

Subject: Children Online Newsletter

CHILDREN ONLINE

Internet Safety Newsletter from Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

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23rd Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.

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Resources for Parents

WEB SITES:

1. [The Top 20 Websites for Kids - from "Today's Parent"](#), though an older article published in 2005, many of the recommended sites are still current
2. [Great Web Sites for Kids](#) by the American Library Association.
3. [Best Web sites for Kids](#) - though from a heavily commercial site, More4Kids.info, their list includes some long-time gems.

A common question many parents ask of us during our workshops is "What age do you recommend I allow my child too...?" Fill in the blank with topics such as use email, instant messaging, social networks, texting or using the Internet at all.



With the amazing speed new communications devices appear on the scene, adults are often looking for a set of rules or guidelines to follow. Today children and teens see the Internet as a seamless part of their culture. As Ganz Communications Director (Webkinz), Susan McVeigh states, "Kids are on the internet at a younger and younger age. They are comfortable in an online environment, more so than their parents. It just feels natural to them."

For teens, texting and IM-ing have become their main forms of communication. Scrolling through chat rooms and hanging out in social networks have replaced hanging out in real life. The evolution of communication technology is transforming children's lives. Trying to steer our children and teen's use of technology can be tough, especially when so little is understood about the inherent risks and issues. This month's newsletter provides a basic list of Children Online's recommendations for children up to age seventeen.

As always, we welcome your comments. Our telephone number for Children Online is 413-214-1225.

4. [KidSites.com](#) - Your Guide to the Best Kid Sites on the Web

PARENTAL CONTROLS FOR CELL PHONES:

1. [ATT](#)
2. [Verizon](#)
3. [Sprint](#)

PARENTAL CONTROLS FOR GAMING CONSOLES:

1. [XBox](#)
2. [Playstation 3](#)
3. [Nintendo Wii](#)
4. [Nintendo DSi](#)

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology,

For additional details and discussion about some of these recommendations please [visit our website](#) to see past newsletters and our most recent book, [Racing to Keep Up](#).

Best wishes,
Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at marjem@childrenonline.org or dougf@childrenonline.org for information about our programs or consulting services.

Our Recommendations for Children's and Teen's Use of Technology

Keep in mind that you know your child best. Our recommendations are based on general developmental stages and our research and experience for the best practices for parents.

Younger Children

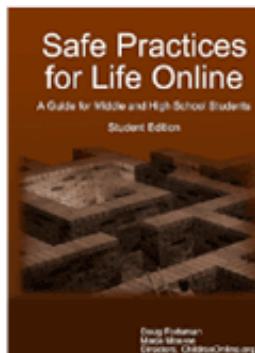
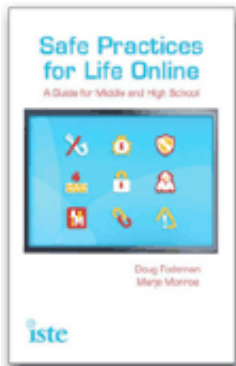
- Begin exploring Internet sites with children on a lap or sitting next to an adult. PBS has a wonderful children's site, for example. There are many good science and other learning sites dedicated to teaching young children about almost any subject imaginable. See the sidebar listing for some recommendations.
- We recommend installing parental control software and only providing access to sites that parents approve beforehand.

Ages 6-8

- Consider starting a first email account writing to family members. The adult or parent should be in control of the account, password, writing process and sending functions.
- We recommend writing the emails along with the child using full sentences and celebrating the child's own newly developing spelling patterns.
- Explain the value of strong passwords and the importance of never sharing a password with anyone. (Except for parents, of course)
- If Webkinz, Club Penguin or similar websites are allowed at this age, we recommend turning off (or blocking) all chatting functions using the built-in parental controls for these web sites or your own parental control software. Parents should know and explore the web sites their children use, and know their children's passwords for all accounts.
- Have frequent conversations with young children about the responsibility of communicating online, including being kind online and using good language.
- Begin linking family values to Internet technology use. Continue this practice, as the child grows older.
- Don't allow young children to post photos or videos on the Internet.

counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

Check out our newest book in both a teachers edition and student edition:



- We do not recommend the use of instant messaging or chatting functions for this age group.
- If a 9-11 year old has a cell phone for safety reasons, we recommend prohibiting texting and Internet access. There are cell phone packages that are specifically designed for children. Check with your carrier.
- Internet access should not be available in a bedroom or private location.

Ages 9-11

- Consider allowing the ability to write emails to good friends and/or family from a separate email account. Parents, however, should know the password and have regular access to the account. We encourage parents to monitor all emails received or sent from a child's account.
- If chatting in kid-friendly game sites such as WebKinz or Club Penguin is allowed, we recommend knowing the child's passwords and having "anytime access" to all accounts.
- We do not recommend allowing the use of instant messaging until age 12. Parental Control software can provide valuable options for parents to control and monitor the use of IM.
- If the 9-11 year old visits YouTube, set restrictions for downloading or uploading photos or videos. We do not recommend allowing children in this age group to sign up for accounts on YouTube.
- We do not recommend allowing this age group to use social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Friendster, Hi5 or Xanga.
- If a 9-11 year old has a cell phone for safety reasons, we recommend prohibiting texting or Internet access. There are cell phone packages that are specifically designed for children. Check with your carrier.
- Internet access should not be available in a bedroom or private location.

Ages 12-14

- Consider allowing independent email accounts with the ability to send, write and receive emails without parent's looking and/or approving the emails first. We recommend, however, that parents still know their child's password and have access to the email account at anytime.
- Consider allowing instant messaging. Parental Control software can provide valuable options for parents to control and monitor the use of IM. We recommend that parents know every person on their child's buddy list and know their child's password.
- If the 12-14 visits YouTube, consider setting restrictions for downloading or uploading photos or videos. We do not recommend allowing children in this age group to sign up for accounts on YouTube.
- We do not recommend allowing the young teen to use social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Friendster, Hi5 or Xanga.

- If the 12-14 year old has a cell phone, we recommend prohibiting texting or Internet access. There are cell phone packages that are specifically designed for children. Check with your carrier.
- Internet access should not be available in a bedroom or private location

Ages 15-17

- Consider allowing access to social networking sites such as Facebook or My Space. We recommend that parents make it a requirement that parents have access to these accounts by "friending" their children through their own accounts or knowing their child's password.
- Consider moving Internet access to the bedroom at the upper end of this age range, but set time and web site restrictions with the help of parental control software.
- Consider allowing texting and/or Internet access via cell phones. Have discussions about appropriate use of all cell phone technology such as cameras, texting and Internet access.
- Have conversations about posting information, photos and videos online and make your expectations clear about what is acceptable and what is not. Remind teens that nothing is private online.

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