

Jeannette Prandi Children's Center

Keeping Kids Safe

Shadows of the Internet: Sexual Content and its Impact on Children

Shadows

- In our discussion tonight we will talk about sex, a subject which sometimes is uncomfortable addressing in a public forum. However, it is critical for us to discuss sex because your child enters a potentially heavily sexualized world when connecting to the Internet.

- Developmentally this is a stage (Adolescence) when a child becomes curious about sexuality. Children this age are hunting for information that helps satiate interest in better understanding their sexual changes and those of the opposite sex.

- This is a healthy striving that should be expected and supported by the parent.

What's Out There

- As of January 1999, there were 19,542,710 total unique visitors per month on the top five pay porn Web sites, and there were 98,527,275 total unique visitors per month on the top five free porn Web sites.
- In November 1999, Nielsen Net Ratings figures showed 12.5 million surfers visited porn sites in September from their homes, a 140% rise in traffic in just six months.
- Nearly 17 percent of Internet users have problems with sex on the Net.

What's Out There

- A profile of severe problems with sex on the Net exists for 1 percent of Internet users- 40 percent of these extreme cases are women.
- Most of all e-porn traffic, about 70 percent, occurs weekdays between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 PM.
- There are 100,000 Web sites dedicated to selling sex in some way- this does not include chat rooms, e-mail, or other forms of sexual contact on the Web.
- About 200 sex-related websites are added each day.

What's Out There

- Sex on the Internet constitutes the third largest economic sector on the Web (software and computers rank first and second), generating one billion dollars annually.
- The greatest technological innovations on the Web were developed by the sex industry (video steaming is one example)

Carnes, Delmonico, Griffin, [In the Shadows of the Net](#)

- Adolescence is a time of physical and emotional metamorphosis during which the youth feels estranged from the self the child had known. It is a time of seeking; a seeking inward to find who one is; a searching outward to locate one's place in life; a longing for another with who to satisfy cravings for intimacy and fulfillment.

- It is a time of turbulent awakenings to love and beauty but also of days darkened by loneliness and despair. It is a time of carefree wandering of the spirit through realms of fantasy and in pursuit of idealistic visions, but also of disillusionment and disgust with the world and the self.

- It can be a time of adventure with wonderful episodes of reckless folly but also of shame and regret that linger. The adolescent lives with a vibrant sensitivity that carries to ecstatic heights and lowers to almost untenable depths.

- Theodore Lidz

- Question becomes – How does this desire for sexual information interface with the plethora of uncensored images and perpetrators trolling the Internet for sexual contact.

What's on the Information Highway

- Chatrooms
- Instant Messaging
- E-mail
- Peer-To-Peer (P2)
- Newsgroups, Forums and Bulletin Boards
- Net Cams
- Websites

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

- ***Online Victimization:
A Report on the Nation's
Youth***

Report Statistical Highlights

- Approximately one in five received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in the last year
- One in thirty-three received an aggressive sexual solicitation- a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere, called them on the telephone, sent them regular mail, money, or gifts.

Report Highlights

- One in four had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex in the last year
- One in seventeen was threatened or harassed

Report Highlights

- Approximately ***one quarter*** of young people who reported these incidents were distressed by them
- Less than 10% of sexual solicitations and only 3% of unwanted exposure episodes were reported to authorities such as a law-enforcement agency, an Internet service provider, or a hotline
- About one quarter of the youth who encountered a sexual solicitation or approach told a parent. Almost 40% of those reporting an unwanted exposure to sexual material told a parent

Report Statistical Highlights

- Only 17% of youth and approximately 10% of parents could name a specific authority (such as the FBI, CyberTipline, or an Internet service provider) to which they could make a report, although more said they had “heard of” such places.
- In households with home Internet access, one third of parents said they had filtering or blocking software on their computer at the time they were interviewed.

What is the Youth Internet Safety Survey

- A telephone survey of a representative national sample of 1,501 young people ages 10 through 17, who used the Internet regularly
- Regular – Once a month

What is the Youth Internet Safety Survey?

- Parents or guardians were interviewed first for about 10 minutes
- With parental consent, young people were interviewed for about 15 to 30 minutes
- Care was taken to preserve privacy and confidentiality during the youth interview.

What is the Youth Internet Safety Survey?

- Topics covered in the interview
 - Experiences of sexual solicitation, unwanted exposure to sexual material, and harassment via the Internet and reactions to those experiences
 - The nature of friendships formed over the Internet
 - Knowledge of Internet safety practices among young Internet users and their parents or guardians
 - Assessment of factors that might make some young people more vulnerable than others to sexual solicitation, unwanted exposure to sexual material, and harassment via the Internet

What is the Youth Internet Safety Survey?

- Youth survey participants were
 - 53% males, 47% female
 - 73% non-Hispanic white, 10% African-American, 3% American Indian or Alaskan native, 3% Asian, 2% Hispanic white, 7% other, 2% did not answer

Age of Child Participants

- 10 4%
- 11 8%
- 12 11%
- 13 15%
- 14 16%
- 15 18%
- 16 17%
- 17 13%

Online Victimization

- Sexual Solicitations and Approaches
- Unwanted Exposure to Sexual Material
- Harassment

Sexual Solicitations and Approaches

Sexual Solicitations

- Approximately one in five (19%) received an unwanted sexual solicitation or approach
- 25% of those solicited said they were very or extremely upset or afraid (distressing incident).
- One in seven of those solicited included an attempt to contact the youth in person, by phone or by regular mail

Who was targeted?

- Girls were targeted at almost twice the rate of boys (66% versus 34%)
- More than three quarters of targeted youth (77%) were age 14 or older
- 22% were 10 to 13 with this younger group being disproportionately distressed, suggesting these younger kids had a harder time shrugging off these solicitations

Who were the perpetrators?

- Virtually all (97%) were persons the youth originally met online.
- Adults were responsible for 24% of sexual solicitations and 34% of the aggressive solicitations.
- 48% of the perpetrators were younger than 18.
- 24% were older than 18.
- 27% unknown

Perpetrators

- Slightly more than two-thirds of the solicitations and approaches came from males.
- One-quarter of the aggressive episodes came from females.
- In 13% of instances, the youth knew where the solicitor lived

What Happened?

- Many of the sexual solicitations appear to be propositions for “cybersex”- a form of fantasy sex, which involves interactive chat-room sessions where the participants describe sexual acts and sometimes disrobe and masturbate
- 70% of the incidents the youth was home when the solicitations occurred

What Happened?

- 65% of incidents, the youth met the person who solicited them in a chatroom; in 24% of episodes the meeting occurred through Instant Messages
- In 10% of incidents, the perpetrators asked to meet the youth somewhere, in 6% the youth received regular mail, in 2% a telephone call, 1% money or gifts
- In most incidents, the youth ended the solicitations, using a variety of strategies like logging off, leaving the site, or blocking the person

Testimony

- A 13 year-old girl said that someone asked her about her bra size.
- A 17 year-old boy said someone asked him to “cyber” meaning to have cybersex. The first time this happened he didn’t know what cybersex was. The second time it happened he “just said, no.”

Testimony

- A 14 year-old girl said that men who claimed to be 18 or 20 sent her an Instant Message asking for her measurements and asked other questions about what she looked like. She was 13 when this happened and the men knew her age.
- A 12 year-old girl said people told her sexual things they were doing and asked her to play with herself

Testimony

- A 15 year-old girl said an older man kept “bothering” her. He asked her if she was a virgin and wanted to meet her.
- A 16 year-old girl said a man would talk to her about sexual things he wanted to do to her and suggested places he would like to meet her.

Testimony

- A 13 year-old boy said a girl asked him how big his privates were and wanted him to “jack off.”
- Another 13 year-old boy said a man sent him a drawing of a man having sex with a dog. The man said it was a picture of him.

How did the Youth Respond to the Episodes?

- In almost half incidents (49%), the youth did not tell anyone about the episode. Even when the episode was aggressive, youngsters did not tell in 36% of incidents.
- In 24% of incidents the youth told a parent, and in 29% of incidents the youth told a sibling or friend.
- Only in 10% of the cases was it reported to an authority, a teacher or law enforcement agency.

Areas of Concern

- It is remarkable that so few of the episodes of sexual solicitations, even those that were distressing and/or aggressive, prompted the youth to confide in someone.
- Some probably were not alarmed or were not sure who to report to.
- Some may have been embarrassed or shamed, because the youth may have believed they had gone to places on the Internet that parents and even friends would disapprove.
- Youth may have feared having their Internet privileges restricted.

How did the Incident Affect the Youth?

- In 75% of incidents, youth had no or only minor reactions, saying they were **not** very upset or afraid in the wake of the solicitation.
- In 20% of incidents, youth were very or extremely upset and in 13% very or extremely afraid.
- In 36% of the aggressive solicitations, youth were very or extremely upset and in 25% very or extremely afraid.

How did the Incidents Affect the Youth?

- In 17% of incidents, youth were very or extremely embarrassed. This was true in 32% if aggressive incidents.
- In one-quarter of incidents, youth reported feeling at least one symptom of stress “more than a little” or “a lot” in the days right after the incidents.
- The aggressive episodes were more distressing with at least one symptom of stress reported in 43% of episodes.
- 17% of the youth who were solicited had five or more symptoms of depression at the time of the interview, twice the rate of depressive symptoms in the overall sample.

Posttraumatic Stress

- Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts or perceptions
- Recurrent distressing dreams of the event (in children there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content)
- Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience)
- Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
- Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event

Posttraumatic Stress

- Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
- Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
- Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
- Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
- Feelings of detachment or estrangement from others
- Restricted range of affect (e.g. unable to have loving feelings)
- Sense of foreshortened future

Posttraumatic Stress

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Irritability or outbursts of anger
- Difficulty concentrating
- Hypervigilance
- Exaggerated startle response

Summary

- Most of the youth were solicited appeared to brush off the encounters, treating it as a minor annoyance. Nonetheless, there was a core group of youth who experienced high level of upset and fear and for whom the experience may have provoked a stress response and even depressive symptoms. The group with a strongly negative reaction is substantial.

Internet Friendships

- 16% of regular Internet users reported forming close online friendships with people they had met online
- “Close friendship”- was defined as a relationship with “someone you could talk to online about things that were really important to you.”

Internet Friendships

- 3% of youth had formed a close friendship with an adult they met on the Internet. Most of these children were 15 or older.
- Girls were somewhat more likely than boys (59% versus 41%) to have formed a close online friendship with an adult.

Internet Friendships

- The adult Internet friendships were also both males and females, mostly in the young adult age group, 18 to 25.
- The youth typically met them in chat-rooms where they shared similar interests, gaming, popular music, dancing and sports.

Internet Friendships

- In most of these friendships (69%), there had been some contact between the adult and youth outside of the Internet.
- Mostly these contacts occurred over the phone or through regular mail.
- Parents knew of approximately three-quarters of these friendships.

Internet Friendships

- In almost one-third of the youth-adult friendships, the youth actually met the adult in person, usually in a public place with a friend present.
- Parents knew about one-third of these meetings.

Internet Friendships- Examples

- A 17 year-old girl became close to a woman in her forties. They met in a chat room devoted to a self-help group. Her parent knew, and there was no offline contact
- A 15 year-old boy became friends with a young man when he designed a web page for the man's music group. They met in person. The boy's parents did not know about this friendship or the meeting.

Internet Friendships- Examples

- A 17 year-old boy described a relationship with a woman in her late twenties as “romantic,” but not sexual. They never met.
- A 16 year-old girl became close to a man in his thirties who traveled to meet her. They met in a public place. He wanted to spend the night with her, but she refused.

Internet Friendships

- Probably the best advice is simply to remind youth that people they meet online may have ulterior motives and hidden agendas.

Summary

- Sexual solicitations and approaches occur to approximately one in five regular Internet users.
- Most incidents are brief and easily deflected
- Some turn out to be distressing to the recipients and some become more aggressive including offline contact and attempts at personal meetings.
- One would suspect incidents are underreported, youth may be embarrassed, others accepted this as an unpleasant reality of the Internet.

Summary

- Are youth being solicited to run away by potentially predatory adults?
- Seven youth, revealed such an episode.
- In two instances the episodes involved communication with friends.
- Five instances involved encouragement from people not known to the youth.

Unwanted Exposure
to Sexual Material

Unwanted Exposure

- Pornography is plentiful on the Internet
- Inadvertently, many children stumble across unwanted sexual images while surfing the web.

Unwanted Exposure

- 25% of youth had at least one unwanted exposure to ***pictorial images of naked people*** or ***people having sex***.
- 71% of these exposures occurred while the youth was searching the Internet
- 28% received these unwanted images while opening E-mail or clicking on links in E-mail or Instant Messages.

Which youth had the unwanted exposure?

- Boys outnumbered girls slightly (57% to 42%).
- More than 60% of the unwanted exposures occurred to youth 15 years of age or older.
- 7% of the unwanted exposures were to 11 and 12 year old youth.
- None of the 10 year-olds reported unwanted exposure

What was the content and source of the unwanted exposure?

- 94% of the images were of naked people
- 38% showed people having sex
- 8% involved violence, in addition to nudity and/or sex
- Most of the unwanted exposures (67%) happened at home, 15% at school, 3% at libraries

What was the content and source of the unwanted exposure?

- How the youth encountered the material:
 - Searches (47%)
 - Misspelled addresses (17%)
 - Links in web sites (17%)

What was the content and source?

- E-mail contact

- 63% of unwanted exposure came to an address used solely by the youth
- In 93% of instances, the sender was unknown to the youth

17% of all incidents of unwanted exposure, the youth said they ***did know*** the site was X-rated before entering (described as unwanted or unexpected).

Unwanted Exposure

- It is not clear to what extent it was some curiosity or just navigational naiveté that resulted in the opening of the sites despite prior knowledge of their illicit content
 - 48% reported to parents

Unwanted Exposure

- Pornography sites are also sometimes programmed to make them difficult to exit. In fact, some sites the exit buttons take a viewer into other sexually explicit sites.
- In 26% of the incidents where sexual material was encountered while surfing, youth reported they were brought to another sex site when they tried to exit the site they were in.
- This happened in one third of distressing incidents encountered while surfing.

Unwanted Exposure- Testimonials

- An 11 year-old boy and a friend were searching for game sites. They typed in “fun.com,” and a pornography site came up.
- A 15 year-old boy looking for information about his family’s car typed “escort” into a search engine and a site about an escort service came up.

Unwanted Exposures- Testimonials

- Another 15 year-old boy came across a bestiality site while he was writing a paper about wolves for school. He saw a picture of a woman having sex with a wolf.
- A 16 year-old girl came upon a pornography site when she mistyped “teen.com.” She typed “teeen” instead.

Unwanted Exposure- Testimonials

- A 13 year-old boy who loved wrestling got an E-mail message with a subject line that said it was about wrestling. When he opened the message, it contained pornography.
- A 12 year-old girl received an E-mail message with a subject line that said “Free Beanie Babies.” When she opened it, she saw a picture of naked people.

How did the youth respond to the Exposure?

- Parents were told in 39% of the episodes.
- Youth disclosed to no one in 44% of incidents.
- In a small percentage of cases officials were notified (3% teacher, 3% Internet service provider).
- Only 2% of youth who encountered sexual material returned to the site of exposure.

Unwanted Exposure

- The fact that so many youth did not mention their exposure to anyone, even a friend, even to laugh or talk about it as an adventure, is noteworthy.
- It probably reflects some degree of guilt or embarrassment on the part of many youth.
- It might be healthier and helpful to youngsters if they were able to talk to someone about these incidents.

How did the Exposure Affect the Youth?

- 23% of youth who reported exposure incidents were very or extremely upset by the exposure. This amounts to 6% of the youth interviewed.
- 20% of youth were very or extremely embarrassed.
- 20% reported at least one symptom of stress.

Summary

- Unwanted exposure to sexual material does appear to be widespread, occurring to 25% of all youth who use the Internet.
- While it is not a new thing for young people to be exposed to sexual material, the degree of sudden and unexpected exposure in an unwanted fashion may be an experience made much more common by the widespread use of the Internet.

Summary

- More than one third of the imagery was of sexual acts, rather than simply naked people, and 8% involved some violence in addition to nudity and/or sex.
- From a social-scientific view, the exposure to unwanted sexual material is difficult to evaluate. The research on exposure to advertising and violence makes it clear that media exposure can have an affects. Media can affect attitudes, engender fear, and model behaviors (both pro and antisocial).

Harassment

Harassment

- Feeling worried or threatened because someone is bothering or harassing them online.
- Someone using the Internet to threaten or embarrassed them by posting or sending messages about them for other people to see.
- 6% of the sample reported such an experience.

Who were the youth targeted for harassment?

- Boys and girls were targeted about equally (51% and 48%).
- 70% of the episodes occurred to youth 14 and older.
- 18% of targeted youth were 10, 11, or 12.

Who were the harassing perpetrators?

- A majority (54%) was reported to be male, but 20% were reportedly female. In 26% of the instances, the gender was unknown.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the harassing perpetrators were other juveniles.
- Almost a quarter of harassing perpetrators (24%) lived near (within an hours drive of) the youth. In distressing episodes, 35% of perpetrators live near the youth.

Who were the harassing perpetrators?

- In contrast to the sexual solicitation episodes where only 3% of perpetrators were known to the youth offline, 28% of the harassment episodes involved known perpetrators.

What happened?

- Slightly more than three quarters of the youth were logged on at home when the harassment was occurring.
- The harassment primarily took the form of Instant Messages (33%), chatroom exchanges (32%), and E-mails (19%).
- Of the harassment episodes involving perpetrators who were not face-to-face acquaintances of the youth, 12% included an actual or attempted contact by telephone, regular mail, or in person.

Testimony From Youth

- A 17 year-old girl said people who were mad at her created a “hate page” about her.
- A 14 year-old boy said that he received an Instant Messages from someone who said he was hiding in the boy’s house with a laptop. The boy was home alone at the time. He was very frightened.

Testimony from Youth

- A 14 year-old girl said kids at school found a note from her boyfriend. They scanned it, posted it on the world wide web, and sent it by E-mail throughout her school.
- A 12 year-old girl said someone posted a note about her on the world wide web. The note included swear words and involved sexual name-calling.

How did the youth respond to the episodes?

- Parents were told about these episodes half the time.
- Slightly more than one third of youth told friends.
- 21% of the episodes were reported to Internet service providers, 6% to teachers
- 24% of harassment incidences were undisclosed

How did the incidents affect the youth?

- 31% were very or extremely upset, and 19% were very or extremely afraid.
- 18% were very or extremely embarrassed
- Almost one third of the harassed youth (32%) reported at least one symptom of stress after the incident.

How did the incident affect the youth?

- Almost one half the youth who had experienced a distressing episode exhibited at least one symptom of stress.
- 18% of the harassed youth had five or more depressive symptoms at the time of their interview, more than twice the rate for the overall sample.

Dysthymic Disorder

- Poor appetite
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Low energy or fatigue
- Low self-esteem
- Poor concentration or difficulty making decisions
- Feeling of hopelessness

Summary

- An important feature of harassment is that, more than sexual solicitation, it involves people known to the youth and people known to live nearby.
- Certainly, some of the threatening character of these episodes stem from the fact that the targets do not feel completely protected by distance and anonymity. The harasser could actually carry out his or her threats.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- A large faction of youth are encountering offensive experiences on the Internet, 19% sexually solicited, 25% exposed to unwanted material, 6% harassed
- The offenses and offenders are even more diverse than previously thought. A large number of offending behaviors come from other youth.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- Most sexual solicitations fail, but their quantity is potentially alarming. The good news is most young people seem to know what to do to deflect these sexual “come ons.”
- But there are youth who may be especially vulnerable through lack of knowledge, neediness, disability, or poor judgment.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- The primary vulnerable population is teenagers. Most of the sexual material and harassment is targeted at teens.
- Pre-teen children use the Internet less, in more limited ways and are less independent.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- The target population for this Internet victimization is teens, and that makes prevention and intervention a different sort of challenge. Teens do not necessarily listen to what parents and other “authorities” tell them.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- Sex on the Internet is not segregated and signposted like in a bookstore, and it is not easy to avoid. Some “heavy-duty” imagery is incredibly easy to stumble upon.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- Most youth are not bothered by what they encounter on the Internet, but there is an important subgroup of teens who are quite distressed- by the exposure as well as the solicitations and harassment. We cannot assume these are just transient effects. When youth report stress symptoms like intrusive thoughts and physical discomfort, this is a warning sign. Some of this could be the psychological equivalent of a concussion, not a slight bump on the head.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- It may be hard to predict exactly who will get hurt. It may partly depend upon such factors as age, prior experience with the Internet, family attitudes toward sexual matters, the degree of surprise, and the kind of exposure. Anticipating and trying to respond to the negative impact of these kinds of distressing experiences is something that needs more consideration.

Major Finding/ Conclusions

- Nearly half of the solicitations were not disclosed to anyone. Some of this non-disclosure is certainly due to embarrassment and guilt. The higher disclosure rates for non-sexual offenses suggest that finding. Parents are not being informed about a lot of these episodes. They would want to know. And some youth are not even telling friends.

Major Findings/ Conclusions

- As a result teens are not getting a chance to reflect on what happened, get ideas about how to cope and put the experience into perspective. It is somewhat ironic, the Internet provides opportunities to communicate with others about difficult things, but at the same time, it may be increasing the number of difficult things to talk about.

Contracts

- Seven Smart Rules

1. I will not tell a stranger who I am or where I live
2. Me and my parents are a team
3. I can say no
4. I will share e-mail from strangers with my parents
5. Strangers in chat rooms can be good or bad, but they are still strangers
6. Keep a safe distance from strangers
7. My family and teachers care about me- bad things on the Internet are not my fault

Protection

- Basically, there are two ways to filter your kids' Internet access. You can purchase a software filtering product for your PC, or you can subscribe to an Internet service provider (ISP) that filters the material before it gets to you. The advantage to having your own filtering software is that you have more control over what is and isn't filtered, and you can turn them off when it is time for an adult to access the Net.

Protection

- The so-called family friendly ISPs make it simple-they handle all the configurations and updates, but also take away much of your control.

Filtering Programs

- SurfWatch (\$49.95)
- NetNanny (\$39.95)
- Cyberpatrol (\$39.95)
- Cybersitter (\$39.95)
- One problem is that filtering programs such as these have a tendency to embed themselves deep into innards of a PC's operating system-so deep that regular "uninstall" program don't always work.

Filtering Programs

- Several of these programs allow you to block specific words or phrases that your child might type in a chat session. You might consider blocking their ability to type in their full name, phone number, address or other personal information.

Lawrence J. Magid (www.getnetwise.org)

Internet Service Providers

- Another way to accomplish protection for your child on the Internet is by using an Internet service provider (ISP) that filters your content for you. The advantage is that the service provider is responsible for maintaining and updating the software.
- America Online offers parents options with different levels of restrictions, “kids only,” “young teens” or “mature teens.” One thing I like about AOL, is that it also offers completely unfiltered access for adults who want the freedom to go to any Website.

Internet Service Providers

- FamilyClick has a somewhat different philosophy. Although it offers five level of access for different members of the family, none of its subscribers- including adults- has full access to the entire Internet.
- Integrity Online (www.integrityonline.org)
- This.com (www.this.com)
- Mayberry USA (www.mbusa.net)
- Lawrence J. Magid (www.getnetwise.org)

Limitations

- We cannot be certain how candid our respondents were. Although we used widely accepted social-science procedures, our interviews involved telephone conversations with young people on a sensitive subject, factors that could contribute to less the complete candor.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Never give out identifying information-home address, or telephone number-in public message such as chat or bulletin boards, and be sure you're dealing with someone that both you and your child know and trust before giving it out via E-mail. Think carefully before revealing any personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information. Consider using a pseudonym or not listing your child's name if your service allows it.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Get to know the services your child uses. If you don't know how to log on, get your child to show you. Find out what types of information they offer and whether there are ways for parents to block out objectionable material.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without parental permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public spot, and be sure to accompany your child.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Never respond to messages or bulletin boards items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable. Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter such messages. If you or your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your service provider and ask for their assistance.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Should you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling 1-800-843-5678 or visiting the CyberTipLine online. You should also notify your online service

Online Safety Guidelines

- Remember that people online may not be who they seem. Because you can't see or even hear the person it would be easy for someone to misrepresent him or herself. Thus, someone indicating that "she" is a "12 year-old girl" could in reality be a 40 year-old man.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Remember that everything you read online may not be true. Any offer that's "too good to be true" probably is. Be very careful about any offers that involve coming to a meeting or having someone visit your home.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use by your child. Discuss these rules and post them near the computer as a reminder. Remember to monitor their compliance with these rules, especially when it comes to the amount of time your children spend on the computer. A child or teenager's excessive use of online services or bulletin boards, especially late at night, may be a clue that there is a potential problem. Remember that personal computers and online services should not be used as electronic babysitters.

Online Safety Guidelines

- Be sure to make this a family activity. Consider keeping the computer in a family room rather than the child's bedroom. Get to know their "online friends" just as you get to know all of their other friends.

Risky Online Behavior

- Youth went to X-rated Sites on Purpose 8%
- Talked about sex Online with someone youth never met 7%
 - Youth knew he/she was talking to an adult 2%
 - Youth knew he/she was talking to a minor 2%
- Used credit card Online without permission 5%
- Posted Picture of self for anyone to see 12%
- Sent picture of self to someone met online 12%

Risky Online Behavior

- Posted E-mail address for anyone to see
27%
- Made rude or nasty comments to
someone Online 14%
- Played joke or annoyed someone Online
 - Played joke – youth 13%
 - Played joke- adult 2%

Risky Online Behavior

- Posted some personal information for all to see 11%
 - Posted last name 9%
 - Posted telephone number 1%
 - Posted name of school 3%
 - Posted home address 2%

Screenener Questions

- In the past year, did you ever feel worried or threatened because someone was bothering or harassing you online?
- In the past year, did anyone ever use the Internet to threaten or embarrass you by posting or sending messages about you for other people to see?

Screeener Questions

- In the past year when you were doing an online search or surfing the web, did you ever find yourself in a website that showed pictures of naked people or of people having sex when you did not want to be in that kind of site?

Screeener Questions

- In the past year, did you ever receive E-mail or Instant Messages that you did not want with advertisements for or links to X-rated web sites?
- Did you ever open a message or a link in a message that showed you actual pictures of naked people or people having sex that you did not want?

Screenener Questions

- In the past year, when you were online, did you ever find people talking about sex in a place or time when you did not want this kind of talk?
- In the past year, did anyone on the Internet ever try to get you to talk online about sex when you did not want to?

Screenener Questions

- In the past year, did anyone on the Internet ask you for sexual information about yourself when you did not want to answer such questions? I mean very personal questions, like what your body looks like or sexual things you have done.

Screenener Questions

- In the past year, did anyone on the Internet ever ask you to do something sexual that you did not want to do?
- In the past year, did anyone on the Internet ever ask you or encourage you to runaway from home?