

Building Boundaries: Called to Protect for Young Children

Information about the Internet

Current Research

Current research shows that young children are seldom the victims of online predators. In fact, one of the latest studies (The National Juvenile Online Victimization Study) revealed that 99% of Internet-initiated sex crimes involved youth 13-years-old or older. This and other studies are revealing a different profile of online molesters than that of pedophiles who prey on younger children.

Of course, it's still important for you to monitor the online behavior of your young children, just as you monitor any of their activities. Also, teaching children appropriate use of the Internet while they are young may discourage online behaviors that will put them at risk later on. For example, we are learning that having an account through a personal networking site such as MY Space is not, in itself, a high risk behavior. However, youth who "chat" or interact with strangers, who visit x-rated websites, and who use the Internet to embarrass or harass others are more likely to be contacted by an Internet molester

In Called to Protect for Young Children, fifth graders learn the following rules for online safety. You may want to read over these with your child and reinforce them as rules in your own home.

Rules for Online Safety

1. I will not give out personal information such as my name, address, telephone or cell number to a stranger on the Internet.
2. I will not put my parents' names or work addresses or cell phone numbers on the Internet.
3. If an adult or stranger IM's or emails or wants to be on my personal "friends" list, I will tell my parents.
4. I will not agree to meet in person with someone I have met on the Internet. If someone asks me to meet them, I will tell my parents.
5. I will not send any pictures on the Internet without my parents' permission.
6. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or make me feel uncomfortable.
7. I will show my parents any message that says mean things about me or other people I know.
8. I will follow the "Golden Rule" when I am on the Internet. I will not make rude or nasty comments to others.
9. If someone gives me a bad secret on the Internet, I will tell a trusted adult.
10. If someone I meet on the Internet sends me a gift, I will tell my parents immediately.
11. I will not tell my password to anyone except my parents, not even my best friend.
12. I will not download images or install any software onto the computer without my parents' approval.
13. I am aware that my actions on the Internet could possibly corrupt our computer or could even hurt me or my family.

