

I am a parent. What can I do to protect my child?

Predators can send your child a file or link that will install a *Trojan* (a program that appears desirable but actually contains something harmful; a virus or a worm) or a *back door application or adware* (an application that some websites will use to store a “sneaky bug” inside your computer to collect personal information.)

- It is important that you scan your child’s computer from time to time to detect these rogue applications.
- On the computer screen, click on “history” to learn which websites your child has been visiting.
- Contact your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to find out how to add safety and blocking features to your child’s computer.

What steps can you take to protect your child before they inadvertently give away the family identity and information?

- Make sure your child knows the rules about Internet Safety. Don’t assume they know them!
- There are many excellent products that enhance the parent’s ability to protect their child from unwanted solicitation. Contact your state Attorney General’s Office or website for help (www.naag.org). In North Carolina go to www.ncdoj.com or call 919-716-6780.

Parental monitoring software can also log all dialogs between your child and strangers so that the parent can scan for improper communication. Go to the search engine of your choice and type in “best software monitoring for child’s computer.” You can also find help at:

OnLine Guard: <http://onguardonline.gov>

Work hard to keep communication open between you and your child. Trust is very important, but whenever you feel your child may be placing themselves in danger, remember that you can unplug the computer at any time. ***You are the parent!***

- Cast a watchful eye in the direction of their computers *often*—especially when they are involved in Chat Rooms and Instant Messengers.
- Be sure the computer is placed in a common area of the home where other family members are present. This should be wherever most of the “family” time is spent together.
- Set time limits for computer use.
- Discuss your values and concerns. Make sure they understand what you consider to be inappropriate material.
- Encourage your child to come to you or a trusted adult about things that bother them.

Take every precaution you can to protect your child from becoming a statistic! If you suspect that your child has been communicating with an online predator, save everything and call your local police and The National Center For Missing & Exploited Children, 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) **immediately**.

Protect Every Child/www.protecteverychild.org