

## R.A.I.S.E. The Standard: Responsible Adults for Internet-Safe Environments

### Suggestions for Keeping our Children Safe Online:

1. Help a child select a user name that does not expose gender, age, or location.
  - Safe Username: redyellowsun100
  - Unsafe Username: shannon10maui
2. Consider making a rule that your child is never allowed to erase computer history. (Computer history is sometimes referred to as “footprints,” such as the visible trail you make while walking across sand.) Check the computer now and then to see what sites your child has been visiting.
3. To prevent open access to the internet, you can install parental controls at varying levels.
  - Free software: OpenDNS ( <http://www.opendns.com/start/>)
  - Software for purchase: Webwatcher (<http://www.webwatcherkids.com>)
4. Pre-teen and younger children are not eligible to make a Facebook or Myspace account, but many of them get around the rule by lying about their birth year. If you are a social network “friend” of anyone younger than 14, consider deleting them so as not to encourage the deception.
  - As an alternative, a family could set up a family social network page so that children can learn from adults and older siblings appropriate social networking behavior. Set the privacy levels at the highest settings, and then enjoy sharing photos and notes with Grandma and Grandpa.
  - Tutorials for making a Facebook page and Myspace page private are located on [youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)-search **Myspace privacy/Facebook privacy settings**.
6. If you are having a problem with your child spending too much time online—for example, you find your teen online late on a school night—you can control your computer with a password. The teen will be unable to get onto the computer without you.
7. If you choose to allow your children to have internet access on their phones, it is another area you will need to control. (Side note: when a teen boy died in a single-car accident after falling asleep at the wheel, his parents were heartbroken to learn that he hadn't had a solid night's sleep in months. Phone records showed he was on his phone almost hourly—texting, calling, online.)
  - Some families require all electronic devices to be in a specially-designated box by a certain time each evening. The children may retrieve their items in the morning.
8. There is probably no good reason for a child to be in an online chat room. The wonderful innocence of a child makes them too susceptible to exposing information to strangers.
9. The room with the internet is exactly like all the other rooms in the house: the adult is in charge, and you make/enforce the rules. Treat every act in the real world and online equally (ex: lying in the real world and lying on the internet is the same) with consistent rules and punishments.