

# Keeping Your Kids Safe Online

## Podcast Transcript

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Between text messaging, talking on a cell phone, and using the computer, it can seem as if technology is taking over our children's lives! With our children spending more and more time online, it is important that we educate them about being responsible and safe users.

First of all, establish some rules for Internet use. For example, what sites do you want your children to visit? Are they allowed to visit chat rooms and use instant messaging? If so, who are they allowed to contact? A good rule to start with is that your children shouldn't talk to anyone on the Internet that they don't know personally.

Another important safety tip is to make sure your children do not put too much personal information online. A phone number, address, or a birth date can be taken and used inappropriately and should be left off of your children's blogs or Facebook accounts.

You should also talk to your children about the photos and personal statements they put on these sites. More and more colleges and employers are turning to sites like Facebook and MySpace to check out future candidates. Pictures of weekend parties or inappropriate language can have a negative effect on your children's future.

Be sure to talk to your children about cyberbullying. This can take the form of gossiping or spreading rumors through email or text message, sending out embarrassing photos, or posting rude comments online. Encourage your children to come to you if they are the victim of something like this and of course let them know you will not tolerate them being on the other end of it.

Lastly, stay involved! This does not mean that you have to screen everything your children do on the computer, but talk to your kids about your concerns. The more they know about cyberbullying, online predators, and Internet scams, the better! And if you haven't done so already, it might be fun to join a site like Facebook and communicate with your children in a whole new way.

For more information on how to keep your children safe online, check out Military Youth on the Move's "Just for Parents" section. Our website has a ton of great information and resources for all your parenting concerns such as saving for college, getting active, and much more.

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For more information, visit Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>, an official Department of Defense website.