

Some important definitions:

Sexual Exploitation: When someone is used by another person for sexual purposes. This may be done by pressureing, threatening, promising, and/or intimidating someone.

Child sexual abuse:

When a child or teen under 18 is forced, tricked, intimidated, or pressured into any kind of sexual activity. When the offender is a family member it is called incest.

Signs that your child may be at risk on the Internet.

- Spends lots of time on-line especially at night.
- You find pronography on your child's computer
- Your child receives phone calls from people you don't know or is making long distance calls to numbers you don't recognize.
- Your child receives mail or gifts from unknown individuals.
- Your child quickly turns off the computer monitor when you enter the room.

For more information please call
ACASA at:

1-866-63-ACASA

You will be referred to the nearest sexual
assault crisis provider. Each center provides

24 hour crisis hotline
information and referral
support groups and more

All services are free and confidential

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Surfing the Net . . .



A Guide for Parents to Reduce the Risk of On-line Sexual Exploitation

ACASA
ARKANSAS COALITION
AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

“Surfing the net” means different things to different people. For some, it means a quick look at the local news, for others it means a day of learning about their newest hobby, and for many it simply means a fun and educational way to spend their spare time.

Unfortunately, the Internet can also be used in ways that hurt children. For example, the rapid growth of the Internet has allowed for easy access to the exchange of pornographic material. In addition, some sex offenders may sue the Internet to identify and make contact with potential child victims.

This brochure is designed to give parents and/or guardians information, safety tips and resources on using the Internet safely to reduce the risk of on-line sexual exploitation for children and teens. The term on-line refers to any communication that occurs on the Internet (e-mail, website, etc.).

What are the laws related to sexual exploitation on the Internet?

In general there are two types of laws, which can be used to address on-line sexual exploitation. Those which are designed to forbid visual depiction of children engaging in sexual acts and those which are designed to protect children from becoming victims of sexual offenders who attempt to contact them on the Internet.

Often these crimes violate federal and state laws because the Internet can be used by a person from one state to lure a child from another state into sexual activities and/or to send child pornography between states.

Guidelines For Parents and Guardians

- Get to know the computer. Spend time with your child on-line. Ask your child to show you their favorite website(s).
- Talk to your child about sexual exploitation and potential dangers when using the Internet.
- Tell your child that if they feel uncomfortable with something that has happened on-line, they should tell you immediately.
- Tell your child that they should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they “met” on-line.
- Do not allow your child to respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, or threatening.
- Remind your child to never share personal information (name, address, etc.) or pictures of themselves on the Internet.
- Keep the computer in the family room where you can monitor your child's activities.
- Share an e-mail account with your child so you are aware of the types of e-mail they receive.
- Do not allow your child to go into private chat rooms.
- Consider an on-line service that has special child accounts with restricted access to chat rooms and the internet.

Computer Resources for Reducing Your Child's Risk of On-line Sexual Exploitation

Computer software companies often have filtering programs or screening products. These are software tools that parents can put into their computers to prevent certain material from reaching their children who are “surfing the net.”

Most work by limiting access to web sites that contain words such as “sex” that could link a child to a pornographic website. Be aware that pornographic sites are increasingly able to get around software filtering programs by using words that a child may use to research a class paper.

Instead of a software package, another option is to research Internet service providers to see if they offer filtering services. The filtering services they provide will be more current than what you would get in a software package.

Resources for Parents & Guardians:

- Family Guidebook: A Parents Guidebook to the Internet.
<http://www.familyguidebook.com>
- PedoWatch
<http://pedowatch.org/parenting.html>
- Cyberangels
<http://cyberangels.org/about/index.html>
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
<http://www.missingkids.com>