. Not necessarily. In reality they look like an average person. A minister, a teacher, a policeman. They blend in with everyone else. Asking you to keep your relationship with them a secret is a dead giveaway that they are not who they seem to be.
23. Say: now, I want you to look at the form I gave you. Did you answer all of the questions? Do you know what the word reveal means? It means to make known—to let someone else know something. When you filled out this form, you gave personal information that revealed your identity to me. I could find my way to your home. Now I want you to tear this form into very small pieces. Don't make a mess!!! But tear it up so no one can read it. Protect your identity and don't give or your reveal your identity to anyone on the Internet that you don't know.
24. O.K. Let's go over the rules again. You tell me what they are! They are listed on the information you have. Be sure they include the following things: never talk to strangers; never agree to meet anyone you met online; never give your real name or tell if you are a boy or girl; always check with your parents before adding any information to a website form; never give personal information about you or your family to anyone you only know online; never send your picture.
25. Now, before we leave, I want to tell you something. Do you remember my name? When I came here today I said I am Sarah Smith. I was not honest with you. I am really _____. That is how a predator can reach you. He may tell you he is 18 years old, and you may feel very flattered that an 18 year old is spending his time talking with you. He may be a 40-year-old man searching for his next victim. Even if he was only 18, he may be making plans to lead you into a dangerous situation.

26. Many kids think it is cool to pretend to be older than they are if they talk to a stranger on the Internet. They forget that the other person may be pretending, too. On the Internet, it is not a game. It is extremely dangerous. It can lead to you being taken from your home. Even if kids caught in this situation never leave home, they can be scarred for life. Learn all of the rules about Internet safety. They are on the sheet you were given—put them where you can see them.
27. Another document you were given is an Internet Safety Contract for Kids and Parents. Take this contract home and go over it with your parents. This is very important. You may be thinking to yourself—“I’m not doing this!!!!” You may think you are too grown up to do this, but being grown up is acting responsibly. It is very important that you and your parents trust each other. Having this contract may even give you more privileges. You don’t have to use this one, but use it as a guideline. Doing this may save you or your younger brothers or sisters from harm one day.
28. The Internet can be a wonderful and fun place to be!!! Part of growing up is acting responsibly. Using good judgment. Not letting your dog chase cars! You would not want your parents to leave your driveway and never come home again because they ran through the stop sign or stoplight at the end of your street. It is the same thing for you. You must make good decisions. Show your parents that you can be trusted to stay safe while using the Internet and that you can make wise choices. Make safety a priority!!

As a *Safety On The Internet Conference Leader*, your job is to reinforce the rules of Internet Safety. Most children learn these rules in school, but we can never assume that they know them or that they use them. Every day parents are sending their children into the violent world of the Internet unprepared. Our focus on all of the good that comes from the Internet has to be sidetracked. The 6:00 news broadcasts are full of stories about sexual predators meeting teens online and then arranging to meet them in person—and not to chat!

As children approach the age to get their driver’s license, we start to teach them how to drive safely. They are required by law to take driver’s education as a part of their school curriculum. We sit at home and worry when they make that first trip out alone at night. We set rules about where they can go and what time they have to be home. Too many parents forget or don’t realize that there is a place we allow our children to go where they are in constant danger. We neglect setting guidelines and teaching them rules that may one day save their life. That place is the Internet.

The key to protecting children from online predators is education. Teach parents the importance of building a relationship of trust. Many kids will never tell their parents about talking to strangers online because they are afraid they will be blamed for doing something wrong. It takes time and patience to sit with children to be sure they know the rules about Internet safety, and to be sure they are only talking to friends they know in person when they are in Chat Rooms or in any other form of Instant Messaging. Predators are experts at deceiving their prey. They have tremendous patience and will spend hours or perhaps even months “grooming” a child to gain their confidence. Children may never think of this person as a stranger. After all, they have been talking online for months. At this point, it would not be hard to arrange a face-face meeting.

Mary B. Conyers
Protect Every Child
P. O. Box 749
Knightdale, NC 27545
soapbox@bellsouth.net

NOTE: When teaching kids (or adults) rules of Internet Safety, all you can do is try to make them understand the importance of protecting their identity. The decision to follow these rules is a personal choice. We must make them feel responsible for teaching safety to their friends.