

Internet Safety: Parenting Generation Y's

FACT SHEET

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that “childhood is entitled to **special** care and assistance”. Families are viewed as a key institution and natural environment to support “a full and harmonious development of [the child’s] personality”.

Schools, social agencies, criminal justice systems, and other sectors also have important roles in protecting children and youth.

Collaborating for the safety and health of children and youth can progress through the identification of shared goals, action, and mutual accountability.



Gen Y's (aka Millennials), born between the late 1970's and 2000, have grown up with technology as part of their social landscape. More than any other generation, Gen Y's understand the power of technology as a communication and social tool. Because of this, they have been described as “digital natives in a land of digital immigrants” (Downing, 2006, p.5). Since technology is a powerful influence shaping our interactions, including those of children, adults have an important role to play in ensuring BC's 'digital natives' are net safety smart.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that “for the full and harmonious development of [a child’s] personality”, children require special care and assistance in keeping their evolving capacities. As ‘duty bearers’ for the well-being of children, adults have an important role to ensure children grow up in healthy and happy environments. Safeguarding children through their development of social, emotional, and technological skills for the safe use and application of technology is an important area. This sheet offers tips to assist adults in making this an interesting and enjoyable activity.

Caregivers have a critical role to play in protecting children against negative influences that may arise from social media. Just as parents strive to teach children how to safely cross the street, tie their shoes, or develop respectful behavior, similar life skills are required as children receive Internet-based devices (iPods, game consoles, PCs'). Maintaining positive relationships with children and youth is central to the transfer of skills for the virtual world. Adults are encouraged to spend time with children and truly listen in order to understand and be more responsive to an increasingly complex world. Children can also teach adults important things about their world.

An emerging aspect of education for the 21st Century is to ensure children are ready for Internet-based learning. The following page provides 10 practical tips for supporting parents and other caregivers as they establish safe and caring Internet experiences for families. With appreciation to School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith), this safety publication has been adapted to support families in this endeavor.

Downing, C. (2006). The next generation: What leaders need to know about the Millennials. (2006). Retrieved from Wiley on-line library 26(3) <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/lia.1161/pdf>. Heritage Canada (1991). *Convention on the rights of the child*. United Nations, Department of Human Rights Program, Hull, QC.

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Caregivers are encouraged to discuss the following 10 Internet Safety Tips as a family.



Tape these guidelines on home fridges for regular reflection!



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Top Ten Internet Safety Tips for Parents 2012/13)

1. **Set clear rules** (3 to 5) about the Internet for your child's safety. Work together to create realistic options that work for the entire family. CHILDREN SHOULD NOT HAVE 24/7 ACCESS TO THE INTERNET, e.g., Smart Phones texting messages from 1 to 6 AM.
2. **Keep technological devices in a common area of the house.** This refers to the computer, laptop, and other devices. Make yourself available when your children are online, until they are old enough to use the Internet unsupervised.
3. **Avoid threatening to take away the Internet or other devices.** Set reasonable consequences if your child breaks the rules. Kids can easily find other ways to get online (friend's house).
4. **'LISTEN don't LECTURE.'** Promote open communication about your child's online activities. Show your children you are willing to listen, even if you do not have all the answers. Develop and maintain positive relationships.
5. **Encourage and welcome your child** to come to you if they surf to an inappropriate site (pornographic, violent). DO NOT overreact with anger: teach him/her to find a solution.
6. **Be 'tech-savvy' and stay informed** with changing technology. Make use of Internet safety resources such as:
 - a) [Media Smarts Canada](#)
 - b) [Netsmartz Parents](#)
 - c) [Common Sense Media for Parents](#)
7. **Be a leader.** Model the behaviour you want your child to follow.
8. **Know your child's online friends.** It is important to know whom your children are speaking to online. Ensure they never meet anyone in-person without going with them.
9. **Teach what you know.** The Internet is a new medium for learning parenting lessons. Bullies, strangers, and harsh content online exist just like in the real world.
10. **Children should only post personal information** with a parent/guardian's permission: THINK CAREFULLY before posting any pictures, names, addresses, etc. because once the 'SEND' button is pushed it's in cyberspace forever!