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Safety Tips by Age - 8-10-Year-Olds

Eight- to ten-year-old kids have a strong sense of family. They are interested in the activities of older kids in their lives; they are starting to develop a sense of their own moral and gender identity; and they tend to be trusting and not to question authority.

Surfing for fun and playing interactive games are favourite online pastimes at this age. They are using e-mail and may also experiment with instant messaging, chat rooms and message boards (online forums).

8 to 10-year olds:

- are curious and interested in discovering new information
- lack the critical thinking skills to be online alone
- are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests and registration forms
- may be frightened by realistic portrayals of violence, threats or dangers
- begin to communicate with online acquaintances they may have not met in real life
- may be influenced by media images and personalities, especially those that appear "cool" or desirable
- may be exposed to search results with links to inappropriate Web sites
- are vulnerable to online predators when using chat rooms, message boards or instant messaging

Safety tips

- Create a list of Internet house rules with input from your kids.
- Sit with your kids when they are online or make sure they only visit sites that you have approved.
- Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area where you can easily monitor them.
- Investigate Internet-filtering tools as a complement - not a replacement - for parental supervision.
- Use kid-friendly search engines or search engines with parental controls.
- Establish a shared family e-mail account with your Internet Service Provider rather than letting

your kids have their own accounts.

- Teach your kids to always come to you before giving out information through e-mail, chat rooms, message boards, registration forms, personal profiles and online contests.
- Use e-mail filters to block messages from particular people, or those that contain specific words or phrases.
- Don't allow instant messaging at this age.
- Only allow your kids to use monitored chat rooms and message boards on reputable kids' sites.
- Talk to your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their other activities.
- Talk to them about healthy sexuality because kids can easily come across online pornography.
- Encourage your kids to come to you if they encounter anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. (Stay calm. If you "freak out" your kids won't turn to you for help when they need it.)

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